



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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Thirteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 246th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 26 January 1994, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. UKEJE
(Vice-Chairperson)

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In the absence of Ms. Corti, Ms. Ukeje, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Initial and second reports of Zambia (continued) (CEDAW/C/ZAM/1-2 and Amend.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Chigaga (Zambia) took a place at the Committee table.

2. Ms. CHIGAGA (Zambia) said that she would reply to questions posed by members of the Committee, starting with some of a general nature. Firstly, female circumcision was not traditional in any region of Zambia. Zambian tradition emphasized personal hygiene in pubescent girls.

3. There was indeed, however, a significant problem of violence against women in Zambia, particularly in the form of wife-battering. That practice had its roots in the widespread conviction that the husband had the right to discipline and chastise his wife. Some women even felt that for their husbands to beat them was a show of affection. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies were also reluctant to get involved in cases they classified as domestic disputes. Under the Zambian penal code, violence against women was a crime and ranged from simple assault to assault causing grievous bodily harm. The Government had been encouraging the prosecution of offenders, but most victims of such violence were not prepared to press charges. In the worst cases, women were not even willing to admit that they had been battered, possibly out of fear of further reprisals or of the dissolution of their marriage. It was important to bear in mind that most women were economically dependent on their husbands.

4. As stated in the addendum to the initial and second reports of Zambia, Zambian law recognized equality between men and women in regard to their legal capacity; it accorded them the same legal status, the same right to sue or be sued. Under the law, members of either sex were treated as legal entities without distinction as to gender. Furthermore, Zambian law granted equal citizenship rights to men and women.

5. If at least one of the parents of a child born in Zambia was a citizen of that country, that child became a citizen at the date of his birth. That law, which did not discriminate between the sexes, constituted an improvement: previously a child born to a Zambian father had been automatically accorded citizenship but a child born to a Zambian woman had not.

6. While a woman married to a Zambian citizen for a period of more than three years preceding 24 July 1988 was entitled to apply for citizenship, a man married to a Zambian woman was still required, under the 1991 Constitution, to wait 10 years to qualify. That provision was a sensitive and controversial issue in Zambia where, for economic reasons, foreign men often entered into marriages of convenience in order to remain there. However, the constitutional

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article in question was under review, and stood to be amended in the near future.

7. The Women in Development (WID) unit of the Department of Planning and Development Cooperation functioned as coordinator of development and human rights issues related to women. Its responsibilities included organizing seminars to raise the consciousness of the community with regard to the situation of women, to gather information and materials, and to contribute to the development of plans and budgets. While the WID unit had not yet fulfilled its objectives, it was setting up mechanisms to facilitate the advancement of women.

8. The question had also been posed as to the impact of non-governmental organizations on the Women's League and the WID unit. Traditionally, the Women's League in Zambia had been a political wing of the party, and its members' beliefs and traditions had often conflicted with those of the members of non-governmental organizations, who were mostly educated, professional women interested in exploring such concerns as inheritance and bride price. The WID unit was the governmental department that interfaced with non-governmental organizations concerning women, which in turn supplemented its work with their generally broader and more varied range of interests. The non-governmental organizations had, for instance, arranged seminars and had participated in media forums related to women's issues. They were involved in the revision of educational curricula and texts, in cooperation with the National Curriculum Development Department of the Ministry of Education.

9. The slow pace at which the status of women was advancing in Zambia could be attributed to a combination of factors. Firstly, Zambian culture frowned on women perceived as dominant, and custom and practice did not encourage women to excel. Education had had a beneficial influence: both parents and children had learned to value the benefits of education for girls, and women were beginning to assert themselves. Unfortunately, under the structural adjustment programmes, the Government had been obliged to trim educational programmes, which had, temporarily it was hoped, slowed down that process. It was indeed the case that certain traditions prevented women from fully enjoying their rights. The woman bore complete responsibility for maintaining the home and caring for the children; men never shared those duties. Though young women were sometimes employed before marriage, it was impossible for them to pursue their careers after childbirth. Day-care centres were a new phenomenon, rare, expensive and entirely urban.

10. It was expected that girls would prepare for their future role as wives and mothers and their education was therefore traditionally accorded little value. Boys, on the other hand, were considered responsible for supporting their extended families, and all available family resources went into their educations.

11. In the reformed Constitution, article 23 had been amended to state that no law should make any provision that was discriminatory either of itself or in its effect. Any citizen could therefore challenge an alleged discriminatory act in a court of law. The current constitutional review had been undertaken to obtain the approval of the general population, because at the time of the 1991

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constitutional amendment process, several political parties had boycotted the exercise.

12. The eradication of all "customary laws" was not under consideration. Such "laws" were in fact traditions and had not been written into law. Furthermore, all "customary laws" were not necessarily negative; the Constitution, of course, prohibited the practice and enforcement of those which were deemed to contravene the basic principles of justice.

13. In Zambia, a widow had custody of her children. In exceptional circumstances, when she was not in a position to care for them owing, for example, to ill health or economic incapacity, the extended family took charge of the children. In fact, the custody issue arose only in urban settings, on the death of one of two working parents. In rural settings, the extended family live within the confines of a single village, and in the event of the death of a husband, his brothers would pool their resources to provide for the widow's household. If the children were taken away from her, she could petition the High Court for their return.

14. The subsequent report would fully address the issues raised by article 3 of the Convention, including a detailed discussion of the budget and of the structure of the national machinery. It would also furnish a detailed description of the situation of women in Zambia, including, in particular, traditions and customs that had an impact on their lives. It would be useful, if the Committee could specify which customary laws were of particular interest and concern.

15. With respect to article 4, the subsequent report would provide information on temporary special measures and on the coordination of related activities, as well as on the results of the Fourth National Development Plan in regard to women and development.

16. Under the Zambian educational system, boys and girls had the same teaching staff and curricula, and sat the same examinations. Over 90 per cent of Zambian schools were coeducational. A much larger percentage of boys attended secondary school; however, many girls dropped out of school by grade 7. Under government policy, the secondary school entrance examination set a lower qualifying mark for girls, so as to enable more girls to have access to both secondary and technical school education. Though that measure was generally viewed as positive discrimination, there were those who felt that women should compete with men on an equal footing.

17. Where article 5 was concerned, divorce could be obtained by women in Zambia, where there were two types of marriages. Those under the Marriage Act had international status and petitions for divorce could be processed either in the High Court of Zambia or abroad. Marriages under customary laws, especially in the rural areas, which required payment of a token bride price, could be dissolved only in local courts. Payment of dowries was accepted. Traditionally, widows had always been well protected, although the advent of the money economy had led to an upsurge of ill treatment of widows, especially in the urban areas, by female relatives who claimed the property of the deceased husband.

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18. With respect to article 6, there was no trafficking of women in Zambia. While prostitution existed in the country, the law required that any woman arrested as a prostitute should be charged and prosecuted in a court of law. Any person accused of a misdemeanour, including prostitution, could also sign the admission of guilt form.

19. Regarding the high illiteracy rates among women, and the questions asked in connection with article 10, she said that Zambia had excellent community-based functional literacy programmes in both urban and rural areas which had been very effective in improving women's literacy. The reasons for the high drop-out rate for girls were mainly economic. Large family sizes and the weight of tradition forced parents to opt for sending boys rather than girls to school. However, there were ongoing studies on the issue.

20. Regarding article 11, while the Government was committed to providing jobs for women, there had been a contraction of jobs as a result of the structural adjustment programme which was expected to lead to an expansion of the job market in the long term. No policy existed to guide women in the selection of their professions, although in certain professions it could be said that there was an element of orientation.

21. Concerning reproductive rights (art. 12), it was very difficult for a woman to have control over such rights as traditionally the purpose of marriage was to have children. However, family planning was encouraged in order to decrease the country's current high birth rate. In that regard, the use of contraceptives was very widespread. Abortion was allowed only on medical grounds following the recommendation of three medical practitioners.

22. A high fertility rate of 7.2 coupled with a declining mortality rate estimated in 1990 at 17.5 per thousand accounted for Zambia's high population growth rate of 3.2 per cent per annum. The population structure had resulted in a high dependency ratio triggering a greater demand for basic social services. There was considerable internal migration, especially from rural to urban areas, resulting in a steady rise in urbanization which in turn led to considerable strain on urban infrastructure, social services and on the economy as a whole.

23. While the imbalance in the population could not be explained by out-migration of men, which was not an important factor in Zambia, it could be attributed partly to natural causes, that is, higher female birth rates and higher male death rates. While she was not in a position to provide data on mortality rates for women, the general death rate was about 18 out of every hundred people.

24. Under the Employment Act, employed women were entitled to three months of paid maternity leave after two years of service and at intervals of two years. That was considered a good policy which encouraged family planning.

25. The mortal diseases affecting women were malaria, pregnancy disorders, delivery complications, genital urinary system disease, accidents and injuries, respiratory diseases and AIDS-related complications in that order of importance.

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26. The responses relating to questions raised under articles 14 to 16 on the situation of rural women and a detailed analysis of the operations of the Women in Development Department would be deferred to the next report.

27. In conclusion, she noted that women in Zambia had not benefited as much as men had from the services and opportunities in the country. Their workload in the home was disproportionately larger than that of men because of gender roles assigned by an oppressive economic, social and cultural heritage. Women lagged behind men in all fields. The Zambian Government was committed to the promotion of human rights without regard to discrimination on the basis of gender, and recognized the right to work. However, the structural adjustment policies had had a disproportionately negative impact on women's advancement. Pre-existing inequalities meant that women and others with less access to resources like education, employment, credit and technological know-how suffered more. The restructuring process could take up to five years but, in the new liberal environment, measures were being taken to enable women to attain a quality of life that would in the long run, be equal to that of men.

28. Ms. ABAKA said that in her country, Ghana, all customary marriages must be registered and the partners had the same legal rights enjoyed by partners under statutory marriage. Ghana was willing to share with Zambia its experience concerning the regularization of that issue.

29. Ms. OUEDRAOGO said that she did not agree with the representative of Zambia that customary laws could not be changed. While all customs in Zambia might perhaps be positive, there were customs in her country, Burkina Faso, which adversely affected the health, well being and development of women, such as female circumcision and forced marriage. While customs that reflected positive values should be retained, Africa, which was going through a period of transition, should undertake an objective analysis of its customs and traditions in order to reject those that were negative.

30. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING said that in its subsequent report, the Government of Zambia should examine pre-colonial traditions and customs in relation to the various articles of the Convention.

31. The CHAIRPERSON said that her country, Nigeria, had undertaken a codification of customary laws and had instituted a means of registering customary marriages so as to stipulate the corresponding rights and obligations. Zambia might wish to draw inspiration from them. There was a need to sensitize Zambian women to the fact that violence did not mean love.

32. Ms. CHIGAGA (Zambia) welcomed the comments made, and said that the various observations and concerns would be reflected in her country's next report.

33. Ms. Chigaga (Zambia) withdrew.

Combined initial and second periodic report of Guatemala (continued)
(CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2)

34. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mrs. Archila and Ms. Recinos-Hernandez de Maldonado (Guatemala) took places at the Committee table.

35. Mrs. ARCHILA (Guatemala) said that it was very important to take into account the socio-economic and political situation of a country in determining what could be done in respect of laws and their application. That consideration applied to some of the questions that had been asked about laws which were regarded as discriminatory.

36. Clarification had been requested regarding the action of unconstitutionality that had been brought before the Constitutional Court in respect of some articles of the Civil Code. In the action, the complainant had alleged that article 81 of the Civil Code was unconstitutional because it established a different marriageable age for boys and girls, thereby violating the principle of equality enshrined in article 4 of the Constitution. The Court had concluded that that provision was not discriminatory because it was in the interests of the family and of society. The complainant's allegation that article 89, paragraph 3, of the Civil Code concerning waiting periods for women before remarriage was unconstitutional had also been rejected by the Court.

37. Regarding the complaint that article 109 of the Civil Code, whereby the husband was the legal representative of the spouses, was unconstitutional, the Court had ruled that it was not, but was in conformity with article 47 of the Constitution regarding protection of the family. The complainant had also alleged that article 115 of the Civil Code, which provided that the woman would act as the legal representative of the spouses whenever the husband ceased to do so for any reason, was unconstitutional because it violated the right of women to equality; the Court had rejected that allegation on the same grounds.

38. The Court had rejected the complainant's allegation that article 131 of the Civil Code, which provided that the husband was the administrator of the marital assets, was unconstitutional, and had noted that the wife's rights, in that respect, were also protected by articles 117, 125 and 132 of the Civil Code. The complainant's allegation that article 133 of the Civil Code providing for the transfer of administration of the marital assets to the wife in the circumstances specified in article 115, was unconstitutional had been rejected on the same grounds.

39. The complainant had alleged that article 110 of the Civil Code, laying down the duties of the husband and wife to each other and their children, was unconstitutional because it violated the principle of equality in article 4 of the Constitution; the Court had found that article 110 was not unconstitutional, that the interests of children must be safeguarded, in accordance with articles 78 and 79 of the Civil Code, and that article 110 offered protection to the wife and children.

40. The complainant had alleged that article 113 of the Civil Code was discriminatory because it provided that the wife could engage in outside occupations only if they did not interfere with her maternal and housekeeping

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duties; the Court had found that it was not unconstitutional because it accorded with the rights of children under article 78 of the Civil Code, article 47 of the Constitution on protection of the family and article 52 of the Constitution on the protection of motherhood, and that the elimination of the obligation to care for children would be contrary to the rights of the child and adolescent guaranteed in article 51 of the Constitution. The complainant's argument that article 114 of the Civil Code, whereby the husband could object to the woman engaging in activities outside the home, was also unconstitutional had been rejected on the same grounds.

41. The complainant's argument that article 255 of the Civil Code, providing for representation of minor or disabled children by the husband, was unconstitutional because it violated the right of equality had been rejected on the grounds that it accorded with the requirement of protection of the family in article 47 of the Constitution and with the concepts of responsible paternity.

42. The complainant had alleged that article 257 of the Civil Code providing that the property of underage parents had to be administered by the parent or guardian of the father was unconstitutional because it violated the principle of equality; the Court had rejected that complaint.

43. The complainant's allegation that article 317, paragraph 4, of the Civil Code, whereby women could be exempted from guardianship, was unconstitutional because it violated articles 40 and 47 of the Constitution had been rejected on the grounds that that article did not impose an obligation on women, and therefore was not discriminatory.

44. With regard to articles 81, 109, 110, 114 and 131 of the Civil Code, she noted that in practice her Government considered that because of their living conditions and their responsibilities, most Guatemalan girls were more mature than their chronological age by the age of 14. As to conjugal representation, although by law the husband represented the marriage, in practice there was a high degree of equality. No appeal had been made to the courts in that respect.

45. With regard to the protection and assistance that husbands were required to provide to their wives, the object of the law was to enable women to attend to the education and development of their children. In practice it had been found that lack of attention from either parent, and above all from the mother, caused permanent damage to the physical and emotional development of children, so that in order to ensure the welfare of children over the first few years, the mother needed to remain at home for a certain period, although she could carry out activities that were compatible with her primary function. That approach fully accorded with article 5 (b) of the Convention. Although the husband was the administrator of the conjugal property, the wife was protected in respect of the property she owned in the home. In practice, none of those articles of the Civil Code caused problems, but her Government did feel that there was a need to improve education for women so that they could educate their sons about the equality of the sexes. The National Office for Women's Affairs had submitted proposals for reforms to the Civil Code in that respect.

46. With regard to articles 232 and 235 of the Civil Code, it should be noted that the Penal Code also provided that the death penalty did not apply to women.

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47. Turning to the questions about family planning, she said that family planning had had disastrous consequences for the population and in practice women had suffered great discrimination, since contraceptive methods had been directed to them. Indigenous women were not informed about contraceptives and the associated health risks, and in many cases had been given intrauterine devices without their consent; furthermore, the use of contraceptives had been imposed in exchange for food donated by assistance bodies. It was strongly believed that the availability of contraceptives had corrupted society and encouraged extramarital affairs, leading to unwanted pregnancies and increasing the number of single mothers, and that anti-birth campaigns had led to immorality among young people, increasing the breakdown of society and the deterioration of the family as an institution.

48. With regard to article 1 of the Convention, it should be borne in mind that the Guatemalan people belonged to varied ethnic groups and had deep respect for indigenous cultural values. Population control efforts should therefore be directed towards educational programmes which would improve the standard of living and bring about balanced population growth. As to the view that the provisions of the Penal Code protecting the right to life should be repealed, such a step would in no way be an advance, but would constitute regression. The Constitution of Guatemala guaranteed the right to life and the attempt to modify that provision, as it related to abortion, had been strongly opposed by all sectors of society.

49. With regard to article 3, her Government was endeavouring to consolidate peace, and that would help women achieve balanced development, free from violence. It was not clear why the impression had been gained that the role of women in Guatemala was considered inferior to that of men, since in reality that was not the case. Perhaps those who had that impression regarded women's roles as wives and mothers as undesirable. Widows' organizations in Guatemala were gaining considerable attention, although in some cases they were being manipulated by external forces.

50. With regard to article 4, the law protected working mothers, although in practice employers were reluctant to hire mothers.

51. In connection with article 5, work was being carried out in the private sector on educational programmes aimed at enabling men to recognize the contribution of women to society and involving men actively in the education of children. The Office for the Defence of Women's Rights was carrying out educational campaigns to eradicate violence against women. The results of these efforts would be described in the third report.

52. On the question of prostitution, her Government felt that all evils derived from the lack of basic education and it was trying to make work available, provide training to women, and inculcate among the people the values of respect for human dignity. With respect to the participation of women in political life, a number of women were participating actively at both the national and international levels.

53. The measures being taken to combat the traditional cultural stereotypes of the respective roles of men and women included the promotion, through

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educational programmes, of the concept of the complementarity and equality of the sexes so that men and women alike could contribute to the development of society with the same freedoms and responsibilities. Guatemala's third periodic report would contain information on the specific programmes that had been implemented towards that end.

54. With regard to the suggestion that co-educational schools should be encouraged, the adverse reaction of the population reflected the right and duty of parents to determine what type of education their children should receive. Guatemalans viewed same-sex schools as offering better protection for girls rather than discriminating against them. She found it strange that the Committee should recommend further cost-cutting in the area of education rather than providing increased assistance, since the development of a society depended on the education of its population.

55. On the subject of discrimination against women in the field of employment, she reported that women were free to organize themselves in Guatemala but that, given the prevailing cultural norms and the general satisfaction of the population with the structure of society, there were relatively few women's groups.

56. On the question of the access of women to health care and family-planning services, she said that family-planning agencies conducted extensive, country-wide information campaigns and had established clinics which were accessible to the population of all the country's departments. While indigenous communities had equal access to such services, there was still resistance on their part to family-planning methods which were not in keeping with their traditions and customs.

57. The Government of Guatemala firmly rejected the suggestion that educational patterns regarding the role of women in the family should be changed, since the experience of those countries which had effected such changes was not at all encouraging. Indeed, the excesses associated with the promotion of equality between the sexes had adversely affected other societies. In Guatemala, there was equal treatment for men and women in the field of employment, occupational training and remuneration. Furthermore, Guatemalan workers enjoyed certain benefits which even workers in the developed countries did not have.

58. The Government of Guatemala would carefully consider all the opinions and recommendations of the Committee in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention more fully.

59. Ms. RECINOS-HERNANDEZ DE MALDONADO said that, if the Committee so wished, she could provide statistics on specific programmes which had been implemented in Guatemala for the benefit of women.

60. The CHAIRPERSON said that the information should be communicated to the Committee in writing.

61. Ms. BUSTELO said that the Convention whose implementation was being monitored by the Committee was a human rights instrument. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights had declared that human rights were indivisible and interdependent. It had further declared that, notwithstanding national and regional characteristics or the particular cultural traditions of a society, States were obliged to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of their populations. While economic development contributed to the enjoyment of human rights, lack of development was no excuse for a State's failure to protect internationally recognized human rights. The Vienna Conference had also declared that the rights of women and girls were an indivisible part of human rights and that the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on sex should be one of the priority objectives of States and the international community.

62. The Government of Guatemala had ratified the Convention without reservations. Article 16 of that Convention provided that States parties should take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular should ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; the same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise those rights. It was now incumbent on the Government of Guatemala to bring its national legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention. It was incomprehensible to her that the rulings of the Constitutional Court of Guatemala should be so utterly at variance with the Convention. As mankind approached the end of the twentieth century, the international community could not accept principles and theories on the respective roles of men and women based on their different capacities. The Government of Guatemala must review its existing legislation, particularly the provisions concerning equality in marriage. Failure to do so would represent a serious setback for the economic, cultural and social development not only of women in Guatemala but of the country as a whole.

63. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE noted that the Government's past inability to send a representative to the Committee in New York was an indication of its lack of interest in women's affairs. Although the many questions posed by the Committee on the presentation of the combined initial and second periodic reports had finally forced the Government to send a representative, the statement she had read out merely raised further questions and increased the concern of members of the Committee. As a Latin American herself, she was painfully aware of the situation of women in Guatemala. Indeed, a women's interparliamentary group had recently held a meeting in that country. Regrettably, the work accomplished at that meeting had not been reflected in the Government's report. That failure indicated the tremendous gap which existed between the work of women's groups in Guatemala and the positions adopted by the Government in international forums.

64. The Civil Code of Guatemala was Napoleonic and discriminatory in its content. Moreover, the Government had failed to acknowledge the efforts being made by women throughout the world to achieve equality with men. The claim that women's rights ran counter to family values, the prohibition against work by women and the views expressed that family planning destroyed family values and

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(Ms. Garcia-Prince)

corrupted young people highlighted the gulf between government policies and international realities. The contradictions inherent in the report must be urgently corrected. The Government of Guatemala must carefully review the recommendations of the Committee, and should be requested to report to it within two years on the specific action which it had taken to amend its misogynist and discriminatory legislation and to bring it into line with the Convention.

65. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING said that the Civil Code of Guatemala was clearly incompatible with the Convention, and failed to protect the human rights of women as provided for in the Convention and other human rights instruments. The national legislation was based on outdated stereotypes of the sexist roles of men and women. It was well known, however, that legal norms were not eternal but rather corresponded to contemporary social realities. The human rights protected in the Convention were an example of those norms. The Government of Guatemala must therefore review its national legislation in order to bring it into line with the provisions of the Convention.

66. Ms. ILIC said that the incompatibility between the provisions of the Convention and the national legislation of Guatemala was due to a lack of understanding on the part of the Guatemalan authorities and could therefore be corrected. The Government should request the assistance of the United Nations in amending its laws to bring them into line with the Convention.

67. Ms. AOUIJ said that when a State ratified the Convention it committed itself before the international community to respect its provisions and to bring its national legislation into line with those provisions. The Committee's concern was due to the absence of any indication whatsoever that the Government of Guatemala was taking any steps in that direction. Indeed, the report contained no information on amendments to the legislation pertaining to the status of women, for example, nor did it indicate that the political will existed to change the current order of things.

68. Ms. RECINOS-HERNANDEZ DE MALDONADO (Guatemala) said that she had taken careful note of the observations made. Her Government would request the assistance of the United Nations in preparing its third periodic report. Her delegation had read out the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Guatemala, since the ruling had been requested by the Committee. She wished to assure the Committee that reforms were being undertaken in Guatemala. Both the Penal Code and the Civil Code were being amended. Efforts were being made, for example, to ensure that adultery by women and men was punished equally. Her colleague from Guatemala was actively involved in NGOs which defended the rights of women in Guatemala, and particularly the rights of indigenous women. Her delegation had sought to convey to the Committee the mindset of women in Guatemala and to describe the general social context in which the reforms would be undertaken. It was not possible to impose measures on women. Certain agencies, for example, had advocated abortion where parents lacked the means to provide for additional children. It had been proven, however, that family planning had been most successful where it had been based on natural methods more in keeping with the outlook of Guatemalan women. Nevertheless, her Government would heed the advice given by the members of the Committee.

69. The CHAIRPERSON said that the economic and structural problems facing Guatemala had had a disproportionate effect on women, particularly rural women. The Government of Guatemala had ratified the Convention without reservations, however, and the Committee would therefore like to see increased efforts by the Government to live up to its responsibilities under the Convention. The elimination of discrimination was no easy task and she hoped that the following report of Guatemala would show that some progress had been achieved.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.