



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
16 February 2023

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-fourth session

Summary record of the 1946th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 9 February 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
(continued)

Tenth periodic report of Norway (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Tenth periodic report of Norway (continued) (CEDAW/C/NOR/10;
CEDAW/C/NOR/QPR/10; CEDAW/C/NOR/QPR/10/Corr.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Norway joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway), responding to questions raised at the previous meeting, said that the statistics on rape were disconcerting. The Government had acknowledged the need for an overall review of the Penal Code's provisions on sexual offences and had recognized the need for a better definition of rape, based on the absence of consent. Under the law, prostitution was not criminalized but its purchase was, which placed the burden of criminal liability on the purchaser.
3. **A representative of Norway** said that the Government recognized the need to develop new measures to prevent rape, ensure legal certainty for rape victims, carry out effective criminal prosecution and strengthen safeguards for victims. The Office of the Attorney General had since 2016 investigated the quality of criminal proceedings in rape cases and had noted an improvement, but further progress could be made, in particular with the use of investigation plans and better police investigation case management. The police and the Attorney General's Office had noted that the clearance rate for rape cases had declined in recent years and were endeavouring to find out why, in order to reverse the trend.
4. The Government wanted to put forward provisions that would define sexual intercourse in the absence of consent as rape. However, such a redefinition would not resolve problems related to evidence, and the evidentiary requirements of criminal courts must by their very nature be strict. In rape cases, there were often no witnesses to testify as to whether an act was voluntary. The crime often occurred in situations where the persons involved might be under the influence of drugs, which debilitated their ability to recall the precise circumstances of the act. The existence of reasonable doubt was sufficient to make it mandatory to acquit a defendant, consistent with a fundamental principle in the Norwegian rule of law. A government commission established to examine ways of bolstering action against rape was due to report in February 2023.
5. **A representative of Norway** said that the Government agreed that there was a need for reliable statistics on the number of trafficking victims. A coordination unit compiled an annual report on trafficking and collected all available data from service providers and authorities, thus providing an overview of the situation. Efforts had been made to estimate the number of victims using multiple systems estimation methodology. While research in that field, conducted inter alia with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, had produced an interesting report, it had proven difficult to draw up specific estimates of the number of victims, owing to the limitations related to service providers' policies and the right to privacy.
6. The prosecution authority was aware of the need to strengthen certain penalties and had recently prepared an argument for substantially raising the penalties for human trafficking with the aim of sexual exploitation, but the argument had not been heard in court owing to a procedural issue. Police, prosecutors and service providers all underwent training and were sensitized to the need to address the problem. While the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons noted that there was a high number of suspected cases involving adult women in Norway, recent trends indicated that the problem had become particularly acute for trafficking of forced labourers in the agricultural and construction sectors. In the autumn of 2022, the Government had accordingly launched an action plan against poor working conditions and work-related crime with a view to protecting migrant workers, including against trafficking. Because much of the trafficking for sexual exploitation had taken place in the form of escort services on the Internet, the police had stepped up intelligence gathering and monitoring of such sites. A seminar was currently being held in Oslo, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to develop measures to protect Ukrainian refugees against trafficking and exploitation.

7. The lawyers who defended trafficking victims in legal cases, while not specialized in that field, were highly experienced and qualified and were recommended by service providers; trafficking victims received legal aid at no charge. The Government was continuing to improve its assistance services for victims of trafficking and to establish a national referral mechanism, in line with the recommendations made by the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, whose latest report on the situation in Norway had been issued in June 2022. The establishment of such a mechanism had proven to be difficult. Some of the stakeholders had provided valuable input to improve its implementation, and the authorities would determine which of the other recommendations in the Group of Experts' report would be followed up.

8. **A representative of Norway** said that when trafficking victims applied for asylum, the authorities carefully considered whether their return to the country of origin imposed a risk of re-trafficking. Norway applied a gender-sensitive approach to the handling of asylum cases. In 2020, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security had issued new guidelines on the handling of trafficking cases under the procedure established by the Dublin III Regulation. The procedure must not be waived in cases where the applicant had testified in criminal proceedings in a trafficking case or where the applicant held a residence permit. The Government was able to decide not to waive the Dublin procedure in cases of human trafficking if there were special reasons to do so. In other cases of human trafficking, the Dublin procedure could be waived. In any event, the Norwegian immigration authorities were responsible for meeting the obligation to combat trafficking.

9. **A representative of Norway** said that the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and other government agencies provided regular grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with women involved in prostitution, in particular for those NGOs providing the most vital services in cities. Women involved in prostitution who had Norwegian citizenship readily had access to assistance through the country's social and welfare systems, which helped them deal with a variety of personal challenges, for example related to drug and alcohol abuse, financial, educational and labour problems, and physical and mental health issues, that they often considered more problematic than their involvement in prostitution. Because of the wide variety of situations, there was no standard, national approach to assistance in finding an exit from prostitution. The authorities and several NGOs did, however, address the needs of certain specific groups. Non-citizens involved in prostitution had relatively fewer rights, which complicated the provision of assistance. The Ministry of Health was considering an extension of the rights of foreigners to receive health care, and the rights of women victims of trafficking would also be considered in that context. The effects of the criminalization of the purchase of sex on the health of sex workers were unclear and the subject of much debate.

10. **A representative of Norway** said that the protection of child victims of female genital mutilation or family violence was the responsibility of the child protection services, which provided guidance to the family, or, when necessary, were able to withdraw a child from a family for placement, for example in a host family.

11. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she would like to know how the State party's judges, who were mainly generalists, were made aware of the issues specific to human trafficking.

12. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that, despite the excellent work done in recent years to eradicate gender stereotypes, there remained a problem of gender imbalance in a number of professions where one sex traditionally predominated. She would like to know what efforts the State party was making to ensure that more female students would specialize in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to encourage male students to show greater interest in female-dominated professions. The Committee would like to know what tools had been made available to Norwegian educators to raise their awareness of bullying so that they could rely more heavily on prevention. In respect of the standards for the education system's treatment of migrants that had been adopted in 2020, she would like to know whether they included specific guidance to support female migrants, in particular those who had been disadvantaged in terms of education in their country of origin.

13. She asked whether the Government was addressing the fact that women tended to work in the public sector and to hold positions with relatively low remuneration. She wondered what was being done to integrate women from minority groups, migrants, women with disabilities and women released from prison in the labour force. A larger proportion of women than men held part-time employment, in part because women were subjected to much greater social pressure and expectations. While the gender pay gap was relatively small, it was apparently persistent, and there was a significant gender difference in pension payments. Did the authorities plan to take steps to address such disparities? The Committee would also appreciate information on the steps taken by the Government to address sexual harassment in the armed forces.

14. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that gender stereotyping began long before higher education and measures were therefore required at all levels of society to combat such stereotypes. The gender-segregated labour market and the higher number of women in part-time work were important reasons for the gender wage gap and inequality in the workplace. The Government was accordingly prioritizing action to enhance women's economic independence by strengthening the right to full-time employment and funding pilot projects. A white paper on professional education, incorporating a gender perspective, would be presented in early 2024.

15. **A representative of Norway** said that, while Norwegian judges received no specific training on trafficking, courses were available to enhance judges' skills in dealing with trafficking cases. Court of Appeal judges working on such cases had been visited by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in September 2022, who had commended their understanding of the issue.

16. **A representative of Norway**, speaking via video link, said that gender stereotyping began in kindergarten and it was therefore the duty of such establishments to base their activities on promoting equality and equity for all. A new national curriculum for primary and secondary education had been implemented in 2020, with an enhanced focus on gender, equality and diversity.

17. Tackling gender stereotypical educational and occupational choices was high on the agenda of the Government and its social partners, with the National Council for Vocational Education and Training providing overarching advice. High-quality career guidance, tailored to a person's skill set and ambitions rather than his or her gender, would therefore be made available to all students.

18. In Norway, many universities and colleges offered additional points to the underrepresented gender in connection with admission to higher education. The lists of selected courses were updated annually, and in 2023 women would receive points to access technology, engineering and maritime studies. However, gender points alone were insufficient to promote equality and prevent discrimination; it was imperative for higher education institutions to map and analyse their gender imbalance and implement measures to address it. In response to a recent proposal by a public committee to replace gender points with special gender quotas, the Ministry of Education and Research had ruled that such quotas should only be implemented where a specific assessment had taken place.

19. In order to ensure that all immigrants possessed the necessary Norwegian language skills and had completed secondary education, the Government had taken steps to increase the number of students completing upper secondary education. Those measures included a guarantee that persons entering upper secondary education would have the right to continue their studies until they received a vocational or higher education entrance qualification, and the improved adaptation of adult education to the needs and goals of mature students.

20. **A representative of Norway** said that the new Integration Act offered immigrants with a refugee background an introduction programme tailored to the background and goals of each participant, many of whom were women with little to no education. Participants were required to map their skills and receive career guidance before starting and should complete as much of their education or training as possible while under the programme, which was limited in duration. Any approved leave would be added to the duration of both the introduction programme and the programme on Norwegian language and social studies, which was particularly helpful for women on parental leave or with parental responsibilities.

The Integration Act stipulated that municipalities were responsible for preventing interruptions to education and training. Financial support from the Labour and Welfare Administration and refugee grants were available in such cases.

21. The gender wage gap had been gradually narrowing: women's wages in 2022 were, on average, 88 per cent of those of men, representing an increase of over 2 per cent since 2015. When adjustments were made for education, experience, industry and profession, the difference in wages was still around 8 per cent; more research was required into the reasons for that disparity. Nonetheless, the gap in Norway was relatively small compared to that in other countries, owing to the high degree of wage-setting by the social partners, who were committed to enhancing wage equality. The Government also played an important role in reducing the wage gap by strengthening reporting obligations under the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion had administrative responsibility for a tripartite committee in which gender wage differences were regularly discussed. Notwithstanding such efforts, it was often difficult, in a specialized and skills-intensive labour market, to define "equal work" and therefore to develop policy measures promoting the notion of equal pay for equal work.

22. Regarding pensions, while the proportion of women receiving the minimum pension had fallen from 37 per cent in 2012 to 24 per cent in 2021, it remained higher than the corresponding figure for men. The rates were highest among women aged 85 years and above, reflecting the greater prevalence of traditional gender roles in the past. It was expected that the disparities would reduce once younger women, who had higher labour participation rates, reached retirement age. Women were expected to be the main beneficiaries of a recommendation by the committee on pension reform for more generous indexation of the minimum pension.

23. **A representative of Norway**, speaking via video link, said that the incidence of bullying was reported in an annual survey of pupils. Over 100 million kroner had been earmarked in the 2020 State budget for the prevention of bullying in schools and kindergartens. Under the Education Act, schools were authorized to move pupils to another school if their behaviour affected the safety and learning of others. To enhance the ability of schools and kindergartens to tackle bullying, including online, the Government offered packages tailored to the circumstances and challenges of each municipality, which included the provision of external mentors for establishments with significant bullying-related challenges and the creation of networks for establishments in need of support to develop their competence in fostering positive learning environments and preventing bullying.

24. **A representative of Norway** said that the statutory duty to prevent sexual harassment was enshrined in section 13 of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, breaches of which could be brought before the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal and the ordinary courts. The Government was due to submit a white paper on sexual harassment to parliament in 2024, which would map the prevalence of sexual harassment and propose preventive measures in the fields of work, education, culture and recreation.

25. Regarding sexual harassment in the Norwegian defence sector, the first survey of bullying and harassment in the armed forces, conducted in 2018, had revealed that 55 per cent of female respondents had experienced some form of sexual harassment in the previous year. Guidelines on whistle-blowing in the sector had therefore been revised in 2020 and the Ministry of Defence had published its own guidelines and an online course on improving the handling of sexual harassment complaints. A small decrease in sexual harassment had been reported in the second survey in 2020, while the results of the third would be made public in 2023.

26. The first survey covering the rest of the defence sector, including the Ministry of Defence, had been conducted in 2022, revealing that 21 per cent of female respondents had been a victim of sexual harassment. Measures were being adopted to ensure a safer working environment for all, such as the revision of the human resources management system for the armed forces, including those involved in peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, and enhanced training of personnel.

27. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that action by employers to promote and report on gender equality was key for improving the situation in the workplace and more generally.

Accordingly, from 2020, public and private employers with over 50 staff had been obliged to actively promote gender equality in the workplace and report on differences in pay and the use of involuntary part-time work.

28. **Ms. Hacker**, noting that Sami women were more likely to experience mental health problems than other Norwegian women, said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to improve the mental health of Sami women. She would be grateful for information on how the Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination on the Grounds of Ethnicity or Religion 2020–2023 had increased the health literacy of the population, particularly in Sami communities. The Committee would welcome data, broken down by the services received, on the number of women Sami patients who had been treated at the Sami Clinic in Karasjok since its opening in January 2020. The delegation might also provide information on the development of specialist health services for the Sami population.

29. She wondered how many abortions were requested every year, how many were granted, what circumstances caused women to seek an abortion, whether abortion was free of charge and whether contraception measures were available without charge. Given that many women found the experience of dealing with abortion boards to be stressful, she asked whether the State party would consider abolishing the use of such boards for women between the twelfth and eighteenth weeks of pregnancy and replacing them with a voluntary guidance and support scheme. It would be interesting to know what criteria the boards used in deciding whether or not to accept a request for an abortion.

30. The Committee would be grateful to learn whether women missed out on social benefits because diseases and conditions that particularly affected women were underdiagnosed or went unrecognized. The delegation might explain what was being done to raise awareness of gender-sensitive medicine and social benefits. It might also indicate whether there was any explanation for the particularly high incidence of endometriosis among Norwegian women and whether appropriate assistance was provided to women with that condition.

31. In view of the fact that significant proportions of transgender persons had either considered suicide or attempted to take their own lives, she wondered what steps were being taken to provide appropriate mental health services to transgender women. The Committee wished to know what forms of care were made available to older women who lived alone or required a level of care that family members were not qualified to provide. It would also be interested to hear how the State party planned to address the deficit in care services for older persons, which was expected to increase over the coming years.

32. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that improving women's mental health was a priority for the Government. A specially established committee would shortly be issuing a report on women's health, on the basis of which a strategy would be drawn up. That committee was responsible for dealing with many of the issues raised during the constructive dialogue, including the issue of unrecognized or insufficiently treated women's diseases. A government committee was reviewing the law on abortion and the use of abortion boards and was formulating proposals on how best to provide guidance to women seeking abortions. The Government was planning to launch a new action plan in the near future setting out measures to support and protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

33. **A representative of Norway** said that the Government recognized that Sami women were more likely to have mental health problems than other women in Norway. The Government had established the Sami National Centre for Mental Health which, among other functions, treated young people and adults for substance abuse. Steps were being taken to raise health-care providers' awareness of the specific health issues experienced by the Sami people. A public health survey covering the northernmost counties – Nordland, and Troms and Finnmark – had found that the majority of the participants were in good or very good health.

34. A total of 10,400 requests for abortions had been granted in 2021. Efforts were being made to improve the health care provided to older women, especially those who lived at home and had no relatives to help them. The municipalities were responsible for providing home-based or residential care to older women.

35. **A representative of Norway** said that, in 2021, the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs and the Directorate of Health had commissioned a study to identify measures that could be implemented across the health-care system to ensure access to equitable health-care services for transgender persons. The study would be completed later in 2023.

36. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she would like to know what measures were being taken to improve public officials' knowledge of Sami culture and language and to reduce the soaring rates of domestic violence within Sami communities. The delegation might describe any steps being taken to tackle cybercrime and online violence against Sami women, especially those with disabilities. It might also explain how the State party used artificial intelligence and other new technologies to prevent violence and rehabilitate victims of violence. She would be grateful to hear about any measures being taken to promote Sami women's access to leadership positions.

37. The State party's prisons had been primarily designed for male prisoners and were often unable to provide gender-sensitive health-care services. In June 2020, a court had found that the Norwegian Correctional Service Directorate had discriminated against female inmates in a manner that violated the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. In the light of that situation, she wished to know whether conditions for women prisoners had subsequently improved and whether the recommendations set out in the white paper on women's prison conditions issued by the Storting (parliament) had been implemented. The Committee was interested to learn how the State party tackled violence in prisons, including sexual violence against women prisoners; how it addressed the high rates of suicide and self-harm among women prisoners; how it ensured that women incarcerated far from their hometowns could receive visits from family members; and how it planned to improve legal assistance for women. The State party might consider implementing the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) throughout all stages of the criminal justice process.

38. The Committee wished to know whether the Government would consider moving from a medical model of disability to a human rights model, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and whether it would bring its laws and policies on disability into line with that Convention. She was interested to know whether the State party mainstreamed intersectionality in all of its laws, policies and programmes and whether it would adopt a policy on health care for undocumented migrants.

39. Given that, in 2018, the Government had established that at least 5 per cent of new civil service recruits must be persons with a disability or a gap in their curriculum vitae, she asked whether that target had been programmed into recruitment platforms managed by artificial intelligence and whether it would be applied to the private sector, including technology companies.

40. **Ms. Haidar**, noting that women's and girls' rights to health and life were particularly at risk from the effects of climate change, said that she wished to know whether the State party's climate change policy would be amended to incorporate the gender perspective, and whether the State party would enact laws restricting the expansion of the oil and gas industries, the exportation of oil and gas, and the activities of private and State-owned fossil fuel companies. She wondered how the State party guaranteed that energy companies complied with international laws on women's human rights and environmental standards, what measures were being taken to reduce the State party's greenhouse gas emissions by 55 per cent by 2030, and whether the State party intended to align its emission reduction targets with those set out in the Paris Agreement on climate change.

41. She was curious to know how the State party would ensure that women participated meaningfully in the development of climate change adaptation and energy policies; what measures would be taken to ensure that the authorization of oil and gas extraction did not violate the rights of rural women, particularly Sami women; and how the State party would strike a balance between the development of renewable energy and the preservation of Sami homelands. Lastly, she asked whether the Government supported the decision, taken at the most recent Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change, to establish a loss and damage fund by which financial assistance would be provided to countries most affected by climate change.

42. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that, as suggested by the Chair, her delegation would provide written answers to the Committee's questions on climate change.

43. **A representative of Norway** said that the Government's policies towards the Sami were governed by section 108 of the Constitution and by the relevant international treaties that Norway had ratified. The Sami parliament had its own policies on gender issues, including the prevention of intimate partner violence. The Sami had the right to use their language when dealing with the public authorities within a legally defined geographic area. A truth and reconciliation commission would look into the effects of the assimilation policy to which the Sami had formerly been subject and would publish a report on its findings within a few months.

44. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis**, calling on the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities without further delay, said that she would be grateful to receive data on the representation of migrant women and women with disabilities in high decision-making positions in politics and the private sector.

45. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she would welcome an update on the status of the planned evaluation of domestic legislative provisions concerning the value of non-financial and indirect spousal contributions. In the light of reports that high-conflict families, including those affected by domestic violence, were frequently offered inappropriate or inadequate services by mediators owing to a lack of systematic training on relevant issues, it would be interesting to receive data on the number of child custody and visitation decisions that had explicitly taken into account reports of domestic violence.

46. She wished to know what measures the State party had taken to raise awareness among public services staff of the residence permit options available to foreign nationals under section 53 of the Immigration Act and whether it had considered reducing the threshold requirements laid down in the provision, bearing in mind the difficulties often faced by foreign women in proving domestic violence.

47. Research indicated that women with disabilities suffered abuse more frequently than other women and that perpetrators of sexual assault received milder punishments when their victims were women with disabilities. In cases involving women victims with cognitive and psychosocial disabilities, courts in the State party had opted to apply a special provision of the Criminal Code that granted victims additional protection against sexual exploitation but had lower sentencing parameters. It was not clear whether recent amendments to the Code to ensure the correct application of the law had resulted in changes in actual practice. A description of the steps taken by the State party to remedy the situation would be appreciated.

48. **A representative of Norway** said that, in June 2020, the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal had found that women inmates in Tromsø prison had been discriminated against. The situation had since been rectified, it having been decided that women offenders in northern Norway should serve their sentences in the women's wing at Trondheim prison. The country's geography, coupled with the relatively low number of women prisoners and the fact that approximately 90 per cent of them had some form of mental health issue and required access to appropriate services, made it challenging to adhere to rule 4 of the Bangkok Rules. To alleviate the situation, the Norwegian Correctional Service Directorate was prioritizing the use of electronic monitoring. Moreover, funds had been set aside to establish a resource team for women with severe mental health problems at Bredtveit prison. A guiding principle in the Norwegian correctional service was that, to the extent possible, women should serve their sentences in separate prisons or wings. The Directorate had been granted 145 million kroner in 2022 and 2023 to increase the number of prison staff and thereby improve prisoners' access to work and educational and leisure activities. A working group established by the Directorate to examine ways of ensuring gender equality in prisons and the separation of different categories of detainees was expected to present recommendations in mid-March 2023.

49. **A representative of Norway** said that family consultation services used a standardized questionnaire to identify violence in couples who had requested mediation and,

based on the replies, classified cases by degree of conflict. Families with a background of violence or where violence had been detected were assigned two mediators offering individualized services. The issue of violence had been raised in around 13 per cent of the 14,500 family consultations held in 2022. Since it was not possible to keep minutes of the consultations, no detailed statistics were available. In response to the 2022 baseline evaluation report on Norway of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, family consultation services would review their tools and procedures for detecting violence, mediators would be given more specific training on detecting and handling violence, and individuals specialized in combating violence would continue to be trained as therapists and mediators.

50. **A representative of Norway**, drawing the Committee's attention to paragraph 181 of the periodic report (CEDAW/C/NOR/10), said that all joint property was divided equally between spouses in the event of divorce, regardless of their individual contributions. Non-matrimonial assets such as inheritance were not considered to be joint property. A spouse's indirect contribution to the acquisition of property belonging solely to the other spouse, usually in the form of unpaid work such as childcare, could lead to the establishment of joint ownership.

51. Refugees and their family members were required to have held a residence permit in Norway for at least five years before they could apply for permanent residence. The Government considered it reasonable for there to be a minimum time requirement and for foreign nationals to have to establish a connection with Norway before being able to benefit from permanent resident status. However, victims of domestic violence were entitled to apply for an independent residence permit on the grounds of abuse. In 2018, following a review of legislation and practice, that entitlement had been extended to include cases in which the abuse had been committed by members of the household other than the applicant's partner. The burden of proof was low, the applicant's account was central to the final decision, the applicant was not required to file a police report, and the abuse could be physical or psychological in nature. While there were no immediate plans to review the legislation further, the Government recognized the importance of victims being aware of their rights. To that end, it disseminated information through online portals, printed materials, hotlines, call centres and crisis centres, among other avenues.

52. **A representative of Norway** said that the Government adhered to the human rights model of disability based on the principles of autonomy, equality and participation. It had adopted a plan of action on universal design and accessibility, and a strategy entitled "A Society for All" for the period 2020–2030. In accordance with the model, access to medical treatment and rehabilitation was viewed as part of the right to health, and disability was understood to have no bearing on a person's status as a rights holder.

53. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act explicitly prohibited intersectional discrimination, the elimination of which was a government priority. The challenges posed by intersectionality were an important topic in many official documents related to equality and discrimination, including the Strategy against Hate Speech and a plan of action on gender and sexual diversity that would enter into force on 17 February 2023.

54. The TryggEst project had been launched to detect and prevent violence and abuse against vulnerable groups, in particular women, who accounted for around 70 per cent of beneficiaries. The project was run by municipalities and was partly funded by the Government, which had set aside €1.5 million for its implementation in 2023. To date, the project had drawn the participation of 37 municipalities serving approximately 32 per cent of the Norwegian population.

55. **A representative of Norway** said that there were no national statistics on the number of women with disabilities in high-ranking positions, as administrative data were not collected on disabilities that had not been medically diagnosed.

56. **A representative of Norway** said that, in white paper No. 39 (2015–2016), the Government at the time had given thought to ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities but had decided against it. The current Government had not studied the matter and had no plans to ratify the Optional Protocol for

the time being. However, a commission had been set up to consider the incorporation of that Convention into domestic law.

57. **A representative of Norway** said that courts did not grant visitation rights when doing so would not be in the child's best interests, for example when the child had suffered abuse, which included witnessing domestic violence. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs would examine child custody and visitation arrangements as part of its review of the Children Act.

58. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that gender equality and non-discrimination for all were key values in Norway, which was fully committed to implementing the international human rights treaties to which it was a party. National policies to combat gender-based discrimination were based on the Convention and would be informed by the Committee's concluding observations.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.