



**Convention on the Elimination  
of all Forms of Discrimination  
Against Women**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 10 August 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. IDER

later: Ms. MUKAYIRANGA

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article 18 of the Convention (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

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

1. Ms. BARABANOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the questions raised by members of the Committee demonstrated their interest in a wide range of issues linked with the implementation of the Convention and the status of women in the Byelorussian SSR.
2. Replying first to the general questions concerning the political structure of the Republic which had been asked in particular by the experts from Egypt, Uruguay, the Philippines and Rwanda, she said that under article 71 of the Constitution of the USSR, the Byelorussian SSR was regarded as one of the 15 Republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, consequently, the Byelorussian SSR had agreed to delegate a number of responsibilities to the Soviet Union, notably in the fields of: social and economic policy, the monetary and credit system, issues of war and peace, the organization of defence and foreign trade and the guarantee of national security. Nevertheless, like all the other Republics of the Union, the Byelorussian SSR, through its representatives in the higher bodies of the USSR, participated in resolving all questions involved in the administration of the Union. It should be noted in that respect that the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union consisted of two chambers, the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. Each Republic, whatever its area and the number of its inhabitants, had a representative in the Soviet of Nationalities. Moreover, the Chairmen of the Supreme Soviets of each Republic were deputies of the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The laws of the USSR applied in the territory of the Byelorussian SSR and each citizen of the Republic was also a citizen of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, although it was an integral part of the Soviet Union, the Byelorussian SSR was a sovereign State with its own flag, its own national anthem, its own Constitution and its own legislation. The Supreme Soviet of the Republic drew up plans for social and economic development and the State budget, managed the national economy and accorded pardons to citizens who had been sentenced by the courts of the Republic. The territory of the Byelorussian SSR could not be altered without the agreement of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic.
3. The Supreme Soviet consisted of 485 deputies, elected for five years, including 180 women, which represented a percentage of 37.1 per cent. The proportion of women represented in the local soviets was even higher and amounted to 49 per cent.
4. Replying to the question raised by the expert from Sweden, the representative of the Byelorussian SSR said that on the initiative of the Standing Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic responsible for questions of work, the status of women and the protection of women and children, appropriations had been made from the State budget to improve the working conditions of women and develop the network of hospital, school and pre-school establishments.

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5. The Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR was the only body of the Republic which was empowered to promulgate laws. The Byelorussian SSR was a socialist State which protected the interests of workers, peasants and people's intellectuals. In that respect, replying to the question asked by the expert from Egypt, she said that "people's intellectuals" meant scientists, writers and the members of artistic unions.

6. The Communist Party was the central element of the political system. It was the Party of the people and was exclusively in the service of the people. It drew up plans for economic and social development and formulated the country's domestic and foreign policy. All the Party organizations worked within the framework of the Constitution of the USSR. The Communist Party of the Byelorussian SSR, which was in the vanguard of the Communist Party of the USSR, consisted of 600,000 members and applicants, including 156,000 women, or a percentage of 26 per cent. Women were represented at all levels of the Party from local units to the Central Committee. Moreover each rural or urban unit of the Party had at least one woman secretary, and the post of secretary was a responsible post.

7. Replying to the question raised by the expert from Rwanda who had asked whether the provisions of the Convention could be invoked before the courts, she said that under article 74 of the Constitution of the Republic, the Byelorussian SSR participated in international relations and discharged the obligations arising from international treaties. In the event of a conflict between national legislation and the provisions of international instruments, the latter prevailed.

8. Replying to the questions of the expert from Guyana who had asked whether there was a similarity between the legal system of the Byelorussian SSR and that of the USSR and how many women held office in the legal institutions and courts and also in the bodies where questions concerning discrimination were considered, she said that both the legislation of the USSR and that of the Republic were in force in her country. The Constitution of the USSR defined the limits of each of those legislations. Article 73 of the Constitution of the USSR specified the fields which fell within the purview of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. As to the second question, she noted that a large number of women (approximately 25 per cent) worked in the legal field as lawyers, prosecutors, inspectors, etc. Moreover, 108 women were magistrates in people's courts.

9. As to the question raised by the representative of Uruguay, who wished to know how the Soviet Women's Committee was represented in the Republic, she said that the Committee was not represented in the Republic by a separate body but four Byelorussian women were members of the Committee and participated actively in its work.

10. The experts from the Philippines and Ecuador had asked for additional information about the participation of Byelorussian women in the world disarmament campaign and their role in the national armed forces. It should be noted that women were not subject to compulsory military service but they sometimes worked as

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volunteers in the commissariat services and in military hospitals. Moreover Byelorussian women, like other women of the world, clearly did not want war, and they associated themselves with all the constructive efforts made in that field by their Government. Nevertheless, they were aware of the need to strengthen the country's defence capacity so as to avoid a repetition of the tragedy of the Second World War in which 20 million lives had been sacrificed.

11. Replying to the question asked by the expert from Bulgaria, she said that the women of the Byelorussian SSR had actively participated in the Stockholm-Moscow-Minsk peace march and had paid tribute to the memory of the innumerable Byelorussian women who had perished in the Second World War.

12. Replying to the question asked by the expert from Sweden, she said that women with children had privileges in the Byelorussian SSR because the authorities of the Republic were aware that, as indicated in article 5 of the Convention, maternity was a very important function, and society wished to improve the situation of children right from birth. At the same time, efforts were being made to increase the birth rate, which was lower than 1 per cent in the Republic.

13. In reply to the question asked by the expert from Portugal regarding the application of the socialist principle "equal pay for equal work", obviously that principle fully accorded with article 13 of the Convention and in that respect, in the Byelorussian SSR, in accordance with article 77 of the labour code of the Republic, work was remunerated exclusively on the basis of its quantity and quality, to the exclusion of any other consideration based on sex, age, race or nationality.

14. The experts from the Philippines, Norway, Hungary and Canada, among others, had inquired about the reasons for the broad participation of Byelorussian women in the active life of their country and had asked whether women had opportunities to improve their qualifications so as to occupy jobs equivalent to those of men. It should be noted in that respect that, in socialist society, work was the only way in which the individual could satisfy his material and intellectual needs. It was by assuring equality between men and women in the fields of education, vocational training, access to employment and freedom of choice in respect of employment, in accordance with articles 10 and 11 of the Convention, that the Byelorussian authorities had increased the participation of women in the active life of the country.

15. The importance of the role of women in non-production areas such as teaching, health, commerce, food, etc., reflected deliberate choice rather than restrictions imposed on women.

16. Replying to the expert from Bulgaria, she said that, according to available statistics, women accounted for 55 per cent of the student population, 45 per cent of the students in technical and industrial institutions, 36 per cent of the students in agricultural schools, 78 per cent of the students in institutions for economic studies, 71 per cent of the students in teacher training institutions and

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59 per cent of the students in medicine and the humanities. Those figures indicated the extent of women's participation in the country's activities. In the Byelorussian SSR there were also vocational guidance services which directed young women to one of the 223 industrial trade schools at which more than 300 subjects were taught. Women comprised 30 per cent of the students in such institutions. The course of study in their schools ranged from one to three years, with tuition and subsistence being paid by the State. Once their studies were completed, the graduates of those institutions were given jobs in accordance with the requirements of the national plan, irrespective of any other consideration. In that way, the right to work guaranteed by article 38 of the Republic's Constitution was honoured in practice.

17. Women also benefited from training and retraining services available to the population as a whole. It was estimated that, each year, 30 to 40 per cent of workers upgraded their qualifications and changed jobs, with women accounting for 25 to 30 per cent of that figure. Women also benefited from the part-time work scheme which was common throughout the Republic, particularly in areas such as business, the food industry or work at home.

18. It was not difficult for a Byelorussian woman to combine professional activities with family life owing to the existence of a huge network of pre-school institutions which could accommodate almost 500,000 children. In addition, there were extended day schools at which children were kept until the end of the working day. Furthermore, all children had an opportunity in summer to stay, either free or on payment of a minimal contribution, at holiday camps. Nevertheless, further efforts were necessary to enable women to reconcile their professional activities with their family obligations and to improve their professional competency. In that connection mention should be made of the establishment, during the United Nations Decade for Women, of a National Committee on Work and Social Questions and a Central All-trade Union Committee to work out additional measures aimed at improving the working conditions of working women. Those committees had adopted regulations under which enterprises were obligated to upgrade the professional competency of their women workers every year. Under those regulations, working women with children under eight years of age were entitled to take vocational training on full salary. Replying to questions raised by the experts from Guyana and Sweden on remedies available to victims of discrimination in the Byelorussian SSR, she said that it should be noted that the country's legislation protected all citizens against all forms of discrimination and especially discrimination on the basis of sex. Every citizen had the right to initiate proceedings before courts, administrative organs, trade union organizations and other public organizations if their rights were violated. Article 55 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR stipulated that the citizens of the Republic were entitled to legal protection against attacks on their honour and dignity, their life and health, their individual freedom and their property. Those rights were also protected by article 56 of the Constitution of the USSR. In that regard, the Byelorussian Penal Code provided penalties for abuse of power or negligence on the part of any official, especially if his acts jeopardized the rights and interests of citizens. There were a great many agencies in the Soviet Union (arts. 6 and 7 of the Constitution of the USSR) one of whose essential tasks was to protect the interests of citizens.

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19. Replying to questions relating to occupations considered as dangerous for women, she said that the Byelorussian SSR had determined that there were a certain number of occupations which should be closed to women to protect their reproductive function. Besides jobs that involved carrying heavy loads, article 160 of the Byelorussian Labour Code prohibited work involving vibrations, work in sweat shops and work in the mines or involving contact with chemicals. The list of those occupations had been published by the National Committee on Work and Social Questions in agreement with the National Union of the USSR and the Ministry of Health. In that connection, research had shown that the slightest contact with cyanide chloride affected women's reproductive functions. Research had also demonstrated that women did not tolerate long-distance flights as well as men. On the basis of that research the number of hours of flying time for men and women had been fixed. Jobs in the mines, in heavy industry, etc., were also prohibited under the various ILO Conventions which had been ratified by the Byelorussian SSR.

20. With regard to the question raised by Panama, Uruguay, the Philippines and Sweden, who wished to know what sectors of industry were dominated by men and women respectively, she specified that in her country industry comprised more than 100 different sectors in which both men and women worked. It was nevertheless true that women preferred to work in light industry, the fashion industry, precision engineering, etc. It was interesting to note that they represented more than half the labour force in mechanical engineering. There were more men in jobs requiring greater physical stamina such as tractor and car manufacture, mining, building, transportation, etc.

21. The experts from Portugal, Panama and Guyana wanted to know what was meant by the administrative management service and what percentage of women worked in it. They had also asked what were the functions of the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic and what proportion of management posts in that body were held by women. It should be stated in that connection that women occupied all kinds of positions in those organs, including management posts. It should also be remembered that the average salary of a civil servant in the administrative management service was 144 roubles a month, compared to an average salary in the Republic of 153 roubles.

22. Replying to questions raised by the experts from Bulgaria and the Philippines on article 167 of the Byelorussian Labour Code, she noted that women, if they had worked for more than one year, were entitled, in addition to maternity leave, to leave on partial pay to care for their children up to the age of one. They could also, on request, receive six months' additional unpaid leave. All Byelorussian women took advantage of that benefit knowing that their jobs were kept open for them and that they could, if necessary, be retrained.

23. The position of Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet was not an administrative but a high-level political post. It was the Secretary who promulgated all the decisions and laws adopted by the Supreme Soviet.

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24. Replying to a question put by the expert from Canada, she stressed that there were six women deputy ministers and that the Vice-President of the Byelorussian Council of Ministers was also a woman. The post of First Secretary of the Komsomols of the Republic was also held by a woman. In addition, women constituted 46.2 per cent of the heads of trade union organizations and the membership of professional trade union committees. Of the 24 committees of the Republic, 12 had women secretaries. All those women monitored the implementation of Soviet legislation and thus ensured the implementation of the legislation guaranteeing equality of the sexes. Many Byelorussian women were also represented among the staff and directors of public institutions (schools, universities, etc.). They occupied management posts in every sector of the national economy. In particular, they managed 55 kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

25. With regard to the situation of young couples and, in particular, the problem of housing, a matter which was of interest to the expert from Guyana, it should be noted first that 100,000 new dwellings were constructed every year. However, since that did not solve the problem, the law gave priority to large families and single mothers in allocating public housing. A decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic in December 1982 provided for the strengthening of family ties by building housing for young couples. Business enterprises and agencies were also called upon to provide material assistance to young couples and young workers and easy repayment terms for debts incurred from housing.

26. Replying to a further question asked by the expert from Guyana, she said that rape was regarded as a crime and was punished by the deprivation of employment. In accordance with article 13 of the Code of criminal procedure, the trial was always held in camera, but the decision was announced at a public session. The victim was entitled to damages and, if necessary, to free medical and psychological care.

27. As to family and marital relations, about which questions had been asked by the experts from Rwanda, Portugal, Norway, Finland and Guyana, article 51 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR stipulated that the family was protected by the State. The spouses had equal rights and the State undertook to establish and develop a network of institutions for children and to provide grants at each birth and allowances to large families. The Code on marriage and the family adopted in June 1968 by the Supreme Soviet set forth the specific provisions regulating the family. That legislation determined the procedure for marriage, the property rights between spouses and between parents and children, procedures for adoption or guardianship, and methods of dissolution of marriage and of registration of changes in civil events. One of the key elements of the Code was, of course, equality between men and women in the family. For example, article 3 stipulated that, in accordance with the Constitution of the USSR and of the Byelorussian SSR, the spouses had equal rights to their property. Under article 64, the father and the mother had equal rights and duties towards their children, but there were also many other rights (arts. 68, 69, 114) which were implicitly available to both sexes, including the right of the two spouses to choose their surnames independently at the time of marriage (art. 19, first part), their occupation and domicile (art. 20, second part), and the surname of the child, in the latter case by agreement between the parents or, failing that, by decision of a judicial body (art. 60).

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28. In respect of family relations, the elimination of all discrimination against women within the family was the most difficult objective to attain because it encountered a deep-rooted tradition. The State was therefore trying to educate public opinion. Housework was regarded as a method of earning a living and therefore gave the wife, in respect of joint property, the same rights as the husband working in the production sector. Consequently, rights to acquired property did not depend on the occupations of the spouses.

29. In response to the questions raised by the experts from Sweden and Guyana, she said that women with many children had a number of privileges because they played an extremely important social role which was recognized by the State and protected and encouraged; the same was true of unmarried mothers.

30. In response to the expert from Portugal, she said that, in relation to the rights and obligations of parents towards their children after the dissolution of marriage, article 64 provided that parents had equal rights even after the dissolution of marriage. All questions relating to the education of the children had to be settled by mutual agreement or, failing that, by the guardianship bodies, with the participation of the parents. Article 67 specified that the parent who no longer lived with the children had the right to visit them and participate in their education. Disputes in that field were settled by the guardianship bodies and, if either parent refused to comply, a decision was made by the courts.

31. Article 114 provided that any adult citizen, unless he had been deprived of his parental rights or had already adopted a child and had not discharged his obligations properly, could adopt a child. No restriction was envisaged on the basis of sex or family status.

32. In response to the question asked by the expert from the Philippines, she quoted a recent case. A mother had died in childbirth, leaving a live child. Under article 165 of the Labour Code, only the mother had the right to maternity leave. Since the mother had died, however, the father had requested that he should be accorded that leave. The Soviet of trade unions had decided in favour of the father. That case demonstrated the way in which State bodies tackled the problem of equality between men and women.

33. In conclusion, she assured members of the Committee that all the questions asked during the session would be brought to the attention of the competent bodies of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, so that they could be taken into account in preparing the next report.

34. Ms. Mukayiranga took the Chair.

35. Ms. CORTES thanked the representative of the Byelorussian SSR for having replied fully to the questions raised and congratulated her on having very frankly described the problems which remained to be resolved.



36. Ms. PEYTCHEVA said that she was very impressed by the attention paid by the State to working mothers and the steps taken to protect motherhood in accordance with the Convention.

37. Mr. NORDENFELT thanked Mrs. Barabanova for having replied very fully to his numerous questions.

38. Mrs. Ider resumed the Chair.

39. Ms. SHEVCHENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), replying to the question asked about the steps taken to enable women to combine work in the production sector with motherhood, said that article 33 of the Constitution of the USSR provided for full equality between men and women. Thus, in view of the special function of women and their role as mothers, the State accorded favourable conditions to women who raised children, without prejudice to their work, career or salary. All women had the right to maternity leave and additional leave, paid or unpaid, to look after their children. The State also established structures to enable parents to maintain close contact with their children, for example, family vacation accommodation and day schools and nurseries at the workplace of the mother.

40. Not only the Constitution but the entire Soviet legislation considered men and women as equal under the law. For example, under article 20 of the Code on marriage and the family, the father and mother were equally responsible for the education of their children. Under article 59, parents had equal rights and duties towards their children, even after dissolution of the marriage.

41. Replying to the questions asked by the experts from Norway, Mexico and Panama concerning the custody of children after divorce, the legislation in that field was based on the general principle that the rights of parents should never run counter to the interests of their children. Article 40 provided, for example, that the court must protect the interests of minor children. Under article 69, in the event of disagreement between parents as to custody of their children, it was for the court to decide. If the child was 10 years old or more, however, his opinion was asked, although it was not always binding on the court. In all cases, it was not the material advantages offered by the situation of one or other parent which counted, but their moral qualities and ability to give the child the education he needed. Article 65 provided that the parent who did not have custody of the child had the right to visit him and take part in his education. In the event that that right was denied him, he could have recourse to the guardianship bodies or the courts.

42. Replying to a question asked by the expert from Bulgaria, she said that, in relation to the maintenance of children in cases of divorce, article 80 provided that both parents should contribute and that in the event of a dispute, the court should make a ruling. Article 82 provided that the food allowance should not exceed a quarter of the salary for one child, a third for two children and half for three or more. Replying to the question asked by the expert from Mexico, she said that even if the parents were not legally married, their duties towards their children were exactly the same under article 57 of the Code.

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43. Replying to a question asked by the experts from Mexico, the Philippines and Canada regarding the effect of marriage on the names of the spouses and of the children, she said that the legislation of the Ukrainian SSR settled that question on the basis of the principle of equality of the sexes, with due regard for the interests of the children. Under article 19 of the Code on marriage and the family, the spouses, at the time of marriage, could choose either to use the name of one spouse, or to retain their own names, or to add the name of the other spouse to their own name; that last possibility was a special feature of the legislation of the Ukrainian SSR and accorded with a tradition. As to children, article 62 of the same Code provided that children should have the name of their parents or the name of one of them if the parents had different names. In the latter case, if the parents could not agree on the name to be given to the child, it was for the guardianship body to decide. Dissolution of marriage did not give rise to any change in the names of the children. However, if after the dissolution of the marriage, the parent who had custody of the children wished to give them his name and they had the name of the other parent, the guardianship body could authorize the change of name with the agreement of the other parent. In exceptional cases, and if the interests of the child required it, the guardianship body could authorize the change of name without the consent of the other parent.

44. Replying to a question concerning divorce asked by the expert from Portugal, she said that the legislation of the Ukrainian SSR aimed to strengthen the family as an essential institution of human society to which great moral value was attached. Thus, under article 40 of the Code on marriage and the family, divorce could not be declared in the absence of the consent of the spouses, unless the continuation of life together and the maintenance of the family unit were impossible. In order to be sure, the court, before declaring a divorce, set a period of reconciliation which might last up to 6 months.

45. The age at which women could marry, about which the experts of Sweden, Mexico and Uruguay had inquired, was set at 17, for biological, social and historical reasons: women generally matured earlier than men, secondary schooling ended at age 17 and, Ukrainian women had traditionally been able to marry at 16 years. The earlier Code, which had been in effect until 1970, had set 16 as the minimum age at which women could marry. Marriage was subject to no conditions other than the minimum age and the consent of the spouses. However, article 17 of the Code laid down certain prohibitions: marriage was forbidden if one of the future spouses was already married, if the future spouses were related, whether directly, collaterally or through adoption, or if one of the spouses was recognized to be incapacitated for marriage owing to disease or mental deficiency.

46. The experts of Rwanda, Bulgaria, Portugal and Uruguay had asked about the effects of marriage on property. In that case, too, the legislation of the Ukrainian SSR acknowledged the equality of the sexes by applying the system of limiting joint property to acquests alone (art. 22 of the Marriage and Family Code). Both spouses enjoyed the same rights in respect of joint property. In accordance with article 24 of the Code, property owned by the spouses on the date of celebration of the marriage concluded was deemed to be separate property not

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included in the joint property. Clothing and the personal effects of either spouse, even if they were acquired during the marriage, were also, by their very nature, considered to be separate property. Each spouse had full control over his or her own property. Lastly, separate property whose value increased during the marriage through the labour of one or both spouses could be declared joint property by the court. Income earned from copyright, about which the expert of the Philippines had asked, was treated as being a wage and was therefore included in the joint property.

47. Replying to questions asked by the experts of Rwanda, Canada and Mexico concerning inheritance law and legislation governing adoption, she said that inheritance matters were governed by the Civil Code and that heirs were divided into two categories, depending on their relationship to the deceased: the surviving spouse and descendants, on the one hand, and collateral relatives, on the other. Adoption was governed by a series of provisions designed to protect the interests of the child and the adopter. In accordance with article 101, adoption was permissible only in the case of a minor and only if it was in the minor's interest. Under article 103, the adoptive parent had to be adult and legally competent and must not have been deprived of parental authority. A single man or woman could therefore adopt a child.

48. Replying to the questions asked by the experts of Canada, the Philippines and other countries about the rights of women in the matter of nationality, she explained that those rights were set forth in the law of 1 December 1978 on USSR nationality. Under Soviet and Ukrainian legislation, women enjoyed the same rights as men with regard to nationality. Under article 4 of the said Law, marriage between a Soviet citizen of either sex and an alien or a stateless person, as well as the dissolution of such a marriage, did not change the nationality of the spouse. An alien spouse wishing to acquire Soviet nationality must submit an application to that effect, pursuant to article 15 of the Law on Nationality. In the consideration of such an application, no account was taken of the race, belief, national origin or sex of the person concerned. Under article 17, Soviet nationality could be withdrawn by a decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Lastly, when parents of whom one had Soviet nationality and who were domiciled outside the territory of the Soviet Union could not agree on the nationality of a child, the question was settled in accordance with the agreements in force between the Soviet Union and the country concerned.

49. The socialist society guaranteed women their rightful dignity and provided them with an opportunity to use their creative talents to further the progress of society as a whole. In the Ukrainian SSR there were 27.3 million women, representing 54 per cent of the population. In 1981 52 per cent of all workers and employees had been women. The Party and the Government sought to give women the means of engaging in an occupation and increasing their participation in the country's economic activity. Whereas on 1 December 1960 only 965,000 women had been engaged in a specialized occupation, the figure had risen to 3,157,600 by November 1980. Women represented 58 per cent of persons holding a diploma in higher education, 34 per cent of engineers, 35 per cent of agronomists and veterinary and forestry experts, 71 per cent of economists, 62 per cent of doctors, 72 per cent of teachers and 73 per cent of cultural workers.

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50. During the previous decade, the proportion of women in the labour force had increased. From 1960 to 1971 the working population had grown by 6 million, of whom 3.5 million had been women. Women represented 75.7 per cent of teachers in secondary schools, 35.7 per cent of primary school principals and 34.4 per cent of secondary school principals.

51. Women were not conscripted into the armed forces, and the number of female volunteers, who were assigned to technical positions, to the commissariat or to work as mechanics, was insignificant.

52. In industry, it was in the engineering sector, and no longer in light industry, that the largest number of women was to be found.

53. Seven hundred women held doctorates, 400 were members of the Academy and 15,500 were pursuing studies leading to a university degree. In 1959, out of every 1,000 women 18 had completed advanced studies and 32 had secondary studies; in 1979, 20 years later, 58 of every 1,000 women had completed advanced studies and 524 had completed their secondary studies. In accordance with article 211 of the Labour Code, men and women working in the field of education were entitled to additional paid leave to sit for examinations. Under article 209 of the same Code, during the school year they were given lighter schedules or periods of leave during which they received up to 50 per cent of the average wage and in no case less than the minimum wage.

54. Replying to the questions asked by the experts of Portugal, Canada and Uruguay, about education in the Ukrainian SSR, she said that education was free, democratic and open to all. The system in the Ukrainian SSR included pre-school education, general secondary education, adult education, vocational training, specialized secondary education and higher education. The majority of students received scholarships, which varied in amount depending on their marks. Scholarships could also be granted when the material situation of the student so required. In the Ukrainian SSR, as in the Soviet Union, secondary education was compulsory and free for everyone, and thereafter education could be continued by correspondence courses. The Government encouraged people to pursue their studies to as high a level as possible.

55. The Constitution guaranteed women the same rights as men in the economic, political and cultural fields. Women had the right to vote and to be elected. The Supreme Soviet of the Republic included 234 women, or 35.9 per cent of the deputies, and women held responsible positions on it: for example, the Vice-President of the Supreme Soviet was a woman, as was the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers. The Minister of Social Security and the Director of the State Committee for Environmental Protection were women, and many women were vice-ministers in other ministries. Women also held important posts in economic life: many, for example, were heads of enterprises.

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56. Replying to a question raised by the expert from the Philippines, she said that under the Constitution, the Civil Code and the Marriage and Family Code, Soviet citizens were free to choose their place of residence, and the parents chose for children under the age of 15. Under article 21 of the Marriage and Family Code, married couples chose their home by mutual agreement. Men and women of the Ukrainian SSR were free to leave the country and permission was granted in accordance with the legislation in force.

57. Another question raised by the expert from the Philippines concerned the situation of writers and artists in general. Writers and artists in the Ukrainian SSR enjoyed the greatest respect and included many women. They could organize associations and there were unions of writers, composers and journalists. They enjoyed freedom of expression and creative activity and were given material assistance.

58. The rights of women in employment, on which the experts from Sweden, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines and Uruguay had put certain questions, were, under the Constitution, the same as those enjoyed by men. Article 22 of the Labour Code prohibited employers from denying a job to a woman without legitimate grounds. Under article 27, the length of the probationary period was determined by agreement between the parties without regard to sex; under article 26, women enjoyed the same rights as men in respect of breach of the labour contract. Article 22 provided that labour disputes should be brought before labour boards, trade union committees or district peoples' courts. The parties concerned could also invoke the intervention of the public prosecutor. Nevertheless, few disputes were brought to court and conflicts were usually settled by the trade unions.

59. There were also provisions to protect pregnant women or the mothers of young children. For example, article 184 of the Labour Code prohibited employers from denying employment to a woman or reducing her salary because she was pregnant or nursing. Furthermore, if a woman could not perform her normal work because of pregnancy, she had to be assigned an easier job while retaining the salary applicable to her former duties. The same was true for nursing women.

60. Since the level of education was constantly rising, as shown in the above-mentioned statistics, it was easy to guarantee women a job, especially since there was no unemployment in the Ukrainian SSR or in the USSR.

61. An employee could be dismissed if the results of the probationary period were unsatisfactory. In that case, he or she could be offered another job in keeping with his or her ability. Graduates of vocational and technical schools, those just entering the liberal professions after completing their studies in educational institutions and veterans of the Second World War were exempt from the probationary period.

62. The whole of chapter 7 of the Labour Code of the Ukrainian SSR was devoted to salaries. In accordance with the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR, article 94 of the Labour Code established the principle of pay based on quantity and quality of

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work and prohibited any difference in pay based on sex, age, race or nationality. Salaries were determined on the basis of scales established at the top level in consultation with the trade union organizations. Degrees could also be taken into account. Furthermore, higher salaries were paid for certain particularly difficult jobs.

63. Article 74 of the Labour Code guaranteed the right to paid annual leave. In addition, articles 76 and 77 of the Code granted additional leave to certain categories of workers and employees, such as volunteers in the patrols of the people's militia or volunteer firemen.

64. While those provisions were applicable to all workers regardless of sex, there were provisions which took into account the particular physical and physiological features of the female organism. For example, it was prohibited to employ women at hard labour and under harmful conditions or in underground work, and there were ceilings on the amount of weight women could lift or transport. In addition, pregnant women or nursing mothers could not do night work or overtime.

65. Penalties were provided for employers who violated the right to work. Article 265 of the Labour Code provided administrative penalties (fine, reprimand, dismissal, demotion) and, if necessary, payment of damages. Wrongful dismissal was also penalized under article 238 of the Labour Code.

66. Replying to questions raised by certain members of the Committee regarding retirement rights, she explained that women were entitled to retire five years earlier than men. That could not be regarded as discrimination because it was normal for women to enjoy special consideration on the basis of age in view of the family obligations they had to assume together with their professional obligations. The conditions of retirement and pension were the same for women working in the city and in the country.

67. Turning to the population and family planning policy of the Soviet Socialist Republic of the Ukraine, a question which interested the experts from Sweden, Panama, Canada, Mexico and the Philippines, she said statistics showed that most families averaged only one or two children. Nevertheless, a recent trend toward more families with three children was observed. That should probably be interpreted as the result of the Government's family protection policy. In that connection, and in reply to a question raised, the honour of "heroine mother" was awarded by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR to mothers of 10 children all of whom were still living when the last-born celebrated its first birthday. The motherhood medal was awarded to mothers of five children or more.

68. Abortion was free and the decision to abort depended exclusively on the spouses. It was performed in clinics, where women were also given birth control counselling and information.

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69. Prostitution did not exist in the Ukrainian SSR or in the USSR because the social causes of that problem had been eliminated but as a preventive measure, the Penal Code of the Ukrainian SSR provided penalties for prostitution. For example, article 210 prohibited pimping, but it very rarely had to be applied.

70. In reply to a question from the expert from Norway concerning measures to inform women of their rights, she said that in the Ukrainian SSR women were informed of their rights by various organs of the national and local press which devoted articles to the question. In addition, conferences were organized and brochures were circulated. Furthermore, women with special problems could have free legal aid.

71. Ukrainian women participated in large numbers in the work of international bodies, in which they were widely represented. Nevertheless, despite the requests of the Government, there were still too few of them in the United Nations Secretariat.

72. The Ukrainian SSR scrupulously complied with its obligations under international law and the international instruments to which it had acceded. It made every effort to bring its laws into line with those instruments, particularly its Civil Code and its Marriage and Family Code, whose provisions were by and large in conformity with international norms. The Ukrainian SSR was a country in which women were free and enjoyed genuine equality with men in society and in the family. All the sociological studies conducted in the Ukrainian SSR, as in the USSR, showed that women attached great importance to their many activities in working women's collectives. Nevertheless, the distribution of roles in family business did not always demonstrate that women were not assuming more family responsibility than men.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.