



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

Thirty-fourth session

Summary record of the 717th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 31 January 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani (Vice-Chairperson)

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06-22800 (E)

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In the absence of Ms. Manalo, Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)
(CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5 and Add.1)

Combined second, third, fourth and fifth periodic reports of Mali

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Mali took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Diallo Sene** (Mali) said that Mali had ratified the Convention in 1985 and had also ratified its Optional Protocol. It had presented its initial report in 1988, but due to circumstances beyond its control, had been unable to report again until the current session. The report had been prepared by means of a participatory process with the involvement of civil society.

3. Since the attainment of independence in 1960, three successive political regimes had held power in Mali, culminating in democratic presidential elections in 1992 and the current dynamic multi-party political system. Those regimes had all made the advancement of women and children a priority, and there had always been a government mechanism for the social, economic and legal advancement of women, which had resulted in the establishment of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families in 1997. The ongoing cooperation between the Government, women's associations and NGOs and the women's trade union movement had been a significant factor in their progress. Civil society had been closely involved in preparing and implementing the plans of action resulting from the World Conference on Women held in Beijing.

4. The Constitution of 1992 enshrined the principle of equal rights for women and men, non-discrimination and individual freedom, and numerous provisions of the Penal Code, the Labour Code and the Family Code allowed for the protection and implementation of those rights and freedoms.

5. Positive discrimination and special measures for the advancement of women had been taken in a number

of areas. In education, the policy on girls' school enrolment had tripled the number of girls attending school between 1990 and 2004, rising from 19 per cent to 59.9 per cent. Incentives had been provided to encourage girls to study scientific and technical fields, to enter the military academy and to continue to the university level by awarding girls a bonus point on scholarship examinations, and it was no longer possible to force pregnant girls to leave school.

6. Innovative strategies adopted in the area of reproductive health and family planning included the provision of free maternity care and screenings for cervical, uterine and breast cancer. Mali had ratified the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, which required it to adopt legislation banning female genital mutilation. The current strategy was to conduct intensive education and awareness campaigns about the dangers of the practice in order to change public opinion before introducing such legislation.

7. In the area of employment, the Labour Code stipulated equal pay for equal work. Programmes for women entrepreneurs and access to credit for women in the informal sector also helped to build women's economic power. Under the revised Commercial Code, a woman no longer needed her husband's permission to work, and tax legislation favourable to women had recently been adopted. Although women's representation in public life and government was growing (15 female deputies, 5 ministers and 3 ambassadors), they remained underrepresented in decision-making bodies. Rural women were benefiting from literacy programmes, which, along with the emerging network of rural women's associations, were boosting the access to decision-making positions. By law, women had equal access to agricultural and land resources, and could benefit from State affirmative action programmes to acquire land. Prostitution was illegal in Mali, and voluntary associations helped former prostitutes to reintegrate into society.

8. Despite the progress achieved in the advancement of women, the burdens placed on women by society, poverty, insufficient application of existing laws and a lack of funds allocated to address women's concerns still prevented them from fully enjoying their rights. However, the many advocacy, awareness and education programmes undertaken by NGOs, women's associations and government institutions would

certainly have a positive impact on the status of women in Mali.

Articles 1 to 6

9. **Mr. Flinterman** said that the Constitution stated that international agreements took precedence over domestic law, but thus far the Convention had not been cited in any court cases. He would like to know what kinds of cases were examined by the Constitutional Court and whether the Convention had been cited in any of its decisions. Since the Constitution did not contain a definition of discrimination, he wondered whether the definition in article 1 of the Convention would be reflected in legislation. He commended Mali for being among the first countries to ratify the Optional Protocol; the strengthening of domestic remedies thus became even more important. He was interested in the steps being taken to strengthen the material and human resources available to the court system and to make it more accessible.

10. Lastly, he suggested that in its next report, Mali might wish to refer to general recommendation No. 25 on article 4, which drew a distinction between temporary special measures for women and general policies.

11. **Ms. Gnacadja** stressed that awareness campaigns were not sufficient to put the Government's commitments into practice; the difficulties in reaching consensus in a country which was 90 per cent Muslim must be overcome with a view to adopting legislation.

12. Noting that article 58 of the 2001 Penal Code did not specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, she asked whether the Government planned to amend those provisions or to adopt appropriate legislation in accordance with article 2 (b) of the Convention.

13. Drawing attention to articles 15 and 16 of the Convention, she asked whether any progress had been made in eliminating discrimination in the context of marriage, the family and guardianship which appeared to be condoned by law. Additional information on the obstacles encountered in reforming the legal system would be helpful. She asked how the white paper mentioned in the Government's response to question 4 (CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5/Add.1, p. 3) was being used in elaborating new texts and rescinding discriminatory ones.

14. She drew attention to the 16 practices harmful to women's health (CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, pp. 45-46) and asked whether the Government planned to eliminate all of them by amending the relevant laws. Referring specifically to the practice of excision and Mali's response to question 23 (CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5/Add.1, p. 20), she suggested that the Government should take advantage of the experience of other countries in the region which had adopted provisions to eliminate that practice.

15. While recognizing the major effort Mali was making in connection with article 3 of the Convention, she asked what the real impact of those measures had been for the advancement of women.

16. **Ms. Patten** supported Mr. Flinterman with respect to the apparent misunderstanding of the nature of temporary special measures. Temporary special measures were different from the measures described in the report, and she wondered whether the Government had some equivalent policy, perhaps under a different name. In any case, she urged the Government to consider the inclusion in the Constitution of a provision allowing for temporary special measures to be adopted with a view to overcoming the many obstacles encountered in achieving the de facto equality of women in such areas as education, politics and employment.

17. Turning to measures to increase the school attendance of girls, she asked how many girls had benefited from the one-bonus-point system in applying for scholarships, how large the budget was for special funding for girls' schools and how many schools received such funding in both rural and urban areas.

18. **Ms. Gaspard** noted that, despite the Government's determination to implement the provisions of the Convention, stereotypes and traditional customs were still at the root of discrimination against women, in particular with respect to female genital mutilation, the treatment of widows and domestic violence.

19. She pointed out that, unlike other African countries which had taken vigorous action to combat excision, Mali appeared to be moving very hesitantly. She asked what results had been achieved from the campaign to retrain those performing excisions for other professions and from the celebration in which they had laid down their knives. It would be helpful to have additional information concerning efforts to have

the medical corps encourage families to abandon that practice. Although Mali had ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, it should also adopt its own legislation on that issue. What were the Government's plans in that respect?

20. The situation of widows was particularly deplorable (they were considered to be the property of their husband's family and were frequently mistreated), and tolerance of domestic violence made it even more difficult for them to seek help. She asked whether the Government planned to adopt any policies or legislation to address that problem.

21. Lastly, she drew attention to the situation of young girls who hired themselves out as household servants in order to obtain money for their trousseau but who were often raped or subjected to sexual harassment. She asked whether the Government planned to take steps to assist such girls.

22. **Ms. Coker-Appiah**, referring to the Government's responses to question 10 (CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5/Add.1, p. 10), pointed out that all the forms of violence mentioned stemmed from a patriarchal ideology and were justified by traditional customs. Moreover, violence was frequently considered a private matter and, as such, not even recognized by the State. A multidisciplinary approach was needed to change traditional customs, raise awareness and, ultimately, adopt the necessary legislation. Referring to Mali's response to question 11 (CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5/Add.1, p. 11), she asked when the new laws mentioned were expected to be adopted and whether they would deal with all forms of violence, including forced sexual intercourse in marriage. She also asked whether the State extended support to civil society and individual organizations that provided victim assistance. She drew attention to the need for the police to be specially trained to assist victims of violence, because the negative attitude of some police workers kept women from reporting instances of abuse.

23. West Africa, including Mali and her own country, Ghana, had not been spared the problems of trafficking in persons, whether for household service, marriage or prostitution, and she commended the Government of Mali for having ratified many international instruments to combat that scourge. In that connection, she requested information on the case of the Nigerian

procurer who was being tried for trafficking. She also asked what was being done to help reintegrate female victims of sexual exploitation, for example, through the provision of free legal aid and health care. Drawing attention to article 229 of the Penal Code, she asked how many cases had been tried under those provisions and what the results had been.

24. **Ms. Diallo Sene** (Mali) pointed out that it was time to review Mali's current Constitution, which had been adopted in 1992, in order to fill certain gaps, such as introducing a definition of discrimination.

25. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali) said that the Constitution of Mali, which dated from 1992, condemned discrimination against women although it did not contain any definition of it. However, it stipulated that all international treaties ratified by Mali took precedence over national law. That included not only the Convention but also the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, which itself incorporated the definition given in the Convention. For some time, not all magistrates in Mali had had access to the texts of those treaties. Training seminars had therefore been organized for magistrates by the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families to sensitize them to women's issues and to develop jurisprudence in that area. Progress had also been made in improving the courts themselves, in particular through computerization of their records. In addition, centres had been established where women could seek counselling.

26. In reply to the question concerning the reform of the Family Code, she said that it had been delayed. It had been adopted in 2002 by legislative order but had subsequently been withdrawn because of reservations expressed by the National Assembly. After review by a reading committee, a consensus had been achieved; it was scheduled to be submitted again to the National Assembly very shortly.

27. **Ms. Diallo Sene** (Mali) spoke of the difficulties involved in putting an end to the practice of excision. The establishment of democracy had enabled large numbers of women's associations to be founded and to advocate on behalf of women, but, at the same time, had allowed fundamentalist religious groups to form organizations in pursuit of their own agenda. It took a long time to change customs; besides awareness-

raising, legislative measures were needed, under the responsibility of the State. One of the aims of the proposed Family Code was to ensure women's equality with men. Similarly, the 2001 Penal Code, which contained no specific reference to sex-based violence, would be amended to cover rape, bigamy, desertion of home and children and domestic violence.

28. **Ms. Kante Toure** (Mali) said that the forthcoming subregional conference would enable Mali to learn from the experience of neighbouring countries in overcoming resistance to efforts to discourage excision. A law was also needed to establish appropriate penalties. She emphasized the scale of the problem in Mali, where nine in ten Malian women had undergone excision, and its deep-rootedness in the people's culture. It went back so far in time that its origins were not even known and it could not be expected to vanish from one day to the next. The first efforts at sensitization had been based on medical arguments; however, the medical approach had proved inadequate and had therefore been superseded by a socio-economic and educational approach targeting people's beliefs and myths. Once their lack of foundation was recognized, a law would be better accepted; otherwise, the practice would go underground. She said that the ceremony 10 years previously when women who performed excision had publicly laid down the tools of their trade had not in fact signified any real change in the practice. Some women had stopped performing the operation because of their own health problems; they had been replaced by younger women. Efforts were currently being directed not at them, but at those who requested their services, namely, parents and grandparents, who needed to be persuaded to discontinue the practice.

29. NGOs had been very active in defending the rights of household servants. The Ministry of Employment had been working with the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families on the issue, in particular through the establishment of a local placement programme, training schemes, HIV/AIDS prevention and help in asserting their rights.

30. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali) said that prostitution was not a punishable offence in Mali but that procurement and the exploitation of women were. Civil society efforts supported by the Government had led to the dismantling of cross-border networks. The Executive Secretariat of the NGO Coalition against Trafficking in

Women set up in Bamako had been seeking to provide accommodation to victims and, working with other countries, to alert the police, particularly border police, to cases of trafficking. An alert system had been put in place to help the victims of trafficking and forced prostitution. The Government was showing a willingness to support the Coalition, in particular through the establishment of shelters, and was already assisting in the provision of psychological assistance and social rehabilitation.

31. **Ms. Soumare Diallo** (Mali) said that since Mali's accession to national sovereignty, the authorities had benefited from the active support of civil society, which they aided financially and materially. Women's NGOs contributed in turn to the elaboration of the Government's policies and strategies; they drew its attention to cases of violations of the rights of women and children. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families, as well as the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice, cooperated in combating violations. That was consistent with the Government's general stand on human rights: in Mali the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December was commemorated every year.

32. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali), in response to the question about efforts to combat stereotypes, said that women themselves resisted such efforts. It was therefore important to increase the school enrolment of girls, who thus became more responsive to modernity and to the cause of women's rights. A package of measures had accordingly been developed, encompassing education and economic empowerment, to enable women to defend their rights and thus combat stereotypes.

33. **Ms. Assitan Diallo** (Mali) also recognized the need for a multisectoral approach in order to bring about a widespread change in attitudes. Such an approach had to include conscious-raising and advocacy measures at grass-roots level, with the help of traditional communicators. National radio and television also had an important role to play in combating stereotypes by developing a positive image of women and creating a critical mass of informed women throughout society.

34. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali) pointed out that domestic violence was covered in both the Penal Code and the Marriage and Guardianship Code. Legal aid was

available for women at all stages of civil proceedings, from the police inquiry to obtaining a medical certificate documenting spouse-inflicted injuries; however, family pressure often brought civil proceedings to a halt. The case could still be heard in the criminal court, but without a civil case, women had no chance of receiving compensation for injuries. The national plan of action on domestic violence for 2006-2011 was aimed at establishing a unified approach to training for police, health workers and judges with a view to giving the issue greater visibility and tackling it in a consistent manner.

35. **Ms. Shin** wondered why representatives of civil society had appeared before the Committee as part of the delegation, when it was the Government of Mali which was accountable for implementation of the Convention.

36. **Ms. Gabr** pointed out the importance of Islam, as the religion of 90 per cent of Malians, in determining the perception of women in society. Islam was equitable towards women, but there were customs stemming from African tradition that were often confused with Islam, and dialogue with the country's spiritual leaders was essential in order to avoid misunderstandings.

37. **Ms. Šimonović** explained the steps by which the Convention was implemented and asked whether equality between men and women was already enshrined in Mali's Constitution, or in the draft Family Code. She would appreciate information on the penalties applied in cases of discrimination at the national level since the ratification of the Optional Protocol. She also wished to know whether Mali considered female genital mutilation to be a violation of the rights contained in the Convention.

38. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** said that it would be useful strategically to regard female genital mutilation and other traditional practices as an attack on the basic right to physical and mental integrity, or even, in some cases, on the right to life itself.

39. **Ms. Diallo Sene** (Mali) explained that, since the representatives of civil society had played such an important role in drafting the report and the responses to the list of issues and questions, it seemed logical to bring them along, as part of the delegation, although the Government was solely responsible for implementation of the Convention.

40. **Ms. Kante Toure** (Mali) pointed out that Islam, like the other monotheistic religions, had freed women from being objects and given them rights. Problems arose when Islam was misinterpreted, for instance, by those who insisted that excision was required by the religion, and it was important for the clergy to counter that misapprehension. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families had carried out a study on Islam and violence committed against women, which included the views of men as well. The findings of the study had helped to define policy in that area.

41. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali) explained that the Legal Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for the implementation and follow-up of the Convention, working together with relevant ministries such as the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families and then reporting on the measures taken by those ministries and civil society. Equality in rights and duties was the very basis of the Constitution, and informed all the country's efforts to implement equality and combat discrimination. Obviously, a husband's continued guardianship over his wife constituted discrimination, and there were other problem areas that still needed attention. Discrimination was sometimes punished, but sometimes tolerated and the authorities were slow to revise discriminatory texts and retrain those who worked in the legal system. Lawyers could cite the Convention in their pleadings and judges were required to apply it, although those who had not received special training often did not do so. A decision on the matter was pending in the Supreme Court, and if all domestic remedies should be exhausted, the remedies afforded by the Optional Protocol would still be available.

42. **Ms. Kante Toure** (Mali) pointed out the sociocultural complexities of treating female genital mutilation as a straightforward case of injury caused to the child. A mother subjecting her daughter to excision imagined she was doing something good, thinking that an unexcised girl would never find a husband, and could die in childbirth because her clitoris would block the emergence of the baby's head. Such a child was therefore more a victim of ignorance than of criminal assault, and it was the ignorance that needed to be addressed in Malian society. To criminalize excision would simply be to drive it underground.

43. **Ms. Assitan Diallo** (Mali) added that the concept of universal rights was difficult to convey, but that civil society was gradually succeeding in transforming mentalities. Using a participatory approach to combating excision, it disseminated video cassettes and CDs that linked tiny girls' right to play as children with their right to life itself and included messages from victims of the practice which people could understand.

Articles 7 to 9

44. **Ms. Gaspard** said that women's participation in decision-making depended not on a country's level of development, but on the will of its Government. Rwanda, for example, was at the top of the list with regard to women's participation in parliament, ahead even of Sweden. The African Union had also demonstrated a strong commitment to parity, electing five men and five women to its highest posts in 2003. From her visits to Mali, she knew that Malian women were very dynamic and played a key role in society, though more often than not in informal society. However, women were still underrepresented in elected assemblies and the highest levels of government. Regarding the law granting additional public funding to political parties with women deputies and/or councillors, she said that Mali must go even further and adopt a quota policy, establishing a minimum number of candidates of both sexes at each election. The establishment of a quota for municipal assemblies would benefit rural women in particular. The oft-used excuse that many women were illiterate was not a valid one, as many men were illiterate too and they were still elected. Neither was the excuse that women did not want to stand for election, as past experience in her own country had shown. Women must participate in decision-making in their own communities, as that was where they were most knowledgeable and most equipped to propose solutions. Lastly, she would appreciate information on the number of women in diplomatic posts in Mali's next report.

45. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** noted that, under the Law establishing the Citizenship Code, a man automatically transferred his nationality to his children; however, a woman could transfer hers only in specific cases, for example if the father was stateless or had no known nationality (CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, p. 31). Her question was whether a Malian woman could transfer her nationality to a foreign spouse. According to Mali's responses to the list of issues and questions

(CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5/Add.1, para. 15), the Government would examine the issue of nationality in the context of the current review of the law on nationality, which was incorporated into the draft Personal and Family Code. Under the current Code, the man, as head of the family, had the sole right to take decisions concerning his children. She wished to know whether the new Personal and Family Code would recognize a woman's right to take decisions concerning her children.

46. **Ms. Diallo Sene** (Mali) said that she fully agreed that Malian women were very active and played an essential role in society, and yet were underrepresented. She could report that some progress had been made concerning the establishment of quotas. In the new Electoral Law, neither gender would be allowed to account for more than 70 per cent of electoral lists. The aim was to ensure that at least 30 per cent of candidates were women. The rule would also apply to the National Electoral Commission. The draft Law had been discussed by the Prime Minister's Cabinet and was now being finalized for submission to the Council of Ministers.

47. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali) said that the issue of quotas was one that had been discussed with civil society. Networks of female parliamentarians and ministers played an important role in that regard. The Political Parties Act, under which political parties with women deputies and/or councillors were granted additional public funding, was just one example of what they had achieved. However, the issue clearly needed to be discussed further. Quotas were important not only for electoral posts, but also for administrative posts. They could help to remedy the current situation whereby female deputies were not always re-elected or did not have the means to stand for re-election and pursue the initiatives they had launched while in office. However, to achieve a higher level of representation, it was also essential to raise awareness and develop solidarity among women within political parties. The fact that Mali had 85 political parties made that task somewhat difficult. However, each party had a women's section and movement, and efforts had been made to establish a platform within civil society that brought together all those movements, with a view to raising awareness about establishing a quota within each party and encouraging women to campaign for female candidates.

48. On the issue of nationality, she said that, at the moment, when a Malian man married a foreign woman,

his nationality was transferred to her automatically. However, when a Malian woman married a foreign man, her spouse had to apply for Malian nationality through the Ministry of Justice and was required to give evidence of at least two years residence and to undergo an investigation of his moral standards. The new Personal and Family Code would correct that discriminatory situation by allowing both Malian men and women to transfer their nationality to a foreign spouse automatically and under the same conditions. The current provision that a woman could transfer her nationality to her children only when the father was unknown would also be corrected in the new Code.

49. **Ms. Diallo Sene** (Mali) said that, under the new Code, a widowed or divorced woman would become the head of household and be able to take decisions concerning her children. Previously, the eldest son had become head of the household in such circumstances.

50. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali) said that, as explained in the report, under the current Code the husband was the head of the family (CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, p. 63). The wife could be head of the family only in specific cases, for example in the event of her husband's prolonged, unjustified absence. The new Code confirmed the husband's status as head of the family, but the obedience clause had been deleted. Moreover, the husband and wife would now have joint responsibility for choosing the family home and for their children. The replacement of *patria potestas* by the concept of parental authority would give men and women equal rights vis-à-vis their children and the exercise of guardianship.

51. **Ms. Saiga** said that she would appreciate clarification concerning the transfer of nationality from a mother to her child in the event that the child's father was foreign. Moreover, was the rule for a Malian woman who married a foreigner and had a child the same as the rule for a Malian man who married a foreigner and had a child?

52. **Ms. Maiga** (Mali) said that, under the current Code, nationality was transferred by the father. If the father was foreign, a problem arose. That provision had also been identified as discriminatory and was in the process of being corrected in the new Code.

Articles 10 to 14

53. **Mr. Flinterman** commended the State party for the steps it had taken regarding education. He was particularly pleased that, in the first cycle of basic education, the gross school enrolment rate for girls had increased to almost 60 per cent in 2004 (CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5/Add.1, p. 13) and that young girls who became pregnant could now continue their education (CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, p. 21). However, much remained to be done. For example, did Mali have a time frame for achieving the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education and was it seeking international assistance to that end? Did it have any time frames for increasing girls' participation in secondary and post-secondary education? According to the report (p. 35), the success rate for girls was also lower than it was for boys, and girls were more likely to drop out. He wished to know why that was the case, when in many other countries, if girls were given the opportunity to participate in education, they were often more successful than boys. In that regard, he wondered whether the Government was planning to introduce any temporary special measures to improve girls' access to secondary and post-secondary education. Lastly, he was curious as to the impact of the one-bonus-point system in awarding scholarships to girls, and whether the Government planned to extend the scheme to other fields.

54. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** commended the Government for the action it had taken on health, but lamented the considerable gap between the Government's vision and the reality on the ground. The report had been very frank in acknowledging that gap, referring openly to such problems as the stubbornly high rates of mother and child morbidity and mortality; the high fertility rate; the fact that women were subjected to frequent, closely-spaced pregnancies; the substandard prenatal and post-natal care; the lack of awareness about family planning; the low numbers of women using contraceptives; and the problem of clandestine abortions.

55. She had also been struck by the report's long list of harmful practices (CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, p. 45), some of which seemed very cruel as well as damaging to women's physical and mental health. According to the report, special emphasis had been placed on female genital mutilation (CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, p. 46); however, that was not the only practice that posed health issues. She wondered whether any measures had

been taken to eliminate other harmful practices. While she understood the reasons for the slow pace of change, she said that a woman's right to health would be realized only when such practices were addressed and eliminated.

56. Lastly, according to the report (CEDAW/C/MLI/2-5, p. 45), the HIV/AIDS infection rate was higher among women than among men; that was not the case in many countries. She therefore encouraged the Government to intensify its information and education programmes in the area of sexual health and particularly HIV/AIDS.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.