



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Fifty-fifth session

Summary record of the 1140th meeting*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 16 July 2013, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ameline

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* No summary records were issued for the 1138th and 1139th meetings.

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

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

Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Cape Verde (CEDAW/C/CPV/7-8; CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/7-8 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Cape Verde took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde), introducing the seventh and eighth periodic reports of Cape Verde (CEDAW/C/CPV/7-8), said that her Government had succeeded in implementing policies that contributed to women's empowerment. It had developed an appropriate legal framework and had created the institutional and social conditions needed to ensure its implementation, in spite of deep-rooted sociocultural factors that were an impediment to gender equality. New legislation passed since the report had been submitted included a Ministry of Defence ordinance designed to ensure equal treatment for women in military service and to protect their maternity rights, enacted in April 2013, and a new law against gender-based violence that had entered into force in March 2011, thereby fulfilling the Committee's 2006 recommendation.
3. Work to establish the infrastructures, human resources, practices and general conditions essential to the effective application of that important new law was under way. An inter-institutional victim support and protection network, known as the SOL network, had been created; halfway houses had been established to provide emergency care; three support centres for victims of gender-based violence were due to open before the end of 2013; and construction of the State party's first purpose-built shelter, partly financed by a civil society organization, should be concluded in 2014.
4. In June 2013, the Ministry of Justice had concluded the pilot stage of a rehabilitation project for men accused of gender-based violence that was designed to foster accountability among the perpetrators of violence as well as a change of attitudes and behaviour. After a successful pilot, the project would be rolled out in 11 of the country's 22 municipalities over the next year. In addition, training to enhance awareness and understanding of gender equality issues and gender-based violence among education, health-care, communications and law enforcement professionals was due to commence in September 2013, along with the second phase of an awareness-raising programme for community leaders. Civil society partnerships were essential to progress in all the above areas and a prime example of that cooperation was the nationwide "A mim é pat" (I am a dad) campaign, which encouraged responsible fatherhood and co-responsibility in childcare.
5. In parallel with the legislative and policy developments, the Government had been engaged in a major planning and review exercise in which the Network of Women Parliamentarians and the Association of Women Lawyers had been active participants. An evaluation of the efficacy of earlier policies and programmes had been the point of departure for the formulation of the third national plan for the promotion of gender equality and the second national plan for combating gender-based violence, both of which were currently in the final drafting stages. Cognizant of the importance of objective, statistical information, the Government had also been working to improve data collection and analysis, and was due to conduct a third demographic survey of sexual and reproductive health, which included a section on gender-based violence, before the end of 2013.
6. The Government Programme for 2011–2016 recognized that gender equality was crucial for economic growth, poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Gender + project launched to give effect to that commitment had led, inter alia, to the preparation of a good practice guide, the adoption of

a gender equality plan within CVTelecom, one of the State's largest semi-public companies, and to the implementation of local gender equality plans in four municipalities.

7. Other advances had included the creation of the Gender Observatory and the completion of the first national time-use survey. The results of that survey, released in June 2013, would feed into public policies that promoted work-life balance and recognized the economic contribution of unpaid work. They should also help foster a shift in the common perception that families, and specifically women, should be exclusively responsible for caregiving – a change that the Gender Research Unit of Cape Verde University was also working to realize.

8. Also contributing to the push for broader gender equality were the Network of Women Parliamentarian's action plan for 2013–2014, which called for obligatory gender-sensitive budgeting at all levels of government; the recently completed national plan for health development; workshops on equity in health sector planning and implementation organized for Ministry of Health officials, doctors, student nurses and teaching staff; the Women Entrepreneurship project designed to empower young women in areas with high unemployment; the second national poverty reduction programme, focused on rural women; and programmes to increase women's representation in elective and other decision-making positions.

9. In spite of persistent patriarchal social values and the intense economic changes that it had experienced, Cape Verde had achieved many advances in its 38 years of independence. It was one of the few countries expected to meet almost all its MDGs in 2015 and had gained middle-income country status in 2007. The Government recognized that much remained to be done, but was confident that the required momentum and commitment were there.

Articles 1 and 2

10. **Ms. Patten** wished to know whether the revised text of the Constitution expressly established: a definition of discrimination in line with article 1 of the Convention; the Convention's precedence over domestic legislation; the principle of parity; and provisions for the adoption of temporary special measures such as quotas. She also asked how the State party ensured the Convention's visibility and encouraged judges to invoke its provisions; what was being done to address the multiple discrimination experienced by vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities, migrant women, elderly women and women of African descent; and whether the bill to align the National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship with the Paris Principles provided for a specific mechanism for complaints of discrimination against women. Lastly, she sought an update on the bill's status.

11. **Ms. Pires** (Country Rapporteur) asked whether members of parliament referred to the Committee's concluding observations and general comments in their oversight of the executive's work. Since mobility was difficult in Cape Verde, she would like to know how the State party ensured familiarity with the Convention in remote communities and outlying islands. Turning lastly to issues of language, she asked when all remaining discriminatory language would be eliminated from the text of the Constitution and what was being done to avoid ambiguity and confusion in the use of the terms "equity" and "equality".

Article 3

12. **Ms. Zou Xiaojiao**, echoing Ms. Pires' concerns, invited the delegation to explain and clarify the continuing use of the term "equity" either alongside or as a substitute for the term "equality". She also requested more information on the status of the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity. Did it have adequate resources and authority to provide advice

on all policies for women and what was its budget? She would be interested to know what priorities had been identified for the third national plan for the promotion of gender equality, when the plan would be adopted, when the bill concerning the National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship would be adopted and whether the Commission's mandate would expressly include the promotion and protection of women's rights.

13. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that, in response to the Committee's 2006 recommendations, her Government had worked hard to increase awareness of the Convention and its provisions. Both the current report and the concluding comments on the sixth periodic report (CEDAW/C/CPV/CO/6) had been distributed to members of parliament in Portuguese, and around 90 per cent of the recommendations had been acted upon. Although the Convention was rarely invoked directly in court, efforts to raise awareness of its provisions among judges and other court officials were under way. The State party ensured that all islands of the archipelago were represented in all meetings and consultation processes.

14. The legislature was endeavouring to remove all discriminatory language from the Constitution. The specificities of Portuguese, which used masculine plural forms to denote both men and women, complicated the process but there was a commitment to ensuring that all references to "*direitos do homem*" (the rights of man) were replaced by the term "*direitos humanos*" (human rights). The principle of parity was not expressly established in the Constitution, although the text provided for differential treatment and positive discrimination. However, the Government was aware that parity laws were being used with increasing frequency to bring more women into elected offices and would be exploring the possibility of adopting such measures in due course.

15. With regard to especially vulnerable groups of women, legislation to improve support for persons living with disability and plans for a quota system that would bring more employees with disabilities into the civil service were in the pipeline. A specific strategy on immigration had been adopted for the first time in 2011, in recognition of the growing number of migrants coming to Cape Verde from West Africa. The corresponding plans and programmes accorded considerable attention to women's issues. A particular concern was female genital mutilation, and the State party was working hard to respond appropriately whenever such practices were identified.

16. The future status of the National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship, which had initially been created for the purpose of drafting reports, was still under discussion. The Government was aware of the need for a national human rights mechanism compliant with the Paris Principles, but it was not clear whether the Commission would assume that role or a separate ombudsman's office would be created.

17. The Institute for Gender Equality and Equity was an autonomous public body that received State funding and submitted proposals to Government but depended heavily on civil society cooperation for the success of its initiatives. Although it had a small, streamlined central structure, it was supported by a vast network of partners that included the Association of Women Parliamentarians, focal points within Government ministries, health workers and police officers.

18. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that many of the concepts, rights and freedoms established in the Convention were expressly iterated in articles 1 and 7 of the new Constitution of 2010. The Institute for Gender Equality and Equity took the view that a decentralized network-based approach was the most effective means to implement policy and disseminate information in an archipelago nation. Close partnerships with State agencies, NGOs and other organized networks were therefore essential. For example, the

support and advocacy of the Association of Women Parliamentarians had been pivotal in the successful campaign for the country's first laws against gender-based violence.

19. With regard to the possibility of conceptual confusion between equity and equality, she said that the principle of equality was expressly established in all relevant laws but that the goal actually being pursued was fair in terms of proper access to goods, services and opportunities. In her view, the main problems outstanding lay not in understanding the concepts but in facilitating access; in order to address the obstacles in that area, goods and services sometimes had to be tailored to the needs of the intended beneficiaries.

20. Three priorities had been identified for the third national plan for the promotion of gender equality: effective application of the special law against gender-based violence; gender mainstreaming using a new, more effective methodology; and successful, ongoing implementation of the gender equality components of the Government Programme for 2011–2016.

21. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity was based in the office of the Prime Minister and was funded by the national budget. The name given to the Institute had been welcomed by the people of Cape Verde and there seemed to be a general understanding of the need for a distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* equality.

22. **Ms. Pires** asked whether budgetary resources were allocated to civil society organizations to enable them to carry out activities, particularly relating to women with disabilities.

23. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that the Institute had so-called programme contracts with NGOs active in the country that made provision for funding. Such contracts not only enabled NGOs to carry out activities but also ensured that they were accountable to the Institute. With regard to persons with disabilities, she acknowledged that Cape Verde needed to do more to improve their situation. A law was being drafted that would guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities in the future; however she was unsure whether the law would specifically address women with disabilities.

Articles 4 to 6

24. **Ms. Schulz** said that a number of the measures referred to in the report (paras. 112, 122, 127 and 129) in connection with article 4 were not in fact temporary special measures but related to permanent responsibilities under the Convention. She was perplexed by the reference in paragraph 120 to achieving equal opportunities, when article 4 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 referred to *de facto* or substantive equality, not just equal opportunities.

25. Turning to temporary special measures for specific vulnerable groups, she asked whether the State party had a global strategy or sectoral strategies to deal with the problems faced by women with disabilities and whether such strategies provided for the participation of disabled women's associations. Furthermore, had the Government adopted measures to combat the risk of reproduction of poverty in households headed by women and did it plan to introduce temporary special measures to improve the situation of women in prisons? Lastly, she enquired about the results of the policies on employment and housing, described in paragraphs 79, 81 and 83 of the report.

26. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that despite the number of laudable initiatives that had been undertaken by the State party, she was concerned about a fundamental problem that had been highlighted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, namely that there was widespread discrimination against young girls in Cape Verde. She would therefore welcome further information on social attitudes towards boys and girls and on whether

male dominance of society and a patriarchal system were generally accepted. She recalled the Committee's own strong recommendations on such matters in connection with the State party's previous periodic report and that the main aim of the Convention was to eliminate the idea of superiority of one gender over another. In addition, she wished to know whether women with disabilities faced additional discrimination as a result of their condition, particularly when seeking health care or employment.

27. With regard to evaluation of the national plan to combat gender-based violence, she asked whether there was a baseline for the analysis of the results and whether the plan included clear objectives. Noting that the plan had provided for a framework for cooperation among relevant institutions to combat gender-based violence, she asked to what extent such cooperation had really existed.

28. **Ms. Pimentel** said that the report and the presentation by the delegation showed that there was political awareness of the role of women in society and the importance of gender equality, as well as a real understanding of the concepts underlying the public policies required to comply with the Convention. Welcoming the adoption of the special law to combat gender-based violence, she asked about "the regulation" of the law, referred to in the written replies (CEDAW/C/CPV/7-8), progress with implementation of the law and whether there was a time frame for full implementation. In addition, she wished to know whether all relevant actors were involved in the implementation process, such as the police, judiciary, lawyers and civil society and, in particular, women's associations. Although the law did not make a specific reference to women with disabilities, she asked whether it might allow for measures to prevent violence, including sexual violence, against such women. Were any steps being taken to ensure that women with disabilities had real access to justice, starting with proper legal advice? Had there been any cases of prosecution of persons responsible for violence against disabled women or girls?

29. **Ms. Pomeranzi**, recalling the concern expressed by the Committee in its concluding observations on the State party's previous periodic report about the possible impact of increased tourism on the incidence of prostitution, said that Cape Verde had still not adopted legislation or a national plan against trafficking. Why had the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity not taken trafficking issues into account in its overall gender equality plans? It seemed that there was limited cooperation between the relevant ministry and the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity on trafficking and prostitution. Data was required on the victims of trafficking and on the measures taken to address prostitution and the rehabilitation of its victims. While she acknowledged the difficulties faced by the State party in implementing such measures owing to its geographical constraints, she felt that there was some connection with the prevailing patriarchal attitudes in Cape Verdean society and sought the opinion of the delegation in that regard.

30. **Ms. Fortes** (Cape Verde), acknowledging that Cape Verde was a very patriarchal society, said that programmes and measures were being implemented in order to eliminate violence against women. There were awareness-raising activities for the judiciary, police force and social work sector and appropriate manuals and guidance had been produced. The special law to combat gender-based violence focused principally on mainstreaming gender issues and on the prevention of violence. A three-year programme had recently been launched to implement the law. As part of the programme, training was being provided to primary and secondary schoolteachers to help eliminate sexist stereotypes in the classroom, and the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity was working with the Ministry of Education to eliminate such stereotypes from the school curriculum. A major national NGO was also cooperating with the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity to disseminate information on gender equality and perceptions of masculinity to communities.

31. There was indeed a need to pay greater attention to other gender-related issues, such as the situation of women with disabilities, their limited access to services and violence

against them. The second national plan to combat gender-based violence, currently being drafted, would deal with such matters. With regard to statistical data, she said that 2,500 women per year used the victim support network that had already been introduced in 11 municipalities. It was planned to set up more victim support centres throughout the country that would take into account the needs of women with disabilities. The most recent demographic survey on sexual and reproductive health had included a module on gender-based violence, which showed that 22 per cent of women in Cape Verde had been victims of violence. The statistics indicated a higher incidence of violence in Santiago, Praia and Sal and therefore attention would be focused primarily on those areas. Other information provided had showed that gender-based violence stemmed from the prevailing sexist stereotypes and gender roles and thus greater efforts must be deployed to counter them. The establishment of a national commission dealing with trafficking issues was under way. The Institute for Gender Equality and Equity would play a significant role in that commission and continue to monitor the trafficking and prostitution situation.

32. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde), in response to questions regarding special temporary measures, said that there was real political will to promote gender equality; the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity was focusing on ensuring that equality issues were mainstreamed across all sectors. The Gender + project had been developed to promote gender equality at the national, institutional and community levels and to ensure that all sectors and institutions incorporated a gender equality-based approach in their work. As to concerns expressed about women who were heads of households, she said that one of the main aims of the second national programme to combat poverty was to cater for the needs of such women, particularly those living in rural areas.

33. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde), while acknowledging that greater efforts could be made to introduce temporary special measures, said it was important to remember that Cape Verde was a developing country that had gained independence less than 40 years previously. As a result, priorities had to be set and problems dealt with in stages, and significant progress had already been made in the health and education sectors and in poverty reduction.

34. More needed to be done to address the problems faced by persons with disabilities. Some progress had been made such as the introduction of special infrastructures for children with disabilities in some schools, and greater visibility and recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities in general, but additional measures were still required. However, it had not been possible to accord priority to women with disabilities in the third national plan to promote gender equality currently being drafted. It had been decided to focus on other matters, such as gender-based violence, women's access to politics and economic empowerment.

35. Progress was gradually being made in those other sectors, by making optimal use of external assistance provided. It should be noted that, in economic terms, Cape Verde was now in a transitional phase. For example, in previous years, the United Nations Children's Fund had paid for polio vaccination campaigns, whereas those campaigns were now funded by the Government. Yet, Cape Verde was obliged to establish priorities and make budgetary allocations based on available resources. She assured the Committee that even if certain problems were not being dealt with at present, they would be in future.

36. Gender stereotypes were indeed the most significant barrier to achieving gender equality; equal attention needed to be paid to boys and girls in the education system, although focusing on education to address stereotypes was not enough. It was important to look at the issue from another perspective, such as the anthropological one. A gender and family study centre had been established for that purpose. Violence, particularly sexual violence against women, had been rife throughout the history of the country on account of

the slave trade, and still had repercussions for women in contemporary Cape Verdean society.

37. As far as gender-based violence were concerned, she said that since the entry into force of the special law to combat gender-based violence, sentences had been handed down for acts of violence against women, with penalties including prison terms and community work. The previous year only two women had perished as a result of gender-based violence, compared with seven or nine in previous years, and she hoped that the figure represented a downward trend. Furthermore, there were rehabilitation programmes for the perpetrators of gender-based violence.

38. Recognizing that more work needed to be done to deal with human trafficking, she said that since 2001 steps had been taken to improve national and maritime security. Nevertheless as Cape Verde was an archipelago it was difficult to patrol the entire coastline. Monitoring centres had been established and agreements had been signed with many European countries to combat trafficking and to monitor the movement of persons. However, more work still needed to be done to tackle matters relating to prostitution, including the conditions of sex workers and HIV/AIDS; the third national plan to promote gender equality and would cover such aspects.

39. **Ms. Pomeranzi** requested information on the status of the draft law against trafficking. While she understood the particular geographical constraints of the archipelago, she considered that trafficking problems could be remedied through agreements with destination countries. With so much progress already made on other fronts, she wondered why Cape Verde had not taken the necessary steps to tackle the problem of human trafficking properly.

40. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that although women now enjoyed greater empowerment in Cape Verde, there was no obvious sign of increased paternal responsibility within families and asked for more information in that regard. In addition, she wished to know whether the State party had a register where the police could record complaints of violence against women. Such a register was extremely important and would be a positive step forward in the fight against violence.

41. **Ms. Pimentel** requested more information on the rehabilitation programmes for the perpetrators of violence against women. While she welcomed such a measure, she was concerned that it might replace punishment.

42. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that significant efforts had been made to promote greater shared parental responsibility; moreover, a national NGO ran a project to promote different perceptions of masculinity. However, policies to encourage fathers to take more responsibility and to promote the establishment of childcare services so that women could reconcile work and family life were needed. Currently, 74 per cent of labour in Cape Verde was unpaid, domestic work done by women. The Institute for Gender Equality and Equity had submitted recommendations to the Government regarding policies on shared responsibility in households and the need to factor unpaid work into the Gross Domestic Product.

43. **Ms. Fortes** (Cape Verde) said that there was a register for cases of violence, although it required some improvement. The Institute for Gender Equality and Equity was currently working with the Ministry of Justice and the National Institute of Statistics on the establishment of a database for the judiciary and police and on the improvement of the quality and quantity of data collected. A protocol for police procedures had also been drawn up on how to process complaints, with a view to having a standardized data system nationwide.

44. Rehabilitation for the perpetrators of violence against women was a complementary measure; it did not mean that perpetrators would go unpunished. Rehabilitation enabled them to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions with a view to rectifying their behaviour. The law clearly established that the perpetrators of violence against women must be punished, even if the punishment was not necessarily imprisonment.

45. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that her country had signed the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and that draft legislation on trafficking would be submitted to parliament for consideration shortly. In addition, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, two projects had been undertaken to update other relevant national legislation and to address the problem of illegal immigration. It was important to note that the phenomenon of prostitution and human trafficking in Cape Verde was directly linked to the development of tourism. More specific and targeted measures must be adopted, in the field of education and in cooperation with civil society.

46. Efforts had been undertaken to counter gender stereotyping, for example through the Children's Parliament, in which girls were encouraged to participate and to play leading roles. Moreover, when she had been Minister of Defence, she had actively promoted the participation of women in the armed forces. The elimination of gender stereotypes was a work in progress and there was a long way to go. However, bearing in mind that prior to independence women had not been allowed to be involved in business or even travel alone, great strides had been made and efforts to achieve gender parity would be pursued by the relevant institutions and stakeholders.

Articles 7 to 9

47. **Ms. Schulz** asked whether the State party was aiming for 50/50 gender parity in political representation and whether it would be applied at both national and municipal levels and to both the executive and legislative powers. Why had parity measures failed thus far and what mechanisms had been established to remedy the situation? She sought clarification as to whether the figures given by the State party related to the number of women placed on the electoral lists, or the number elected. What action had been taken to increase the number of women in leadership positions in community associations and in the civil service?

48. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that the aim was to achieve 40/60 parity. Discussions were being held with the two main political parties to try to win them over to the cause and a new parity law was being drafted. Women were still held back by the burden of having to balance their careers and family lives; it was the main reason why women did not take on leadership roles in community associations. While the majority of teachers were women, they remained underrepresented at managerial level. Gender mainstreaming was making a difference in the civil service, however, with increasing numbers of women occupying managerial positions.

49. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that efforts were being made at the grass-roots level in the public sector and in political parties to ensure that more women reached decision-making positions at local and national levels, in the hope that many would come forward as candidates in the 2016 elections. The appointment of gender specialists for rural community programmes had resulted in more women becoming leaders of community associations. Gender equality plans were also being implemented to increase women's participation at the municipal level.

50. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, emphasized the importance of women being not only the beneficiaries, but also the decision makers in the

Government's new strategy on growth and poverty. She welcomed its commitment to ensuring a paradigm shift in that respect.

Articles 10 to 14

51. **Ms. Gbedemah** asked what measures had been adopted to deal with sexual abuse in schools and to establish an early detection mechanism. How many cases had been reported, investigated and prosecuted and how had the victims been rehabilitated? She asked how many girls were enrolled in primary and secondary schools and whether the increase in female enrolments in technical education meant that more girls were studying traditionally male dominated subjects. What measures were in place to encourage more girls to study technical subjects at the vocational training level? She also asked what steps had been taken to incorporate inclusive education into core teacher training curricula and in-service training. She requested statistics disaggregated by gender and location on the number of children with disabilities attending primary, middle and high schools and on their completion rates. What percentage of pregnant students dropped out of school permanently and what training was in place for teachers in sexual and reproductive health education to help address teenage pregnancy? Noting the delay in revoking the 2001 Guidelines for better management of pregnancy in schools, she requested an update on the implementation of the recommendation by the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity to establish specific regulations allowing for the reconciliation of pregnancy and motherhood with studies, as mentioned in the State party's replies.

52. **Ms. Patten** asked what mechanisms were in place to ensure the effective implementation of legislation enacted to bring about women's economic empowerment and to provide social protection for women working in the informal sector. What steps were being taken to monitor employment in the private sector with a view to eliminating discriminatory practices and addressing the problem of higher female unemployment? She requested information on the gender pay gap and asked whether the impact of the national plan for gender equality and equity in the area of collective bargaining on wage disparity had been assessed. She asked whether the Labour Code would be amended to include the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and whether it would be incorporated into national collective agreements. What measures were in place to avoid the indirect discrimination of women in the application of the objective criteria set forth in section 16 of the Labour Code on the right to fair remuneration? She also asked whether the Labour Inspectorate monitored the implementation of the Labour Code to ensure that women did not suffer from direct or indirect discrimination. She enquired about steps taken to combat occupational segregation and to improve women's access to vocational training. Given that the Labour Code was not applicable to rural workers and labour-intensive activities, what alternative legal provisions were in place?

53. **Ms. Nwankwo** requested information on the State party's health policy and on measures adopted to ensure substantive equality in the provision of health services, especially prenatal, birth and postnatal care, including for women with disabilities. Independent reports indicated that women with disabilities were often subjected to intrusive and irreversible medical interventions such as abortion and forced sterilization without their informed consent. Had legislation been adopted to ensure that all health-care services were based on the free and informed consent of the persons concerned, and that involuntary treatment and confinement were illegal, in accordance with international standards? She asked whether abortion was legal in Cape Verde and whether it was available when the life of the mother was threatened, or when the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest. She wished to know what steps were being taken to prevent stigma and discrimination against women living with HIV/AIDS and women with disabilities. Were there plans to take account of women with disabilities in policies, strategies and plans, including national HIV/AIDS care measures, and to ensure that information and health-care services relating

to sexual and reproductive health, HIV and STIs were available to women and girls with disabilities in age-appropriate formats? Lastly, she asked whether the Government funded NGOs providing health services and whether they were being monitored to ensure that standards were maintained.

54. **Ms. Pimentel** noted that charges had been introduced in 2009 for sexual and reproductive health services and wondered whether that disadvantaged poorer women. She asked whether the influence of culture and religion hindered the process of broadening the scope of legislation to bring it into line with the Convention, specifically the decriminalization of abortion.

55. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that the Government was striving to ensure that the needs of all vulnerable groups of women, not just women with disabilities, were taken into account in relevant policies, strategies and plans. A national health policy had been drawn up to establish universal health coverage, but was hampered by the need for more investment in infrastructure to cater for the 500,000 inhabitants scattered over the archipelago of islands. Notable progress had been made in sexual and reproductive health and maternal mortality, and free prenatal and postnatal care was provided to all. A progressive scale of charges for health care had been introduced following the loss of significant international assistance when Cape Verde had become a middle income country. The poor were not disadvantaged because the payment system was means-tested to ensure that persons unable to pay received free health care.

56. Despite the influence of religion in Cape Verde, abortion was legal on any grounds up to three months' gestation and thereafter only if there were valid medical grounds. Abortion had never been criminalized and hospitals were obliged to offer abortion services. Forced sterilization and other medical interventions were illegal and punished accordingly. Legislation on HIV/AIDS had recently been enacted to cater for the needs of sufferers and penalize discrimination. Improvements should be made to the provision of prenatal care, including screening and scanning, and efforts should be made to recruit more men into the health system to encourage more adolescent boys and men to use it, particularly its sexual and reproductive health services. Pregnant girls had not been treated well in the education system in the past and guidelines had therefore been introduced to allow pregnant students to take a break from education and return after the birth. A study had shown, however, that most girls did not return to school and new regulations had been introduced giving schools autonomy on how to address the problem, and the Cape Verdean Institute of Children and Adolescents had decided to submit a bill to parliament to revoke the guidelines.

57. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that a raft of measures had been adopted to encourage girls to study science subjects and gender-awareness training had been provided for teachers. Although the principle of equal pay for work of equal value was not explicitly mentioned in the Labour Code, article 5 established the principle of equality between workers, including remuneration. Compliance with the Labour Code was monitored by the Labour Inspectorate, which was an independent body. Steps had been taken to address gender inequalities in agriculture and a census of the sector would be carried out in 2013, with new data collected to be used for gender mainstreaming purposes.

58. **Ms. Gbedemah** sought responses to her questions about training for teachers in sexual and reproductive health education to address teenage pregnancy and about steps being taken to ensure that more girls opted for technical education.

59. **Ms. Schulz** asked when national legislation would be brought into line with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and article 11 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with respect to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

60. **Ms. Pimentel** asked whether persons unable to pay for health care had free access to health care throughout the islands and whether the staff in the health-care system was willing and able to treat the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

61. **Ms. Nwankwo** reiterated her question about the monitoring of health services provided by NGOs.

62. **Ms. Patten** recalled her questions on pay gaps and on how the private sector was regulated. She asked what protection was afforded to migrant women workers and whether impact assessments had been conducted on the implementation of the State party's Decent Work Country Programme and the national plan for gender equality and equity. Was data available on the number of women who had benefited from such programmes, in particular with regard to vocational training and access to jobs and occupations, including jobs in non-traditional fields?

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.