



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

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Ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 156th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 24 January 1990, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. EVATT

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

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

Initial report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
(continued) (CEDAW/C/5/Add.52 and Amend.1-4)

Article 9

1. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked if the provision of the British Nationality Act whereby a man (but not a woman) who was a British citizen was entitled, until 31 December 1987, to acquire British citizenship for his children born in a foreign country who would not automatically be British citizens at birth had been abolished and, if so, whether the reservation expressed by the United Kingdom with respect to article 9 of the Convention had been withdrawn.
2. Ms. UKEJE asked what rationale lay behind that provision of the British Nationality Act.
3. Ms. TALLAWY noted, with regard to the immigration of students, that males were treated differently from females: the husband of a female student was not automatically admitted to the United Kingdom and was not entitled to work there, whereas the wife and children of a male student were admitted unconditionally and could work if they wished. She asked whether the United Kingdom intended to amend that provision, which constituted a flagrant case of discrimination between men and women.

Article 10

4. Ms. FORDE said that the system of education described in the report appeared remarkable. Since school attendance was compulsory from the age of 5, she wished to know whether day-care centres were available to accommodate children below that age, in order that women might be enabled to work. The report also stated that most schools were mixed. She wondered whether studies had been carried out to determine whether that system was more beneficial for girls than a system in which they attended single-sex schools. In conclusion, it would be useful to know whether the children of immigrants or those belonging to a minority could receive an education of the same standard as that provided to other children.
5. Ms. GUAN Mingian, referring to the section entitled "Classroom practice", asked what exactly was meant by "the hidden curriculum" and "the different treatment of boys and girls in the classroom and in nursery schools".
6. Ms. TALLAWY asked whether there was a brochure describing the programmes mentioned under the heading "Non-traditional careers", on which other countries would certainly wish to draw.

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7. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING congratulated the Government of the United Kingdom on its efforts to improve education at all levels. She wished to know whether the Cockcroft Report on mathematics, which placed emphasis on teaching methods that appeared to motivate and involve girl pupils more effectively, had been followed up with corresponding action. Noting that efforts were being made to teach information technology, physics and mathematics to groups of either girls or boys, she asked whether there were any studies comparing the results obtained from those groups with those obtained from mixed groups.

8. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS asked what the response of teachers in Scotland had been to the "Strategy for equality", what the results had been and whether a comparable initiative had been launched in the rest of the United Kingdom. With regard to the British Virgin Islands, she fully agreed that, as stated in the report, the issue of pregnant teenagers, who were currently required to leave school, needed further review. Was the legal age of marriage the same in the Islands as in the United Kingdom? Another area of concern in the Territory was the fact that the percentage of children not attending school was considerably higher than that of those attending. She wished to know what was being done to deal with that problem and whether it was possible, in the Islands, to open higher education institutions supported by the United Kingdom, thus avoiding the need for girls to pursue their studies on the mainland.

9. Ms. ESCOBAR shared the concern expressed by Ms. Pilataxi de Arenas concerning the pregnancies of teenagers in the British Virgin Islands and asked whether such teenagers were able to complete their studies. She also wished to know what percentages of both women and men were illiterate.

10. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked why the Department of Education and Science continued to subsidize a small number of schools which admitted only either boys or girls and whether that policy was based on any particular ideology. The initiatives of the Department of Trade and Industry to encourage girls to choose non-traditional careers in industry, administration, engineering and information technology were laudable. The question of teacher training was very important; it would be interesting to know the results of the programme designed to prevent future teachers from indulging in preconceptions based on a pupil's sex, and to know what sort of training was provided to teachers with responsibility for sex education.

11. Ms. SAYOGYO asked whether new measures had been taken to encourage women to engage in more intensive professional training, particularly in areas so far dominated by men.

Article 11

12. Ms. DIALLO SOUMARE asked whether the situation of women in the private sector - which was the predominant sector in the United Kingdom - had been studied to determine the extent of women's integration into the working environment and the sorts of constraints to which their presence gave rise. She wished to know what measures had been taken to apply the Convention in the United Kingdom's highly conservative agricultural sector.

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13. Ms. GUAN Mingian, referring to the report's section on unemployment, said that she was pleased to learn that the unemployment rate was lower for women than for men. She also wished to know whether the policy of deregulation introduced with a view to encouraging employers to create jobs was of beneficial effect for women.

14. Ms. FORDE asked, also on the subject of unemployment, whether the rate indicated in the report was equally applicable to immigrant women or those belonging to a minority, or whether separate statistics were compiled for that group of women.

15. Ms. TALLAWY said that, despite the adoption of the Equal Pay Act of 1970, there was still a considerable disparity between the remuneration received by women and men respectively, and she would like to know the extent of that disparity. Had special measures been taken to make up for the lack of self-confidence amongst some women and girls which, according to the report, also constituted an obstacle to full equality?

16. Ms. AKAMATSU asked whether the reasons why the disparity between women's and men's salaries had not been reduced since 1975 - despite the entry into force of the Equal Pay Act and the creation of the Equal Opportunities Commission - had been analysed. The provision whereby dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy could constitute unlawful discrimination only if a man in a comparable position would not have been dismissed was inconsistent with article 11, paragraph 2 (a), of the Convention.

17. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING requested further information concerning the status of part-time workers, most of whom were women: did they enjoy the same social security coverage as full-time employees, even if they completed a minimum number of hours of work, or did the provision of such coverage depend on the size of the firm for which they worked? As for an interruption of professional activity for the purpose of child-rearing and a subsequent return to the job market, it would be interesting to know the average length of such interruptions and at what age women generally began to return to work, in order to plan retraining courses for such women. She asked what the Government's position was with respect to child care and whether it believed that families or employers were responsible for such care. According to the report, the Government encouraged employers to open day-care centres, but was the Government aware of the risks which that implied? If, for any reason, an employer was obliged to close the day-care centres, what would happen to those women who depended on them in order to be able to work?

18. Ms. ESCOBAR asked whether unemployment had the same consequences for men as for women. She also asked whether the United Kingdom had devised a method of quantifying domestic work in the GNP.

19. Ms. OESER asked whether the bottle-necks which prevented women from becoming doctors also existed in the universities.

20. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU said that, before welcoming the high percentage of women engaged in economic activities in the United Kingdom, it should be remembered that a large number of jobs they held were only part-time. They accepted such jobs in order to perform the family obligations which traditionally were incumbent on women, a fact which did not favour the equitable sharing of domestic tasks. Complete equality had not been established with regard to access to the various social security benefits. Under the heading "Retirement pension", the report stated that the rights to the pension were safeguarded for mothers who were away from work looking after children or for people giving up work to care for severely disabled relatives. She wondered whether housewives were entitled to such a pension under that heading. With regard to social services for the elderly, she asked how many persons benefited from those services and the percentage of needs covered. She would also like to know if the percentage of women engaged in a non-remunerative activity not covered by social security, particularly in a family enterprise, was known. That phenomenon was particularly widespread in the Virgin Islands, which were largely dependent on tourism.

21. Ms. SAYOGYO asked whether the percentage of women planning to make a career in science and engineering was increasing and if the rate of unemployment indicated in the report took into account the non-structured sector, especially in the rural areas and whether it was still decreasing.

22. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ said the report mentioned numerous cases of latent discrimination. The Code of Conduct of the Equal Opportunities Commission, for example, was only a series of recommendations, whereas under the Convention such provisions should be compulsory. Dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy was not considered as illegal discrimination (under the Convention any discrimination was illegal) unless, in a comparable situation, a man would not have been dismissed. However, there was no comparable situation for a man and the very existence of such a provision constituted a flagrant discrimination against women. On the question of unemployment, the report stated that the Government could not give its support to measures based only on the reduction of female unemployment. That comment was devoid of foundation because the general measures taken against unemployment were derived from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and not from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. She would like to know the percentage of women who were members of a trade union and whether such membership was an advantage or not for a woman, taking into account the fact that employers often established as a condition for employment non-membership in any trade union. Finally, she asked for information on the consequences of drug addiction on female employment.

Article 12

23. Ms. CORTI welcomed the law of 16 July 1985 prohibiting female circumcision. She asked for details on legislation concerning drugs and more particularly on the provisions enacted against drug traffickers. On the question of abortion, she noted that the law of 1967 made provision for the legal interruption of pregnancy if two doctors authorized it. In other words, only a therapeutic abortion was allowed. The United Kingdom apparently did not recognize the principle that women

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could do what they liked with their own bodies and could interrupt a pregnancy for family, social or economic reasons. She asked whether there was a movement demanding new legislation on the subject and what was the position of women's organizations. The statistics appearing in the report concerned exclusively abortions registered between 1982 and 1985. What was the position with clandestine abortions which the report said was "negligible". Was their number really negligible?

24. Ms. WALLA-TCHANGAI welcomed the measures taken by the United Kingdom to protect the health of mothers and children and in particular to discourage the use of certain harmful substances. She also welcomed the measures taken for the prevention of AIDS. On that subject, since prostitution was an offence in the United Kingdom and was also a cause of the spread of AIDS, she would like to know how preventive measures were applied in the case of prostitutes. The report contained statistics on abortions among adolescents under 16. Since the age of consent in the United Kingdom was fixed at 16, she asked whether such adolescents had become pregnant as a result of rape.

25. Ms. ALFONSIN DE FASAN noted that the United Kingdom was campaigning energetically against the spread of AIDS and against drug addiction. However, she would like to know more about the protection of women suffering from AIDS both at work and from the point of view of general health. She noted that the mortality rate for women was higher than that for men and wondered what were the reasons for that phenomenon which was contrary to the general trend. Moreover, in the case of working women, she felt that day nurseries were an important aid and that it should be possible to increase their number without excessive expenditure, since the birth rate was decreasing in the United Kingdom. Finally, she asked whether there were temporary centres to receive women whose health had been affected by acts of violence and if efforts were being made to assist such women to achieve financial independence by finding them work.

26. Ms. ESCOBAR asked whether girls under 16 needed parental permission for an abortion and if they had access to contraceptives.

27. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU, referring also to the question of abortion, would like to know how often the two medical practitioners referred to on page 101 of the original report, gave a positive opinion. She wondered about the medical expenses of abortion: were they covered by the National Health Service, social security or by the woman herself? She noted that the statistics for abortion referred to "non-residents" and to "agencies" and wished to know the meaning of those terms. With regard to the family planning services provided free by general practitioners and family planning clinics, she asked how such services were provided. She also wondered under what conditions abortions were carried out in the Falkland Islands; were abortions legal there and what medical care was provided?

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28. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS welcomed the law of 1985 prohibiting female circumcision. She quoted a document issued by the Commission on Human Rights stating that the practice was still being followed and that the United Kingdom was trying to combat it among the ethnic groups which allowed it. She asked who those ethnic groups were. She also asked about the results of the action taken by the United Kingdom Government in that field.

29. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether programmes had been envisaged for emigrant women who did not speak English.

Article 13

30. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING recalled that the United Kingdom representative had stated that a person whose spouse did not work enjoyed a tax reduction. Could such a reduction be considered as being designed to encourage women, especially in middle-income households, to remain at home to look after the children?

31. Ms. UKEJE asked whether the tax system in the British Virgin Islands was not somewhat discriminatory and if the laws adopted in the United Kingdom also applied to the Virgin Islands.

32. Ms. FORDE asked for clarifications on the subject of the Green Paper mentioned on page 107 of the initial report and on the disappointing results to which it had given rise. Certainly, in tax legislation there had been progress. But she wondered if the United Kingdom was really moving towards a totally separate system of taxation for husbands and wives. And if such was the case, would the provisions adopted in the United Kingdom be automatically applied in the dependent territories?

33. Ms. GUAN Mingian asked for more information about the general situation of the elderly and the major problems they encountered. She also requested further details about the two campaigns conducted by the Sports Council since 1982.

Article 14

34. Ms. ALFONSIN DE FASAN asked what possibilities were open to unemployed women in the rural areas to register as unemployed. Would it be possible to have a register kept by travelling personnel which would enable such women to receive unemployment benefits? What had been the results of plans designed to develop transport, health services and nurseries in the remote areas? She drew attention to that part of the report dealing with the conservative mentality of the rural areas and inquired what results had been achieved by the training courses organized for women in charge of small enterprises and whether such women benefited from social security coverage.

35. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked to what extent women living in rural areas could participate in the planning of social and economic development of their region, as stipulated in the Convention. It was stated in paragraph 27 of amendment 3 to the initial report that the most effective remedy for a person in the Isle of Man who had a grievance was by means of a complaint direct to a member of the local

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(Ms. Laiou-Antoniou)

assembly (House of Keys). She wondered if women living in the remote areas of the island could really use that method to have their claims heard. For example, was it likely that a woman who had been dismissed for being pregnant would go and complain directly to the local assembly?

36. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS referred to the increase in number of adoptions mentioned in the report. She wondered if that meant not only that British nationals adopted foreign children but also that aliens could also adopt children. She also asked if the recommendation of the Women's National Commission concerning co-operation between women and the police, particularly with regard to rape committed at home, was applied, and how.

37. Ms. SAYOGYO asked whether job-creating programmes existed for women in the rural areas and if so what had been the results.

Article 16

38. Ms. FORDE welcomed the law of 1976 against domestic violence and also the fact that it protected couples living together in consensual unions. She asked whether the Government of the United Kingdom was planning to extend the rights of couples living together in consensual unions to child maintenance and property rights. With regard to the law reforming the Family Code, adopted in 1987, she asked if children born out of wedlock could inherit from their father and on what terms. Did legislation on inheritance contain provisions concerning families established outside of marriage? What was the legal status of such families in the Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands? Did the laws adopted in the United Kingdom apply to those territories?

39. Ms. ALFONSIN DE FASAN noted that the number of households headed by women was constantly increasing. She asked whether there were any plans for giving psychological assistance to couples in difficulty and whether the main factors for the breaking up of unions were known.

40. Ms. GUAN Minqian asked a question about the two possible forms of marital dissolution: separation and divorce. In what circumstances did women choose separation?

41. Ms. AKAMATSU asked for additional details about the number of women who kept their maiden name at the time of marriage and on the number of couples who adopted a completely new name. If the woman continued to use her own name, how was the name of the child decided?

42. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING asked for information on the number of households headed by women and on their economic situation: did such women depend for their economic support on the regular pension, family benefits or special allowances? In the day nurseries was preference given to women who raised their children alone? Was there a problem of poverty among elderly women and did they receive benefits?

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43. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked whether family courts existed. If so, what was their sphere of competence? In case of divorce, what happened to the property acquired during the marriage? Did the woman have any rights to such property even if she had not worked?

44. The CHAIRPERSON said that the experts had shown great interest in the situation of women in the United Kingdom. She hoped that the questions asked would help to clarify the problems raised.

45. Ms. DENHAM (United Kingdom) thanked the experts for the tributes they had paid to her country and said that she would reply in as much detail as possible to the questions asked.

Initial report of Thailand (CEDAW/C/5/Add.51)

46. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Supatra Masdit (Thailand) took a place at the Committee table.

47. Ms. SUPRATA MASDIT (Thailand) said it was a privilege for her to represent her Government as the Minister responsible inter alia for supervising the formulation of laws and the adoption of policies designed to promote the status of women and to protect their rights in Thailand.

48. The initial report of Thailand (CEDAW/C/5/Add.51) had been submitted to the Committee in 1987. She would therefore emphasize in her statement certain new facts concerning the status of women which had occurred since then in her country.

49. Thailand had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985 but had not yet ratified it. Nevertheless, the provisions of the Convention had been reflected at the national level by basic changes in laws and policies. Proceeding from the general to the particular, she proposed to consider the national instruments responsible for promoting the status of women and defending their rights, national policies in that field, local laws and practices relating to the Convention, the specific problems now arising, the reservations and omissions which impeded the achievement of women's rights and, finally, future trends.

50. Turning to the national instruments for the promotion of the status of women and the protection of their rights, she pointed out that, after the change of government in 1988, a permanent national commission had been set up responsible for the status of women. Its task was to formulate policies and to submit plans for improving the status of women, to help governmental and private bodies to solve the problems of women and to recommend the adoption of new laws or the amendment of existing laws regarding women.

(Ms. Suprata Masdit, Thailand)

51. National policies regarding the status of women formed part of two specific plans. They were the sixth national economic and social development plan 1987-1991 and the long-term plan for the promotion of the status of women 1982-2001. The second plan had considerably influenced the first plan. The long-term plan was aimed at improving the status of women particularly in the rural areas and the shantytowns, at modifying laws that were unfair to women, at encouraging women to play a role in society and administration, at promoting co-operation between the public and private sectors with regard to the status of women, at increasing the efficiency of governmental machinery concerned with the status of women and at encouraging the establishment of women's organizations at different levels.

52. Those general objectives were supplemented by specific provisions aiming inter alia at providing the necessary care, including good nutrition, for pregnant women and ensuring that they benefited from governmental or other assistance during a period of six months after they had given birth. It was also stipulated that a couple should not have more than two children and should be able to choose the method of contraception which suited them.

53. The Long-Term Women's Development Plan had also identified certain groups requiring immediate attention. It emphasized the need to amend the abortion law, to widen the grounds for divorce and to impose stricter sentences on procurers who profited from prostitutes.

54. Scrutiny of local laws and practices which had a bearing on the Convention showed that there were very few Thai laws that conflicted with the Convention and that they tended to be covered by the reservations which Thailand had entered to certain provisions of the Convention.

55. The principle of non-discrimination was included in the Thai Constitution of 1978, which stipulated that all were equal before the law. The Trafficking of Women and Girls Act of 1928, the Prostitution Suppression Act of 1960 and the Penal Code of 1956, as amended, were consistent with article 6 of the Convention. The right to education was guaranteed by the Constitution and there was six years' universal compulsory schooling and a 97 per cent literacy rate. An array of laws provided for the protection of women in employment, including a 1972 Ministry of Labour notification providing for equal pay for men and women and 60 days' paid maternity leave. The administration of matrimonial property, which prior to 1976 had been the exclusive right of the husband, was now recognized as being the responsibility of both spouses. Discrimination in relation to certain professions, which had previously barred women from becoming public prosecutors and judges, had now been eliminated. Lastly, in 1987, the Penal Code, which previously had contained provisions protecting girls aged 13 and under against sexual violence, had raised the minimum age of consent to 15.

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(Ms. Suprata Masdit, Thailand)

56. The crucial issue in Thailand was de facto discrimination, since the de jure situation was relatively satisfactory. Such discrimination was prevalent in employment, where women's contribution in terms of housework had not been accorded enough attention; in wages, although equality in law was guaranteed in public life, where the number of women in Parliament was still too limited; in local government; and in the judiciary. On the other hand, there was virtual parity between men and women in international organizations.

57. Another issue of note was the breakdown of the family system as evidenced by the growing divorce rate. That situation could be attributed partly to the fact that economic needs forced an increasing number of women to take up employment while continuing to look after the family.

58. The advent of AIDS, with the official number of infected cases registered at 12,000 men and 2,000 women, had added another complicated dimension to the issue of women's rights.

59. The reservations entered by Thailand at the time of its accession to the Convention were an obvious Achilles heel which must be understood in their socio-cultural, economic and political setting. Only the mobilization of public opinion, which was already under way, would make it possible to eliminate those remnants of discrimination.

60. The first of the seven reservations concerned article 7 of the Convention (equality of access to public office) and reflected existing law and practice, whereby women were excluded from, inter alia, the army and certain key administrative posts. However, there was currently great interest in amending at least parts of the laws which perpetuated discrimination based on a patriarchal attitude towards gender-based laws.

61. The reservation entered to article 9, paragraph 2, had been motivated partly by the paternalistic structure of society and partly by the fear that the children of refugees and illegal immigrants would gain too extensively from the granting of Thai nationality. However, there was growing support for the idea that children should be able to take the nationality of either their father or their mother.

62. The reservation to article 10 (education) could be explained by the fact that women did not have access to military and certain other official institutions. That should not obscure a number of positive developments, however, such as the universalization of primary education, a 97 per cent literacy rate and an almost equal share of places for men and women in formal educational institutions.

63. Thailand would be able to withdraw its reservation to article 11 (1) (b) (employment) now that its laws provided for equality in that area.

64. The Government was also planning to withdraw its reservation to article 15 (3) (legal capacity), since men and women now had equal rights to enter into contractual relations.

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(Ms. Suprata Masdit, Thailand)

65. The reservation to article 16 (matrimonial matters) took account of certain laws and practices which were incompatible with the Convention. The Government was taking a step-by-step approach in that area. The National Commission on Women's Affairs had recently suggested that it become compulsory to stipulate marital status on identification cards, in order to prevent bigamy.

66. The last reservation, concerning article 29 (1) (International Court of Justice), was in conformity with international practice.

67. The prospects for progress in eliminating discrimination were encouraging from several standpoints. In addition to the desire to withdraw at least two reservations, there was a very clear trend towards amending the law on prostitution so that, rather than branding prostitutes as criminals, the emphasis would be on prevention and rehabilitation. There was also a proposal to expand maternity leave and to introduce paternity leave.

68. There was also increasing awareness of the need to see the development of women and children in the broader context of the protection of the family system. The Government had just designated a national family day and was exploring the possibility of more concrete strategies in that area.

69. In conclusion, the political and social will for more law reform and for changes in policy and practice was gaining ground. The challenges were many: women's rights must be shown to be compatible with national security, suggestions for reform must be put into action, the necessary resources must be allocated and women's participation at all stages of the process must be assured. With initiative and insight, however, the day would come when parochial practices yielded to the application of international norms.

70. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the representative of Thailand for her statement and asked her to convey to her Government congratulations on having acceded to the Convention and having submitted the initial report and the amendment thereto, which provided a better understanding of the mechanisms for implementing the Convention. She regretted that Thailand had entered so many reservations to the Convention, but welcomed the prospect that two of them might be withdrawn. She would have liked the report to include more information on the actual situation in Thailand.

71. Ms. BERNARD welcomed the presence of a woman member of the Thai Government, which was tangible proof of the progress made by women in that country. Like the Chairperson, she was concerned at the large number of reservations. She hoped that the Government would withdraw its reservations not only to article 11 (1) (b) and article 15 (3) but also to article 16. She welcomed the establishment of the National Commission on Women's Affairs, which was also responsible for reviewing reservations.

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72. Ms. SINEGIORGIS noted that the report was very frank and thus gave a clearer picture of the obstacles that existed and a better idea of the efforts made by the Government to eliminate vestiges of discrimination. She wished to know how much publicity had been given to the Convention and whether it had been translated into Thai. She was concerned at the number of reservations, some of which called into question crucial provisions of the Convention. Had Thailand actually ratified the Convention? The report seemed to contradict itself on that point. Lastly, why did the Thai Constitution not proclaim the equality of men and women explicitly, rather than using wording that was open to misinterpretation?

73. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS acknowledged the efforts made to eliminate discrimination and to enhance the corresponding legal mechanisms. That only increased her desire to see the early withdrawal of the reservations entered by the Government. What was the stumbling block - women's attitudes or government organs? What impact had the many consciousness-raising seminars for women had and had they been a government or a private sector initiative?

74. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ shared the hope of the preceding speakers that the reservations, which seriously affected the substance and goals of the Convention, would be withdrawn promptly. She said that she would like more information with regard to who decided on the membership of the National Commission on Women's Affairs, on whether minors below the age of 13 were protected against rape and on whether the five-year plan was part of the long-term plan.

75. Ms. OESER also expressed concern regarding the reservations, which affected the essence of the Convention. The report showed frankly the gap between the legal and the actual status of women. However, as the long-term plan indicated, a positive trend seemed to be developing. She wondered if the Government was applying that very detailed plan, which had been prepared by the preceding Government.

76. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU said that she was pessimistic because of the observations she had been able to make personally during a stay in Thailand and because of her reading of the report, which drew attention to many reservations. The developing countries were of course experiencing great difficulties, but political will could overcome many obstacles. In that connection, she expressed satisfaction that a woman had been appointed Minister for women's affairs in the Thai Government. She hoped that a vigorous effort would be made at the legislative level in order to make possible the application of the Convention.

77. Ms. UKEJE (Rapporteur) expressed the hope that the Thai Government would soon withdraw its reservations.

78. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING, noting that the political will to do so had certainly been strengthened, expressed the hope that the Thai Government would make further progress towards equality between men and women, that it would make the necessary changes and that it would withdraw its reservations. She had been glad to learn that a large number of commissions and committees had been established and wished to know whether there were funds available to those bodies for their programmes. She would also like to know what percentage of total resources the funds provided

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(Ms. Schopp-Schilling)

for the five-year plan and the long-term plan represented. With regard to the Convention, she wondered, like Ms. Sinegiorgis, whether or not it had been ratified. If not, what were the obstacles, in view of the fact that it had been signed as early as 1985?

79. Ms. TALLAWY emphasized the candour with which the report dealt with the obstacles to the improvement of the status of women in Thailand. She would also, however, have liked specific information on what measures had been taken to overcome those obstacles. She expressed concern with regard to the reservations, some of which affected fundamental rights (employment, education, legal capacity) and therefore contradicted the provisions of article 28, paragraph 2 of the Convention. Like other speakers, she wondered whether Thailand had ratified the Convention. From the report (page 4), that did not seem to be the case. But then, why had Thailand submitted an initial report when, in accordance with article 18, paragraph 1 (a) of the Convention the report was to be submitted "within the year following the entry into force of the Convention"?

80. The CHAIRPERSON, speaking on behalf of the members of the Committee, apologized to the representative of Thailand for being obliged to interrupt the discussion of her Government's report and asked her, in view of the lateness of the hour, to return the next day in order to hear the questions which would be asked, article by article, by the members of the Committee.

Report of the pre-session Working Group (CEDAW/C/CRP.12)

81. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee had before it the report of the pre-session Working Group established to prepare the list of questions to be transmitted in advance to the States Parties whose second periodic reports were to be discussed at the forthcoming meetings of the Committee. An amendment to that list, issued in English only, had just been circulated to the Committee. Unfortunately, it would not be possible to discuss those additional questions because of lack of time. She therefore suggested that the Committee should transmit to the States Parties concerned the report of the pre-session Working Group together with the questions raised individually by the experts. She asked for the Committee's views regarding that procedure.

82. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING, Ms. ILIC, Ms. SINEGIORGIS and Ms. GUAN Mingqian supported the Chairperson's proposal.

83. Ms. NOVIKOVA said she wished to point out, as a member of the Working Group, that the Group had no intention of excluding the co-operation of the other members. Respect for democratic procedures required that the Committee should discuss the questions raised individually by the experts.

84. Ms. CORTI felt that it was necessary to devote at least 10 minutes to discussing the list of questions to be transmitted to the States Parties. She explained briefly the way in which the pre-session Working Group had gone about its work and added that, in accordance with established practice, members of the

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(Ms. Corti)

Committee could always submit orally questions which did not appear in the report of the pre-session Working Group.

85. Ms. OESER said that she intended to review the questions she had raised in writing in order to see whether they duplicated those raised by the pre-session Working Group in its report. If that was the case, she was prepared to withdraw her questions, while reserving the right to raise them orally with the States Parties.

86. The CHAIRPERSON pointed out that the length of the session was limited. If the States Parties were asked questions which had not been submitted to them in advance in writing, they might not be able to reply in good time.

87. Ms. TALLAWY appealed to the experts who had prepared additional questions to proceed in the way suggested by Ms. Oeser, i.e., to make sure that their questions did not duplicate those the Working Group had already raised in its report. She explained that, in view of the large number of questions raised, the Working Group had been obliged to select those of them which seemed most important. If all the questions raised by the experts were to be transmitted to the States Members there would be no need for a pre-session Working Group; that task could be carried out just as well by the Secretariat.

88. The CHAIRPERSON, noting that the experts remained divided with regard to the transmission to the States Parties of questions added individually by members of the Committee, proposed that, at the present stage, only the report of the pre-session Working Group should be transmitted to the States Parties, on the understanding that the additional list could always be transmitted later if agreement on that subject was reached. If she heard no objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to proceed in that way.

89. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.