



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

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 2 April 1984, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. IDER

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER  
ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued) (CEDAW/C/5/Add.6 and Add.13)

Initial report of the Philippines (CEDAW/C/5/Add.6) (continued)

1. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ said that the Philippines had resolutely participated in activities aimed at achieving equality for women and their incorporation in the development process. The unfortunate observations of the Permanent Representative of the Philippines stood in contrast to those activities, presumably because they had been made in a personal and not an official capacity.
2. Ms. BERNARD associated herself with the views expressed by previous speakers. She believed that Ambassador Moreno Salcedo had spoken in a personal capacity and that his words showed how some men in the Philippines thought.
3. Ms. BIRYUKOVA said that many questions had remained unanswered, especially those relating to the different treatment accorded to men and to women, particularly with regard to family law and equal pay for equal work. It was clear that, in the Philippines, the Convention was not being implemented fully. Ambassador Moreno Salcedo could not have been speaking in a personal capacity, because he had appeared before the Committee as the representative of a State. In his statement, he had made it clear that, in practice, a discriminatory situation existed with regard to women. He had said that women did not occupy high-ranking posts, because, if they did, they would lose their femininity. That statement was offensive to women holding high office. It was a question of a lack of respect for the members of the Committee and for women in general. After hearing the statement of the representative of the Philippines, one might conclude that many of the provisions of the Convention were not being implemented in practice in that country.
4. Ms. PEYTCHEVA asked whether the Philippines was a party to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, and, if the answer was in the affirmative, she would like to know exactly what had been the date of ratification.
5. Ms. ILIC said that the statements of Ambassador Moreno Salcedo had plunged the Committee into confusion and perplexity, because they contrasted greatly with the efforts of Philippine women to achieve equality.
6. Ms. ESCUDERO MOSCOSO said that the report of the Philippines contained reliable information. The technique used for gathering information, which gave an exact idea of what provisions had been adopted for the protection of women, was unusual.
7. Ms. EL-FETOUH said that she agreed with the comments of previous speakers concerning the statement of Ambassador Moreno Salcedo. She found a contradiction between his statement that there were no laws for the protection of women but that that lack was made good by custom and the statement of the representative of the

(Ms. El-Fetouh)

Philippines that there were discriminatory laws which were not taken into account in practice. She asked, therefore, what was the respective validity of the laws and of the Convention.

8. Ms. JAYASINGHE said that, in Ambassador Moreno Salcedo's statement, it had been emphasized that, in the Philippines, there was discriminatory treatment in respect of women, since women were regarded as complementary to men and, consequently, they were not on a footing of equality with men.

9. Mrs. REBONG (Philippines) said that Ambassador Moreno Salcedo had expressed his personal view, for that was not the official position of the Philippines. She regretted that that view should have offended the Committee. Although, in family law, there were prohibitions against the undertaking of certain activities by women, such as the practice of a profession and participation in business, those provisions were not implemented in practice. Although the father of a family could choose his family's place of residence, it was usually the wife who chose it. Women enjoyed many rights from which they were barred by the law. Since the laws were discriminatory, the Philippine authorities were studying amendments with a view to remedying that injustice. The commission entrusted with the revision of the Civil Code and the Penal Code was also undertaking a study of the amendments to those laws. The Philippines had become a party to the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages in 1965 and to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others in 1952. In 1954, the Philippines had acceded to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children and to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age.

10. All the observations made in the Committee would be transmitted to Ambassador Moreno Salcedo for his information. Ambassador Moreno Salcedo had made the statements to which various members of the Committee had referred as expressions of personal views. The opinions which he had expressed were not shared by all Philippine men, even though it must be admitted that some of them held similar views, and nothing could be done to prevent them holding them. Nevertheless, the most important thing was that women and men occupying high-ranking positions in the Government were engaged in a common effort to correct all the inequalities and achieve the enhancement of the status of Philippine women. The provisions of the Civil Code and the Family Law were in the process of revision. It had been asked whether there were any women in the commission entrusted with the revision of those texts. That commission came under the Legal Centre of the University of the Philippines, which was now discharging the functions of the old Codes Commission established by the Congress; it was chaired by a woman, and its membership was mixed and included three women judges, several magistrates and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Services and Development and the Civic Assembly of Philippine Women, an organization which grouped together a number of the country's women's organizations. The proposed amendments would be ready by the next session of the National Assembly, to be held in June. She emphasized her great regret that the views expressed in a personal capacity by Ambassador Moreno Salcedo should have offended the Committee's experts.

11. Ms. OESER endorsed the statement made by Mr. Nordenfelt at the previous meeting and requested that it should be recorded in the summary record that, when representatives of States parties participated in the deliberations of the Committee and replied to questions relating to the reports of their respective countries, they were not speaking in a personal capacity but representing the Government of a State.

12. Mrs. REBONG said that Ambassador Moreno Salcedo had submitted the report as the representative of the Philippines. He had replied to some of the questions as the representative of his country and had expressed some views in a personal capacity.

Initial report of Rwanda (CEDAW/C/5/Add.13)

13. Ms. BAZIYAKA (Rwanda) said that the initial report of Rwanda might appear too concise and even incomplete, but that was because it had been prepared long before receipt of the general guidelines on the form and contents of the reports of States parties. The Government of Rwanda had adopted no legal or other measure in that field since it had signed and ratified the Convention, because measures had already been adopted in order to ensure women's full integration in the country's development and the expansion of their personality through access to education and to professional, social, economic and political responsibilities.

14. In Rwandese society, women had always played an important role in ensuring the survival of their family, and had been respected as wives and mothers. However, as occurred in other countries, women were at times victims of stereotypes and prejudices which placed them in an inferior position compared with men. In order to understand that situation better, it should be recalled that the great majority of the people of Rwanda were passing through a critical period with regard to housing, food and health, and were more concerned with the struggle to survive than with their legal status; Rwandese women had a heavy responsibility for ensuring the survival of their family and the groups to which they belonged, and only a small minority enjoyed relative economic independence and could become aware of women's inferior status. That highlighted the great importance of improving living conditions so that women could be receptive to ideas of equality with men; it was therefore essential to integrate women in national development. The second five-year plan for economic, social and cultural development, covering the period 1982-1986, was very explicit in that regard. According to the 1978 population census: the economically active female population was the same size as the male (94.3 per cent, compared with 94.7 per cent); female illiteracy was 75 per cent, compared with male illiteracy of only 50 per cent; women workers with a secondary education constituted only 20 per cent of the total number of working women, and the figure fell to 13 per cent in the case of women with a higher education; 70 per cent of working women cared for the family and helped the husband in his work without receiving remuneration and, consequently, worked in a situation of dependence. The Rwandese Government had therefore provided, in the third five-year development plan, for the integration of women through the improvement of training and conditions of employment, the provision of equal opportunities and the intensification of measures to enhance the role of women in development.

15. Rwanda had been the first country in black Africa to have signed the

(Ms. Baziyaka, Rwanda)

Convention; it had also ratified or acceded to a number of other important international instruments which enhanced the status of women. In addition, the number of Rwandese women representing their country in international forums was constantly increasing.

16. At the national level, article 16 of the Constitution proclaimed the equality of men and women, and declared that all citizens were equal before the law, without any discrimination on such grounds as race, colour, origin, ethnic group, sex, opinion, religion or social position. The 1978 Constitution represented an advance over that of 1962, adopted by Rwanda upon attaining independence. The 1962 Constitution had placed men in a predominant position: for example, under article 30, men had been considered the natural head of the family. The 1978 Constitution had abolished all discrimination based on sex: article 9 provided that all Rwandese citizens of full age who did not fall within one of the categories excluded by law had the right to vote in elections in the circumstances prescribed by law. Thus, the 1978 Constitution represented an advance over that of 1962: whereas the latter had limited the political rights of women, who could not be candidates for the presidency of the Republic, the 1978 Constitution had abolished that discrimination, and merely imposed the conditions that the candidates must occupy the post of President of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development and must be at least 35 years old, there being no mention of their sex. Furthermore, the 1962 Constitution had already abolished polygamy, and the prohibition was maintained in the 1978 Constitution.

17. The Constitution also prohibited discrimination on grounds of sex in the case of public freedoms. It recognized that both women and men had the right to education, work, equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work. Moreover, women were entitled to social security, paid holidays and retirement and widow's pensions, and special measures had been adopted to protect women, such as two-months' paid maternity leave. Where they combined maternity leave with annual holidays, they could remain at home after the birth for the following three months. The husband was entitled to four-days' leave upon the birth of each child. In addition, nursing mothers were allowed one hour per day to breast-feed their children.

18. The Constitution and Rwandese penal law adopt the principle that criminal responsibility was personal, and that considerations based on sex did not influence the determination of responsibility. The Rwandese Criminal Code punished acts of adultery, prostitution, abortion, the advertising of means of abortion and the desertion of the family, whether carried out by men or women. It was important to note that the concern of the legislator had been to protect women. Prostitution, a phenomenon that had resulted from the contact of the indigenous society with foreign civilizations and the introduction of money, was prohibited, in the case of the prostitute as well as the instigators, exploiters, pimps and others who facilitated the exercise of prostitution. The Criminal Code also provided for aggravating circumstances in the case of pimps, exploiters and those who facilitated prostitution when the offence affected minors or was committed without the consent of the person concerned. The measures adopted by the Rwandese Government to combat prostitution included the opening of two re-education centres for repeated offenders. The legislator had also sought to punish parents who

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deserted their family and a husband who evaded his responsibilities in respect of cohabitation, assistance to and care of his wife when she needed it. For example, the Criminal Code established that the husband who, without serious grounds, voluntarily deserted his wife for more than two months, knowing that she was pregnant, would be liable to imprisonment for a period of from three months to two years or a fine of from 2,000 to 20,000 Rwanda francs.

19. The legislator had also prescribed different treatment for women in the case of adultery and abortion. In 1977 the legislator had treated men and women equally in respect of the elements which constituted adultery. However, under the new Criminal Code, women could be sentenced to prison for a period of from one month to one year, while in the case of men the punishment was from one month's to six months' imprisonment or a fine of 1,000 Rwanda francs. The legislator justified the difference on the grounds of the sociological consequences, which were more serious when adultery was committed by the wife. The Criminal Code severely punished abortion, imposing penalties of from two to five years' imprisonment on women who voluntarily procured an abortion or used means of abortion. Furthermore, it punished the advertising of means of abortion. However, owing to the national demographic policy and with a view to maintaining a balance between the available resources and the growth of the population, the annual rate of which was 3.7 per cent, the situation had evolved and the advertising of contraceptives was no longer considered an offence.

20. The Rwandese Civil Code was being drafted, and until it was approved, the courts would continue to apply the colonial legislation, in other words, the Belgian Code, a slightly modified version of the Napoleonic Code. As to women's political rights, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development, which was the sole party in power, constituted the framework within which all political activities were exercised. Its Manifesto placed women in a favourable position and established, among other things, that harmony and the family's well-being required respect for the principle of equality between men and women. The Movement promoted the emancipation of women while ensuring respect for family ties. The development of women's personality had to be strengthened through their access to education and to professional, social, economic and political responsibilities. Any activity designed to prepare women for the full exercise of democratic freedoms would be encouraged and supported. The emancipation of women was expected to give new impetus to national development.

21. The President of the Rwandese Republic, Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana, had frequently drawn attention to the Government's efforts to promote the advancement of women and their integration in the country's development. In that context, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development envisaged the founding of a national organization of Rwandese women with a view to mobilizing and preparing them so that they could assume their obligations and enjoy their rights in all areas of life on an equal footing with men. Rwandese women were present, although still underrepresented, in the executive, legislative and judicial branches. There was a woman member of the Central Committee of the Movement, and 9 of the 68 members of the National Council for Development were women. In the first legislature, which had concluded its work at the end of 1983, there had been only 4 women out of a total of 64 deputies. About 10 women occupied posts as directors in

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ministries or educational establishments. Two women held the position of first counselor in the Rwandese diplomatic service, and another two were members of the judiciary, one of them being Vice-President of the Appeals Court and the other a counselor in a judicial body of equal importance. Their participation would be expanded with the increase in the number of women who had received professional training in the various fields.

22. Rwanda was an agricultural country: 92.9 per cent of the population worked in agriculture. Since independence, the social centres offering training services for rural women had been extended to the entire national territory. Those centres prepared women to assume their civic responsibilities as mothers and housewives and provided information on hygiene and nutrition. A literacy programme had also been combined with the social centres, with a view to training women to participate more effectively in national development. The orientation of social-action programmes had been changed to integrate men into the programmes. Rural men and women had received instruction on agriculture and family planning. That training had given rise to the creation of co-operative groups of a handicraft, agricultural or multifunctional nature. Also operating in the country were various feminine groups whose contributions in the economic field were very important to the promotion and advancement of women. There had been a gradual creation of communal development and permanent training centres designed to promote the mobilization and organization of the entire rural population. The purpose was to create a structure in which responsibility was given to local leaders and to households in order that they might join forces to promote the country's development.

23. Other tangible steps in behalf of Rwandese women had also been taken. National consciousness-raising bodies for women, such as the URAMA organization, were now being created. January 1981 had seen the establishment of the National Population Office, which was concerned inter alia with studying the process of integration of family planning services into basic health services. There could be no doubt about the beneficial effects of family planning programmes on the health of mothers, who now suffered from exhaustion as the result of frequent pregnancies which increased their vulnerability to diseases of all kinds. Since the International Women's Year, at least one national seminar for women leaders had been held every year, with a view to making those leaders aware of their obligation to place their knowledge at the service of women who had not had any opportunity to receive instruction.

24. Her Government had demonstrated its determination to create favourable conditions to enable Rwandese women to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. The Government was aware that there was still a long way to go, but its efforts were being hampered by a lack of resources. For that reason, the authorities had emphasized structures for the mobilization, organization and training of the population, with a view to channeling all efforts towards the development of every sector of the population in Rwanda.

25. Ms. BERNARD commended the representative of Rwanda on her presentation, which had supplemented the report submitted by her country. However, she would like some clarification on certain subjects. For example, she wished to know whether women could have access to courts if they were victims of discrimination, whether there

(Ms. Bernard)

was any entity responsible for defending women's rights and whether there were women's organizations designed to mobilize women or encourage them to assert those rights. She would also be grateful for information concerning whether wives had the right to have their husbands pay for their maintenance and that of their children in the event of dissolution of a marriage. The representative of Rwanda had mentioned that there were provisions concerning maternity benefits and maternity leave. She would like to know whether women were also entitled to retirement pensions and what was the retirement age in the country.

26. It had been stated that the Government of Rwanda offered facilities for women's education; she would like to know what percentage of women made use of those facilities, especially in rural areas. She would also be interested in having the Committee informed whether the principle of equal salary for equal work was actually being observed in practice. With regard to illegitimate children, she would like to know whether such cases occurred frequently in the country, whether the mothers were given resources to ensure the maintenance of their children and whether illegitimate children had the same rights as children of established marriages. She wished to know what measures had been taken to encourage women to hold management posts and what percentage of women occupied such posts in Rwanda. With respect to adultery, she had noted that the penalties for that crime were different for men and for women. She would be grateful for an explanation of why the term of imprisonment was longer for women than for men and why men but not women were offered the option of paying a fine instead of being imprisoned. The representative of Rwanda had partly answered that question in her statement by saying that the reason lay in the sociological importance of the family in Rwandese society, even so, however, it seemed that punishing women more severely than men was a mark of discrimination.

27. Ms. SALEMA thanked the representative of Rwanda for her excellent presentation. However, as had been pointed out, the report did not include the legislative or other measures which had been adopted to implement the Convention; measures relating to women's rights in matters of acquisition, change or retention of nationality, education and illiteracy, special problems of women in rural areas; legal capacity of women in civil matters; and the rules governing marriage and family relations. Some of those aspects had been mentioned by the representative of Rwanda, but others needed further clarification.

28. With regard to the report itself, she would like to see more data relating to the Constitution, the Penal Code, the Labour Code and the rules relating to women's participation in the country's political life. According to the report, article 9 of the Constitution stated that "all Rwandese citizens of full age who do not fall within any of the categories excluded by law shall have the right to vote in elections in the circumstances prescribed by law"; she hoped that the Committee could hear an explanation of what those excluded categories were. It was also stated that the National Revolutionary Movement for Development was the only political organization in the country; she wished to know how many women belonged to the movement and whether they were active in the political sphere. She would also be grateful for information concerning how women were represented in the National Development Council and in the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Movement and other political organs. She had heard that abortion was prohibited in

(Ms. Salema)

Rwanda, and she hoped that the Committee would be given more information concerning family planning in that country. Lastly, the report had stated that under the Constitution, married women exercising a profession or trade could join professional organizations; she would like to know whether that provision also applied to single women.

29. Ms. SMITH thanked the representative of Rwanda for her presentation of the report. She noted that the Constitution specified the equality of the sexes and that there was an article explicitly guaranteeing the right of all citizens to work and to enjoy equitable and satisfactory working conditions. However, that did not indicate what the real situation of women in the country was. There was also information concerning the penalties imposed for certain crimes, but there were no data concerning the rules that governed family relations, marriage and property. It was well known that in many African countries three parallel legal systems coexisted: traditional practices, the remnants of the colonial system and the new systems established after independence. Since that situation affected the norms relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance, she would be grateful for some explanation of how those systems were reconciled to prevent women from being victimized. She would also be grateful if the Committee were given more information concerning the rights of women in rural areas, especially in matters of property, land use, participation in co-operatives and access to agricultural credit institutions. What opportunities did women have to exercise those rights in practice? It would also be of interest to find out whether men and women had different economies. For example, if a man had cash crops, did the woman receive part of the profits? How was labour divided between men and women in rural areas? With regard to education, she would like to know whether girls did in practice have access to education equal to that of boys. If there were any statistical data on that question, she would be grateful for an indication of what percentage of heads of household were women. Also, since many men were migrant workers in neighbouring countries, it would be desirable to clarify what the legal definition of abandonment was.

30. Ms. VELIZ DE VILLALVILLA commended the representative of Rwanda for her introduction, which had given the Committee a more complete picture of the status of women in that country. It had been somewhat difficult to study the report of Rwanda since it contained only data pertaining to some articles of the Convention. While it was true that the report had been prepared before the Committee had drawn up its guidelines on the matter, it would have been useful if the report had been supplemented by an annex such as other countries had provided. The statement by the representative of Rwanda showed that the Government had worked to promote women's participation in development and to achieve equality between men and women. Nevertheless, the Committee ought to be provided with some additional data, such as data on the overall percentage of illiterate persons in the country and the percentage of illiterate women and on adult education programmes to eliminate illiteracy. She would be interested to know the sectors of production in which women were primarily involved, women's age at retirement and whether that age was the same as the age for men. She also wished to have additional information about legislation relating to the family and nationality. Since the country was primarily agricultural, she would like to have more information about the status of rural women, the establishment of co-operatives and systems of self-help and peasant women's access to health systems.

31. Ms. REGENT-LECHOWICZ said that, considering that Rwanda was a developing country, she was pleased to note that the Government had made a major effort to get rid of some laws which discriminated against women. However, there were some questions on which she sought clarification. For example, the report stated that women held senior posts in the central administration, however, that statement was very general. She would like to know how many women held senior posts, not only as civil servants but also in other sectors. With regard to article 10 of the Convention, she wished to know what measures had been taken to eliminate illiteracy among women and girls, what percentage of women were not reached by the educational system and whether primary education was compulsory. With regard to article 16 of the Convention, she wished to know whether fathers and mothers had equal rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis their children during marriage and after its dissolution. She also wished to know whether divorce was determined by the courts and what were the conditions and forms of divorce as defined by law. Concerning the Criminal Code, she had noted that, in cases of adultery, the penalty was heavier for women. In that respect, the law in force did not appear to be in line with the Convention. However, the Criminal Code offered some interesting solutions, such as those which made it a crime to desert the family and abandon or expose children. Those penalties might not be effective in every case, but they did serve an educational and preventive function. With regard to article 14 of the Convention, she would be interested to know whether married women enjoyed full legal status under the same conditions as men. Finally, she wished to know whether the Government of Rwanda had made any reservations to the Convention upon ratifying it, whether any Government programme existed for the specific purpose of implementing the provisions of the Convention, and, if so, what the results of that programme had been.

32. Ms. BIRYUKOVA said that she had found no information in the report of Rwanda relating to the majority of the articles of the Convention. No mention was made of legislative sanctions relating to discrimination against women in the areas of citizenship, children, articles 10 and 11 of the Convention, social security and other forms of protection. Some provisions of the legislation referred to in the report were discriminatory in nature - for example, article 9 of the law of 28 February 1967, which provided for the exercise of certain rights by married women only, while excluding women of any other marital status. The Criminal Code of Rwanda was also discriminatory vis-à-vis women in the matter of the crime of adultery. Furthermore, the lack of information and statistical data on the status of women in Rwanda made it difficult to draw conclusions about the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. She wished to have more information on the proportion of women currently active in various government organizations and their involvement in the labour force and trade unions. She also wished to know whether there were sanctions which could be applied or measures which could be taken in cases of discrimination against women in employment or of dismissal because of pregnancy. She also sought an explanation of the severe penalties imposed in Rwanda for the advertising of various contraceptive methods and clarifications regarding the Government's demographic policy.

33. Ms. PATIÑO said she took it that the report of Rwanda dealt almost exclusively with the adoption of legislative and judicial measures but included only a few administrative measures, which ran counter to the provisions of article 18 of the Convention. She wished to know whether there were child-care centres in Rwanda

(Ms. Patifo)

which cared for the children of working mothers, given that 94 per cent of all women worked. With regard to the Criminal Code, the meaning of the phrases "shall be punished" and "may be compelled to submit to", since in the latter case doubts might arise as to the person empowered to hand down the sentence.

34. Ms. EL-FETOUH said that, having regard to article 18 of the Convention and article 25 of the Rwandese Constitution, she wished to know whether there were other types of marriage besides the one provided for under the law; if that was the case, she wished to know what the consequences of such marriages were, especially as far as parent-child relations and questions of inheritance were concerned. She thought that there was a conflict between articles 9 and 30 of the Constitution, since article 9 discriminated against unmarried women, failed to respect women's equality before the law and thus openly violated the provisions of the Convention.

35. Ms. OESER said she wished to have more details concerning the right to vote in Rwanda. Likewise, she was interested in knowing the extent of women's involvement in the National Revolutionary Movement for Development. With regard to article 9 of the Convention, the report contained no material on citizenship and equality between men and women in that respect. As for the annex to the report, she wished to know when the Criminal Code had been promulgated and desired full information about the way in which the Code was currently being implemented in Rwanda. With regard to abortion, she wished to know the reasons that abortion was punished; she asked whether they included any implicit religious reasons. She also wished to know whether divorce was in any way prohibited in Rwanda.

36. Ms. GUAN Mingian asked whether the conditions and types of divorce in Rwanda were determined by law, whether men and women had the same rights in respect of divorce and whether the rights of women and children were protected in cases of divorce. She also wished to have information regarding the percentage of women holding administrative and judicial posts, as well as the type of post involved. She also sought information with regard to the percentage of illiteracy among Rwandese women. Concerning the projected doubling of the population by the year 2000, she wished to know whether the Government of Rwanda had taken any measures or adopted any policy in that respect. Finally, she wished to know who was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the provisions of the Constitution; whether there were any women's organizations; and whether women's rights were duly protected.

37. Mr. NORDENFELT said it was encouraging that a developing country like Rwanda, which had so many problems, had decided to ratify the Convention. Nevertheless, some information in addition to that contained in the report was required to understand the data included in it - for example, demographic and economic information, information about the educational system, etc. - particularly in relation to articles 5 and 10 of the Convention. It would also be useful to have more information pertaining to article 7 of the Convention. He wished to know why there were different penalties for men and women in cases of adultery, if all citizens were equal before the law. He asked whether single women could join professional organizations and practise a profession. He wished to know whether abortion was prohibited in all cases. Finally, he asked whether there was discrimination on the basis of sex in the hiring of workers.

38. Ms. ILIC said she wished to have additional information about the implementation of article 9 of the Convention (concerning nationality), article 10 (concerning education and training) and article 16 (concerning marriage and the family).

39. Ms. PEYTCHEVA wished to know, in connection with article 10 of the Convention, what conditions and opportunities the Government provided for young women in terms of vocational guidance. The proportion of women attending school was not very high. She asked what measures the Government had taken to prevent the problem of school drop-outs. With regard to article 11 of the Convention, she wished to know whether women received sickness or disability benefits and whether maternity leave could be taken before a child was born. She also asked if there was free obstetrical care.

40. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ asked for more information about specific measures aimed at implementing articles 10, 12 and 14 of the Convention. She asked why the penalty for adultery was more severe for women than for men, since, if the underlying reason for that measure had been that adulterous women might bring into the home children from different fathers, the same consideration might hold in the case of men.

41. Ms. NGUYEN NGOC DUNG praised the clear and concise introduction by the representative of Rwanda and said that she could understand how the problems of women increased in an underdeveloped country experiencing major economic difficulties and in which women had just begun their struggle against inequality. In that connection, the efforts of the Government to adopt legislative measures aimed at ensuring women's equality and their involvement in the country's political life and development were even more commendable. She noted the brevity of the report; the data which it contained were insufficient to provide an overview of the true status of women and did not specifically correspond to the provisions of the Convention. She hoped that the answers to questions being asked would help to fill in the gaps in the report.

42. She requested that a precise description of women's situation in the country's political life and in the management of national affairs should be provided; if possible, the number of women holding decision-making posts in various sectors of activity should be indicated. Likewise, it would be useful to know the role of women in economic development and cultural life and women's involvement in individual sectors of production: farming, industry, education and other. In addition, it was important to know what the country had achieved in the area of maternal and child welfare. Were there nurseries, kindergartens and other facilities for children? It was also important to know what measures had been adopted by the Government to eradicate illiteracy and promote the vocational training of women, to facilitate their tasks as mothers and wives and to provide them with better access to education. Were there any women's non-governmental organizations in Rwanda which had those objectives? Generally speaking, what obstacles and factors continued to block the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention?

43. Ms. CORTES, after congratulating Miss Baziyaka on her excellent introduction of the report of Rwanda, asked for an explanation of the country's demographic

(Ms. Cortes)

growth rate, which was apparently very high. With regard to family centres, which appeared to have very important functions, it would be interesting to have more detailed information about their organization, financing and functioning. The very detailed section of the report dealing with prostitution led her to suppose that it was a widespread problem. It would be interesting to know whether that was the case, and how effective the punitive measures provided for under the law had been. In particular, it would be interesting to have more detailed information concerning the implementation of article 363 of the Criminal Code: how that article was implemented and how effective it was.

44. Ms. JAYASINGHE associated herself with the positive comments which had been made concerning the introduction of the report. She asked what women's position was in the life of the country, what percentage women accounted for in the executive, legislative and judicial powers, in the country's working population and in senior posts, both official and private. It would also be interesting to have more data on the status of women in education. What was the illiteracy rate for women? What was the number of girls enrolled in schools, and what percentage of the total number of students did they represent? What proportion of all school drop-outs were girls? Likewise, it would be useful to know what mechanisms existed within the country to promote the advancement of women. Were there any official institutions or organs responsible for the promotion of equal rights for women? Were there any non-governmental organizations for that purpose? What mechanisms existed and how did they operate?

45. Ms. CARON thanked Ms. Baziyaka for her interesting introduction of her country's report, which had furnished valuable additional data. Little had been said about women's civil rights, especially as to whether or not women enjoyed full legal rights and could be financially independent, conclude agreements and enjoy and dispose freely of their property without the intervention of their husbands. With regard to financial independence, she asked whether women could inherit property or whether, on the contrary, their position was analogous to that of incompetents or minors. With regard to the punishment of adultery, she shared the astonishment of other speakers: everyone knew that two persons were needed to commit adultery; why, then, were the punishments more severe for one of those persons than for the other?

46. Ms. MACEDO DE SHEPPARD remarked on the outstanding courage of Miss Baziyaka's introduction. She had described the situation of women in Rwanda in a very straightforward manner. Because of the brevity of the initial report, many questions had been raised about the lack of information, especially with regard to practical measures to ensure women's equality, statistical data regarding their political involvement, nationality, international representation, access to education, work, health care, social security, the involvement of women in economic life in rural areas, marital status, family rights and many other subjects covered by the Convention. That information vacuum had been filled in somewhat by the extensive introductory statement, although some doubts remained. With regard to article 9 of the law of 28 February 1967, which stipulated that married women exercising a profession or trade might join professional organizations and participate in their administration or leadership, the situation of women having a different marital status should be explained. With regard to the extensive section

(Ms. Macedo de Sheppard)

on prostitution, it could be deduced from the list of penalties contained in the report and from the text of the relevant articles that punishment was optional. What was cited as constituting a penalty in the text lacked any punitive nature in law; rather, those measures appeared to constitute a regulation of prostitution. It would be interesting to have some clarification on that point. Likewise, the meaning of the word "maintains" in article 365 of the Criminal Code was unclear.

47. Finally, in the section on desertion of the family and abandonment and exposure of children, it was stated that article 387 of the Criminal Code stipulated that if the abandonment or exposure had caused the death of a child or an invalid, the guilty parties would be punished in various ways which were subsequently enumerated. There was no doubt that the situation in question was premeditated homicide aggravated by the fact that it was committed against a minor or an incompetent - in other words, a very serious situation in the criminal legislation of most countries; and yet she was quite surprised that the penalties imposed were much lighter than those prescribed in the preceding chapter, concerning offences against individual freedom. It would be interesting to know the reason for that glaring discrepancy.

48. Ms. ESCUDERO MOSCOSO commended the representative of Rwanda for her statement, which had complemented her country's report considerably. Since the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of national reports had apparently not been followed in the case of the report of Rwanda, it might perhaps be useful to have the information that had been provided orally made available to the Committee in an annex to the report.

49. The CHAIRPERSON asked the representative of Rwanda whether she would be able to reply to the experts' questions during the meeting to be held on the morning of Tuesday, 27 March, or whether she preferred to reply on Wednesday, 28 March.

50. Miss BAZIYAKA (Rwanda) said that, in view of the large number of questions which had been asked about her country's report, she would prefer to answer at the Wednesday morning meeting.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

51. The CHAIRPERSON informed the members of the Committee that the Government of Panama had asked the Secretariat to postpone consideration of its report until the Committee's next session, which would be held in 1985. Consequently, at the Tuesday morning meeting, the Committee would hear the introduction of the report of Norway and, in the afternoon, the replies of the representative of Egypt. If time permitted, Mrs. Shahani would make a statement.

52. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ welcomed Mrs. Sellami Meslem, representative of the Secretary-General and asked the Secretariat to provide some clarification regarding the final distribution of reports from the specialized agencies. She had received the reports of UNESCO and ILO, and believed that FAO had also submitted a report. She had heard that the reports had been distributed on a provisional basis, since they could not be identified as documents of the Committee without masthead or official symbol. In her view, they should have them even though they were background documents.

53. Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee) said that reports had been received from three specialized agencies: UNESCO, ILO and FAO. The report from FAO would be issued in the near future. The reports had not been given a symbol because they were not official sessional documents.

54. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ said that, in working meetings of the United Nations, all documents were issued with a symbol and in official format. She could cite numerous examples of United Nations conferences and meetings in which that procedure had been followed. Consequently, she requested the Secretary of the Committee to distribute the reports submitted by the specialized agencies in the official format.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.