



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Fifty-fourth session**

Summary record of the 1113th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 20 February 2013, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Neubauer (Vice-Chairperson)

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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*)

Sixth periodic report of Angola (CEDAW/C/AGO/6; CEDAW/C/AGO/Q/6 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Angola took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. da Silva Sacramento Neto** (Angola), introducing the sixth periodic report of Angola (CEDAW/C/AGO/6), said that the Government's actions were focused on fulfilling its commitments under the Convention and other human rights treaties to which Angola was a party. Combating violence, particularly violence against women, was a primary concern and that was why during a period of political stability and peace promoting the gender aspect was a major part of economic development policies. The 2010 Constitution established the principle of equality for all citizens, on the basis of which a number of laws had been enacted to protect women in Angolan society, including on domestic violence and the protection and development of children.
3. The Ministry responsible for the family and the promotion of women was in charge of implementing a strategy for the promotion of women and its functions had been strengthened through the inclusion of two new directorates, one for national gender policy and the other for women's rights. That work had been complemented by policies to implement the recommendations of the Committee through the execution of programmes, projects and services to ensure the empowerment of women, particularly rural women, female heads of households and women with disabilities. Those programmes had enabled their access to health, education, land, clean water, food, housing, subsidized credit and income-generating projects.
4. There were still harmful practices and stereotypes in Angola, especially in rural areas, resulting in discrimination against women and girls. Violence against women was a reality in all societies and thus the Government had adopted appropriate measures to prevent and combat such practices in accordance with article 6 of the Convention. There had been cases of systematic sexual violence against migrants during the repatriation process, but it was not a reflection of Government policy, which had aimed to combat the phenomenon in cooperation with international organizations.
5. Angola had not yet achieved the goal of equal female participation in political and public life and, despite efforts to ensure equal access to education for boys and girls, there were still disparities, with 77 girls per 100 boys attending school. All citizens had the right to equal pay for equal work.
6. Maternal and child health was one of the biggest challenges in Angola. Factors affecting maternal and infant mortality were complex and, in addition to revitalizing the health-care system in municipalities, health-care services were provided for mothers and children. However, some challenges remained such as the lack of technical expertise and financial resources, as well as weaknesses in the health information system that had an impact on the decision-making process.
7. Many challenges and goals lay ahead on the way to the effective implementation of the Convention. In that context, Angola had accepted the amendment under article 20 of the Convention, and its instruments of acceptance would be deposited in due course.

Articles 1 to 3

8. **Ms. Patten** asked whether a time frame had been set for repealing discriminatory and obsolete laws in the legislative framework. She requested more information on the application of customary laws that were contrary to the Convention. She also asked whether there were any plans to amend discriminatory land and inheritance laws. Concerning the office of the Ombudsman, she wondered whether there were plans to ensure its accreditation under the Paris Principles and to broaden its mandate to include the promotion and protection of human rights. She enquired how current poverty reduction strategies took into account gender and gender-based discrimination. She asked whether steps had been taken to raise women's awareness of new legislation enacted, particularly on domestic violence, and to ensure their access to justice. What kind of legal aid system was in place?

9. **Ms. Pires** asked what mechanisms had been established to coordinate between the Ministry responsible for the family and the promotion of women and other ministries. She requested information on the work, scheduling and achievements of the Multisector Gender Coordination Council; the availability of and capacity to collect data disaggregated by sex; the financial and human resource capacity of the Ministry and its representations in the 18 provinces; and on the implementation and results of gender policies. Did the provincial governments have a role in promoting women's rights and gender equality, including dissemination of the Convention? She asked whether the Joint Gender Programme had contributed to Government planning, whether gender priorities had been set and indicators developed, and whether there was a monitoring and evaluation component in the planning process.

10. **Ms. Ameline** (Country Rapporteur) asked whether access to justice was a Government priority and whether judges were trained in the provisions and scope of the Convention. She wondered why Angola had ended its partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2008. Was international aid used specifically to address equality issues, or were those funds only received indirectly?

11. **Ms. da Silva Sacramento Neto** (Angola) said that the Ministry responsible for the family and the promotion of women was attached to the Council of Ministers, where decisions were taken. It had representatives in the 18 provinces, who implemented the decisions of the Ministry and depended on the provincial governments for financial and human resources.

12. **Ms. Manuela** (Angola) emphasized that all forms of discrimination were prohibited under the Constitution and therefore any discriminatory law was unconstitutional. The Land Law had been extensively discussed in Angola and had been in force since 2004; any gaps in that Law would be filled under the legislative reform system. Under the Law women were not discriminated against in matters of inheritance, but customary laws and practices on such matters were still prevalent in rural areas, and favoured male lineage in land inheritance. Although the law on domestic violence stipulated which specific bodies should deal with cases and ensured access to justice and the courts, there was ignorance of the provisions of the law among victims and a reluctance to report offences. The law introduced prison sentences for the perpetrators of domestic violence, but it often resulted in the double victimization of victims, as the offenders were also the main providers in the family.

13. **Ms. Buta** (Angola) said that the office of the Ombudsman was accredited in accordance with the Paris Principles because it was an independent public body elected by the National Assembly that guaranteed the rights of all citizens without discrimination.

14. **Mr. Side** (Angola) said that there was no discrimination at any stage in the handling of domestic violence cases by the authorities, the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the courts.

15. **Mr. Pombal** (Angola) said that the Angolan economy was the fastest growing in sub-Saharan Africa, currently growing at 7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) annually. Priority was given to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as the basis to sustain the country's development. Almost half of SMEs were headed by women and were assisted by Government microcredit programmes. Another programme targeted women in the informal economy and a successful campaign had been developed in the agricultural sector, involving over 3 million rural workers, 70 per cent of whom were women. Angola had been disappointed with the results of international development fund initiatives and, as a result, current development aid received was no more than 1 per cent of GDP. Angola had identified 11 economic development priorities, which would define its national development until 2017. The country had not only grown economically, but also socially, with significant advances made in the health and education sectors.

16. **Ms. da Silva Sacramento Neto** (Angola) said that the Ministry responsible for the family and promotion of women had a discrete budget, which had recently been increased. Its activities were closely coordinated with those of other ministries, and focal points had been designated in each to ensure regular contact. The Ministry exercised general oversight in respect of family and women's policies and liaised with the women's parliamentary group on issues due to be submitted to the National Assembly. Having found the figures on gender-based violence compiled by the National Statistics Institute to be insufficient, it had been working to create an integrated online data-collection and analysis system that allowed it to monitor, inter alia, the prevalence of offences by area and incidence of repeat offences. It also hoped to establish an observatory in the near future.

17. **Mr. Correia** (Angola) assured the Committee that there were no obstacles to cooperation with the United Nations human rights bodies. The Government of Angola was in regular contact with OHCHR and human rights were a fundamental pillar of the country's legal system.

18. **Ms. Buta** (Angola) said that the Ombudsman's term of office was four years.

19. **Ms. Šimonović** sought clarification regarding the application of the Convention and its Optional Protocol in Angolan courts as well as information about human rights instruction and awareness-raising activities for judges. Since international instruments did not need to be transposed into domestic law in order to be applied in court, activities of that kind were vital.

20. **Ms. Ameline** (Country Rapporteur) said that, although there were no de jure obstacles, access to justice for women was impeded by de facto obstacles, including financial constraints, fear of stigmatization, the weight of stereotypes and cultural issues. She would like to know about concrete measures adopted to combat those obstacles and the associated culture of impunity. She also asked what the Government was doing to ensure that women shared in the benefits of economic expansion and why, in 2008, it had declined to enter into a global agreement for the protection and promotion of human rights in Angola with OHCHR.

21. **Ms. Pomeranzi** asked how consistency between the national machinery for the advancement of women and local and provincial mechanisms was guaranteed, since in many regions customary laws constituted a huge obstacle to the application of anti-discrimination provisions.

22. **Ms. Patten**, noting that development indicators for women lagged behind the equivalent indices for men, enquired whether, in view of the State party's underdeveloped data-collection systems, sufficient gender-disaggregated data had been available to provide adequate benchmarks for the national poverty reduction strategy and whether the census reportedly planned for 2010 had taken place. She also wished to know whether the joint

Angolan-Congolese commission mandated to address the situation of migrant women and allegations of gender-based violence against them was now operational.

23. **Ms. Haidar** asked how the State party dealt with the adverse effects of the conflict on women. Had any specific healing strategies been developed and had the Government been able to capitalize on women's role in the peacebuilding process?

24. **Ms. Manuela** (Angola) said that Angolan courts invoked international instruments as a last resort only because almost all domestic laws enacted since independence had been drafted in line with those instruments, even though they had not been ratified by Angola at that time. The Constitutional Court had, however, applied their provisions directly in certain recent cases. Training for judges was provided by the national institute for judicial studies, where the core training curriculum included a module on human rights that covered all international instruments. Thus, while not specialists, all judges working in the Angolan legal system were conversant with human rights issues.

25. Although legal assistance was available free of charge to all Angolan citizens who lacked the financial means to pursue a case, it was true that women often declined to go to court. Since the new law on domestic violence had been enacted in 2011, a network of counselling centres had been working to empower victims and make them aware of the potentially harmful consequences of inaction. Nonetheless, in rural areas in particular, women continued to be deterred by a variety of factors, including the sheer distance they may need to travel to reach the nearest court.

26. **Mr. Joveth** (Angola) said that the intersectoral commission set up to investigate allegations of sexual violations during the repatriation process following a visit from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict was fully operational. With assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the commission monitored repatriation activities and the conduct of migration officials on an ongoing basis. The repatriation process was overseen by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, diplomatic missions were required to be present during all operations, and repatriation agreements had to be signed by the authorities of both the country of origin and the country of repatriation.

Articles 4 to 6

27. **Ms. Pires** asked whether the State party had performed a detailed assessment of the possibility of using temporary special measures in the areas identified by the Committee; what factors influenced its decisions regarding their use; and, where special measures had been applied (for example, when flexible working arrangements had been introduced for women), what the benefits had been. In view of the continuing low level of female representation in decision-making positions, and especially in the light of alternative reports suggesting that women elected to representative offices had subsequently been replaced by men, she wished to know whether any temporary special measures were envisaged beyond those currently in place. For example, were there any plans to introduce quotas? Moreover, would temporary measures be used more extensively to address discrimination and segregation in education and employment?

28. Turning to the issue of poverty reduction, she asked what percentage of women living in poverty in Angola were benefiting from the measures described in paragraph 10 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/AGO/Q/6/Add.1); whether temporary special measures might also be used to accelerate women's access to income-generating activities; whether the research centre referred to in paragraph 19 of the periodic report had conducted any research into their use; and, if so, whether its findings had been implemented and what results had been achieved. She would also like more information

about the surveys of women's participation in political life mentioned in paragraph 15, table 2, of the replies to the list of issues.

29. **Ms. Pimentel** asked whether the new law on domestic violence enacted in 2011 was meeting women's needs. Information about women's shelters, marital rape and specific action taken to address sexual violence in domestic life would be particularly useful. She also wished to know: what the Government was doing to combat the stereotypes that helped perpetuate discriminatory practices such as early marriage, early pregnancy and polygamy; what family model it was endeavouring to promote; whether it planned to introduce training on gender issues for public sector employees; and what strategies had been developed for responding to accusations of witchcraft against elderly women and children. In connection with the latter phenomenon, she was pleased to note that under the new law on domestic violence the possibility of reconciliation was specifically excluded for certain offences, since, in her experience, mechanisms that prioritized family reconciliation were frequently detrimental to women's status and security.

30. **Ms. Patten** asked what the Government was doing to address the grave concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences in relation to the mass deportations of Congolese nationals, and the serious human rights violations allegedly committed by Angolan law enforcement officials during the expulsion process. She wished to know in particular: what the intersectoral commission was doing to investigate specific cases of sexual violence; what steps had been taken to prevent gender-based violence by State and non-State actors; and whether, in view of the alleged violations, gender-sensitive training and codes of conduct had been introduced for police and military officers.

31. **Ms. Gabr** noted that according to United Nations records Angola had signed but not ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, whereas the introductory statement referred to ratification. She invited the State party to clarify the current status of the instrument and urged it to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children if it had not already done so. Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families would be another positive step. Highlighting the need for specific legislation and a specific action plan to combat trafficking in human beings, as well as for research and statistics on the scale of the phenomenon, she suggested that the Ouagadougou Action Plan would provide a good basis for the development of anti-trafficking measures. Since a number of cases of child trafficking and sexual exploitation in Angola had been highlighted at a recent conference on human trafficking in Libreville, Gabon, the Angolan authorities should pay particular attention to the protection of children.

32. **Mr. Joveth** (Angola) said that rapid economic growth had attracted an increasing flow of migrants to Angola in recent years, many of them illegal. His Government was extremely concerned about the allegations of sexual violations during the repatriation process and had established the intersectoral commission to respond to that situation. Unfortunately, the investigations had found that victims were often unable to identify their abusers. However, police codes of conduct had been improved; human rights training was being provided in association with IOM; and new detention centres had been constructed to ensure that illegal migrants awaiting repatriation were treated more humanely.

33. Trafficking in human beings was a new phenomenon in Angola and for that reason there was a lack of legal tools to regulate the problem. However, legislation governing associated offences such as document falsification, physical coercion and abuse of minors could in the meantime be used to bring cases against traffickers and provide protection for victims. In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was running local-level workshops to raise awareness of the trafficking risk, a strategic plan for combating trafficking in human

beings was in place and the Government had begun the process of ratifying the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

34. **Ms. Pedro Maria Dias** (Angola) said that a special unit had been created within the Ministry of Internal Affairs to address the problem of domestic violence. Counselling and psychological support services had been introduced for victims and women were always encouraged to pursue their case. Because of the importance placed on the family unit, wherever possible, if the abuser was prepared to undergo counselling, the preferred solution was reconciliation. However, when reconciliation proved impossible, domestic violence cases were always taken to court. In addition, enhanced codes of conduct had been introduced within the police force, and police officers found to have engaged in discriminatory conduct were removed from service.

35. **Mr. Side** (Angola) said that reform of the Criminal Code covered human rights violations, including trafficking.

36. **Mr. dos Ramos Manso Cortez Gaspar** (Angola) said that the legislation on domestic violence provided for cases to be resolved through administrative measures and conciliation.

37. **Mr. Vieira Casimiro** (Angola) said that the State party had no specific plan with regard to training relating to gender issues, but that related programmes were implemented by the Ministry responsible for the family and the promotion of women, and there were plans to introduce training at national level in the future. The Government had been implementing measures to raise awareness of gender issues. The State party had no experience with regard to providing therapy to women, but support included awareness-raising campaigns and training for social activists.

38. **Mr. Pimentel da Piedade** (Angola) said that literacy campaigns were aimed at young adults and women and had achieved a success rate of 68 per cent. A campaign to support children's education had also been implemented.

39. **Ms. da Silva Sacramento Neto** (Angola) said that the Ministry of Culture was working with religious centres and traditional community leaders to address the problem of children being used in witchcraft, and there had been a fall in such cases. The problem was taken seriously, and affected not only children — primarily boys — but also other vulnerable groups, such as the elderly. There was also a National Council for Children, which worked with local authorities to address issues relating to children.

40. Measures were taken to support female victims of violence in the post-war period, encouraging women not to remain silent. Guidance centres had been established, which were the first port of call in cases of violence, before the matter reached the justice system.

41. Women were entitled to three months of paid maternity leave and, during the first year, could work one hour less, in order to breastfeed, and to take time off for medical appointments for their child.

42. Infrastructural problems in the post-conflict period had made access to services, including health care and legal aid, difficult. Projects had been launched to demolish certain areas and relocate families, in order to improve access to health care and protection.

43. With regard to access to justice, neighbourhood centres provided the initial assistance and, after being allocated a legal sponsor at the centre, women could obtain free legal support. Although such programmes were still in their early stages, as a result of the current situation in the country, it was hoped that they would be developed further in the near future.

44. **Mr. Correia** (Angola) said that the issue of repatriating migrants was being addressed on a bilateral or multilateral basis, involving cooperation with the Democratic

Republic of the Congo and the United Nations. There was a procedure in place to deal with violations, but no reports of violations had been received from governments, with the majority of allegations made by NGOs, whose reports were often based on speculation or exaggerated facts.

45. **Ms. da Silva Sacramento Neto** (Angola) said that political parties put forward candidates for decision-making posts, but that the Government provided incentives to ensure women's participation in political life and that they featured on party lists.

46. It was difficult to calculate the percentage of women living in poverty, and the Government had to work on the basis of estimates while it prepared to conduct a national census. Current data indicated that the majority of women in Angola lived in poverty, in areas where they faced hardships, including difficult access to drinking water and electricity. A programme had been launched to ensure access to water for all, but many other problems still remained.

47. Legislation on violence against women did refer to the problem of early marriage. The Government was working with traditional community leaders on a compromise solution, as well as helping to raise awareness through the mass media.

48. Minorities received equal treatment within the education system. Nevertheless, problems, such as language-related difficulties, did arise. Measures were taken to integrate minorities, including nomadic communities, although the success of such measures depended in part on their cooperation. Nevertheless, steps were being taken, such as training measures, to resolve any problems.

49. **Ms. Ameline** said that the information on forced expulsions and sexual violence had come from official documents, and not merely NGO reports. She urged the Government to step up its activities to combat discrimination, and to establish an evaluation mechanism to assess whether existing legislation was adequate and covered all forms of discrimination. It was important to create a solid framework, and to involve civil society in the process. Doing so would help to combat impunity and create a culture of safety. Clear objectives were needed to combat gender stereotyping. It was also necessary to prevent any possible discrimination between men and women as perpetrators of violence.

50. **Ms. Pimentel** asked the delegation to comment on legal provisions relating to marital rape, as the definition contained in the legislation on domestic violence introduced in 2011 made no specific mention of that offence. How was the State party tackling the problem?

51. **Ms. Gabr** said that there was a need to create a national coordination mechanism and introduce specific legislation to tackle the problem of human trafficking, as well as measures to accelerate the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which the State party had signed in 2000.

52. **Ms. Pires**, referring to her earlier question, asked whether an evaluation of temporary special measures implemented under article 4 of the Convention had been carried out and whether the Government had adopted any strategy in that regard. Also, had the research centre referred to in paragraph 19 of the State party's report played any role in carrying out an assessment of the temporary special measures introduced to ensure equality between men and women?

53. **Ms. Manuela** (Angola) said that the provisions of the Criminal Code punished all violence, and did not distinguish between violence perpetrated by husbands or by other men. That piece of legislation was a vestige from the colonial period, a time when the concept of violence within marriage did not exist. Current legislation on domestic violence stipulated that even if the couple were married, the husband could be punished. However,

the main problem with the current legislative provisions was that the perpetrator could only be punished if there was evidence of the crime.

54. **Ms. Gomes** (Angola) said that although the State party was a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the conflict had prevented ratification. The current delay was caused by the need to translate and then approve the text. However, the process of ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was currently under way.

55. **Mr. Kufukila** (Angola) said that there were mechanisms in place to protect the rights of children, including recently passed legislation.

56. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that although political parties were required to submit candidate lists with alternate male and female candidates, there appeared to be little oversight and no sanctions for failure to comply. She asked about women's participation in political life, any training or information provided, including whether men were informed of the importance of non-discrimination. She also asked about the participation of women in organizations such as trade unions, rural cooperatives, professional associations and student bodies.

57. She suggested that the observatory could make an important contribution to equality. She asked whether gender issues were introduced into the decision-making process, enquired as to the institution's independence and credibility, the involvement of civil society, and the reliability of the data collected.

58. She expressed concern regarding the situation of minorities, such as the nomadic San community, and asked whether measures were taken to promote their participation and political representation.

59. The data available indicated that just over 30 per cent of posts in the diplomatic service were occupied by women. However, that figure did not reflect the gender distribution between high and low-ranking posts. She requested specific data on the number of female ambassadors and heads of mission.

60. **Ms. Xiaoqiao Zou** said that, according to some reports, women in certain communities possessed only voting cards not identity cards. That prevented them from obtaining access to justice and other services. What percentage of women remained without identity cards and what measures was the Government taking to remedy the problem?

61. She asked for clarification on whether women travelling with children were required to have a letter of authorization signed by their husbands.

62. **Ms. da Silva Sacramento Neto** (Angola) said that, in general, it was up to the political parties to implement training measures, in cooperation with political counterparts in other countries, and that the Government did not usually intervene in such matters.

63. Women were involved in trade unions and civil society organizations. Some political parties had women's associations, while others did not. Incentives had been introduced to increase the representation of women. Unfortunately, there were still gender disparities in parliament, with some parties ensuring a gender-balanced representation and others failing to do so.

64. All adults travelling with children were required to have the necessary documentation in order to leave the country. Those regulations applied to both men and women.

65. **Ms. Buta** (Angola) said that identity cards were issued under the provisions of Decree No. 31/07 of 2007 on the registration of births, with the relevant data recorded in a national register. Voting cards could not be obtained without a valid identity card.

Nonetheless, certain religious and cultural practices meant that some people did not have identity cards. The Government was working together with communities and municipal authorities to address any related problems, and measures included encouraging the registration of babies in maternity centres, awareness-raising campaigns and the introduction of an automated system for issuing identity cards.

66. **Ms. Dulce Gomez** (Angola), with regard to representation abroad, said that just over 15 per cent of high-ranking diplomatic posts were held by women.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.