



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
**Ninety-second session**

**Summary record of the 2195th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 12 February 2026, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Haidar

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

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

*Tenth periodic report of El Salvador (continued)* (CEDAW/C/SLV/10; CEDAW/C/SLV/Q/10; CEDAW/C/SLV/RQ/10)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of El Salvador joined the meeting.*

*Articles 7–9*

2. **A representative of El Salvador**, resuming her delegation's replies to the questions raised at the previous meeting (CEDAW/C/SR.2194), said that, to address the problem of underregistration of births, the Government had introduced a modern, interconnected birth registration system in hospitals and registry offices, with mobile units providing coverage for the whole country. As many family records had been lost during the civil war, the Government had conducted campaigns, including identity fairs, in order to replace records and protect the right to an identity. Unique identity numbers were assigned to all children at birth, including children of undocumented mothers. The family registration system meant that there were no stateless children, women or families in El Salvador. The deadline for birth registration had been reduced from 90 to 45 days, in line with the duration of the postpartum period, to avoid delays in registration. Moreover, the legal framework had been reformed to make registration procedures more flexible. The Simple SV online platform had reduced processing times and made civil registration procedures more accessible for the whole population, including Salvadorans living abroad.

3. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Counsel General's Office had introduced an early warning system for the protection of women, which it would continue to develop and expand. Thanks to the improved security situation, State institutions enjoyed greater public trust, and more women were coming forward to seek assistance. The number of legal and psychosocial services provided by the Office had risen from 22,000 in 2023 to 65,000 in 2025.

*Articles 10–14*

4. **Ms. Pia-Comella** said that the Committee welcomed the progress made in the education sphere, including as a result of the national cross-sectoral strategy for the prevention of pregnancy in girls and adolescents and the gender equity and equality policy of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Nevertheless, the Committee noted with deep concern the formal prohibition in 2024 of comprehensive sexuality education programmes, even though the right to receive comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive healthcare was protected by the Growing Together Act of 2022. The Committee therefore wished to know whether the State Party planned to reinstate comprehensive sexuality education in schools in order to implement the Growing Together Act.

5. She was also concerned to note the significant disparity in access to education between rural and urban women; the low participation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; reported increases in female illiteracy and sexual violence in educational settings; and the reinforcement of stereotypical gender roles in textbooks and other educational materials. She would be interested to know what had been done to address those concerns, and what had been the impact of teacher training on the prevention of sexual violence and violence against women. She wondered how the education system ensured the equal access of girls and young women to all fields of study, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics and vocational training programmes, without discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation.

6. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the adolescent pregnancy rate had plummeted by about 75%, the result of a combined effort by the State, civil society and international organizations. The national cross-sectoral strategy for the prevention of pregnancy in girls and adolescents 2017–2027 was based on scientific analysis, informed by dialogue with adolescent girls themselves and aligned with the Growing Together Act.

Strategic objectives had been defined in three areas of intervention: prevention; special protection, access to justice and restitution of rights; and knowledge management. The strategy had delivered excellent results.

7. Other important programmes had been implemented in El Salvador. The National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence had established 16 child and adolescent protection boards, which could order administrative measures to ensure that pregnant adolescents remained in education. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology coordinated measures designed to ensure that adolescents remained in school during and after pregnancy. Civil society and private enterprise participated in programmes to provide pregnant adolescents with employment opportunities. The European Union supported the development of life skills for adolescents living in social integration centres and care centres. Multidisciplinary teams helped adolescents to draw up life plans and provided them with career guidance.

8. Adolescents also participated in institutional structures such as the advisory committee for children, which had attracted applications from girls and adolescents from all over the country, and local children's rights committees. Many had represented El Salvador in international forums. All policies and programmes were implemented in consultation with Salvadoran girls and adolescents, ensuring that their voices were heard.

9. **A representative of El Salvador** said that sexual and reproductive health played an important part in the integrated healthcare system of El Salvador. The Government was replacing a fragmented vision of sexual health education with a more holistic model, based on life planning, comprehensive health, prevention of violence and early childhood support, that recognized the importance of collaborative learning and development. The new model enjoyed high-level political support and was grounded in article 33 of the Growing Together Act, which provided that all children and adolescents without exception, in accordance with their development and the progressive exercise of their faculties, had the right to receive comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive healthcare. Adolescents were taught knowledge, skills and values related to the healthy development of sexuality with respect for the body, incorporating elements of sexuality education, life planning, adequate nutrition and mental health. The aim was to give tangible effect to the right to health, replacing vulnerability with empowerment. The State worked with parents, healthcare professionals and girls themselves to establish a permanent protective network that extended beyond the classroom. Rather than waiting for girls to turn to the health system, the health system reached out to them, protected them and supported them in their growth.

10. **Ms. Akizuki** said that an analysis of gender inequality in the State Party had revealed that Salvadoran women still faced strong structural barriers to their economic, social and political development. In 2024, less than half of women participated in the economy, with many working in informal and low-paid sectors. She therefore wished to know what targeted and concrete measures the State Party had taken to increase women's access to formal and better paid employment, particularly for young women, rural women, women with disabilities, women in domestic work, maquilas and home-based work arrangements and returning migrant women. She would be interested to know what steps the State Party had taken to close the gender pay gap, including through pay transparency, enforcement of equal pay for work of equal value and labour inspections, and how many employers had been sanctioned or required to adjust wages as a result of inspections.

11. She was concerned that women continued to perform longer hours of unpaid work than men, while 60% of women outside of the labour force did not seek paid employment due to housework. She would therefore like to know how the State Party operationalized the national policy on co-responsibility for care. The delegation might describe the geographic distribution and accessibility of childcare facilities and the specific support that was provided to female heads of household. She wondered when the State Party would ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and whether it had considered ratifying the ILO Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177). She wondered what protections, particularly with regard to working hours, minimum wages and social security coverage, were currently afforded to domestic workers, including women working in maquilas and under home-based work schemes.

12. Furthermore, the Committee would like to know how many complaints, investigations, prosecutions and convictions had been recorded in relation to workplace discrimination and harassment, and what mechanisms were in place to ensure safe, confidential and accessible reporting, including for women in the informal economy. How did the State Party effectively enforce the prohibition of discriminatory recruitment practices, including pregnancy testing and HIV screening? How effective were labour inspection and reporting mechanisms in reaching women in high-risk sectors, domestic work and the informal economy?

13. **A representative of El Salvador** said that women's equality in the labour market was guaranteed through laws, effective inspection, data-based management and accessible reporting mechanisms. The State had strengthened the role of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security as the guarantor of decent work and equality of opportunity, notably through the use of the Labour Market Information System to monitor occupational segregation and gender gaps in wages and working conditions. Based on the data collected, the Ministry had conducted 850 inspections to verify wage gaps, identify non-compliance and order corrective measures. It had also launched the National Decent Work Award, an initiative that recognized companies for best practices in equality and non-discrimination. To support equal opportunities in employment, the Labour Code had been amended to ensure wage equality, protect pregnant women and punish discriminatory acts, in conformity with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). In 2021, the Government had designed a technical standard on management systems for gender equality in the workplace, which had become part of the legal framework applicable to public and private entities.

14. To reduce the number of women who worked in the informal sector, the Government had taken steps to promote their social security affiliation and had implemented employment programmes for single mothers and young women. It had also provided support for microenterprises, reaching more than 3,500 vulnerable women. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security was pursuing a national strategy to promote formal employment and access to labour rights.

15. Social policy was designed to correct structural inequalities, including the unpaid care burden that limited women's access to work. The national policy on co-responsibility for care 2022–2030 addressed that issue through technical measures and targets. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women had carried out awareness-raising and training with various actors and conducted an analysis to determine how responsibility for care should be redistributed. To professionalize the care sector, the Government had developed the country's first training curriculum on eldercare, adopting a person-centred, human rights-based approach. New professional standards had been adopted for childcare and eldercare. A national study of the care economy had been conducted to examine the circumstances of caregivers and beneficiaries, allowing the Government to identify opportunities to support caregivers and strengthen their capacity. To implement the national policy on co-responsibility for care at the local level, the Government had established an inter-institutional commission on care and local care commissions, with the participation of relevant institutions and civil society organizations.

16. To prevent workplace and sexual harassment, the State had introduced innovative mechanisms such as the SOS Women Workers platform and the 130 hotline, which allowed women to report harassment anonymously. Complaints were acted upon through immediate inspections designed to restore rights and prevent further violations. Between 2019 and 2024, more than 600 inspections had been carried out in relation to equal treatment and non-discrimination, benefiting 3,500 women.

17. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Government approached treaty ratification seriously and rigorously, respecting constitutionally established procedures and taking account of the higher national interest. A decision to ratify an ILO convention meant that the Government was fully prepared to implement it and had strengthened its institutional framework accordingly. A bill ratifying ILO Convention No. 189 was currently before the Legislative Assembly, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security had established interministerial discussion forums to study its implementation. The Ministry was currently

studying the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 with a view to formally commencing the ratification process.

18. **A representative of El Salvador** said that El Salvador had dismantled the stereotype that linked women with care: the Growing Together Act recognized that responsibility for care should not fall solely to the State or to women. Several training programmes had been designed to ensure that children grew up in families in which they received loving and sensitive care and a positive upbringing.

19. Corporate social responsibility was a legal requirement. Private companies with more than 100 workers were obliged to establish early childhood care centres so that employees could be certain that their children would be properly looked after. Public institutions were also required to provide childcare options, which might include building an early childhood care centre or paying for employees' childcare. The requirement for both public- and private-sector employers to offer an early childhood care service was enforced through labour inspections. Early childhood care centres had been established in municipal markets so that informal workers, too, could benefit from childcare.

20. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that, notwithstanding efforts to improve women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services, she was concerned about shortcomings in the coverage, quality, accessibility and safety of health services, including sexual and reproductive health services. The number of deaths as a result of unsafe abortions had increased, and many women, particularly rural women, migrant women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, encountered difficulties in accessing healthcare. She wished to know how the State Party was addressing those challenges.

21. It had been reported that pregnancies in girls aged between 10 and 18 years accounted for one third of all pregnancies in the State Party. Many were the result of violations such as incest and statutory rape, and suicide was the most common cause of death among adolescent mothers. She would therefore be interested to know whether the Government intended to renew the national cross-sectoral strategy for the prevention of pregnancy in girls and adolescents and what steps it was taking to provide care for girls and adolescents who experienced sexual violence. She wondered what measures were taken to ensure that pregnant adolescents and teenage mothers had access to confidential mental health services appropriate to their age and maturity, and that male and female adolescents had direct access to contraception and specialized sexual and reproductive healthcare services. She would like to know whether the authorities had evaluated the consequences of regular contraceptive use for girls' health and growth.

22. Abortion remained a criminal offence in all circumstances in El Salvador, forcing women and girls to resort to unsafe abortions that endangered their lives and health. Women who had attempted abortion or miscarried had been sentenced to more than 40 years' imprisonment for aggravated homicide after seeking healthcare and being reported by medical or administrative personnel. She wished to know how many women were detained in El Salvador for aggravated homicide in connection with abortion and how the State Party ensured access to justice for such women and girls. She would be interested to know whether the State Party had taken steps to give effect to the recommendation by several treaty bodies to immediately suspend the application of the offence of aggravated homicide to women and girls in cases related to abortion. She wondered what steps had been taken to ensure professional secrecy and doctor-patient confidentiality, in line with the State Party's technical guidelines; and whether the State Party might review its laws with a view to authorizing abortion in cases of rape, incest, risk to the health of the pregnant woman and severe fetal malformation.

23. The Committee was concerned that forced sterilization continued to be practised, particularly on women and girls with disabilities. It would be interested to know what legislative and policy measures would be adopted to prevent such harmful practices, to make non-consensual sterilization a criminal offence and to ensure the free, prior and informed consent of women with disabilities to any medical treatment.

24. Lastly, she wished to know whether mental health professionals provided specialized care for women victims of violence, including online violence; women who had been

punished for abortion; lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women; and women deprived of their liberty. Up-to-date statistics on HIV/AIDS and information on the control of mother-to-child transmission would be welcome.

25. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the maternal mortality rate had fallen by 48% in four years, reaching a historic low of 21.8 per 100,000 live births in 2025, compared with 59 for the Americas as a whole. Over the same period, infant mortality had fallen from 9.2 to 7.4 deaths per 1,000 live births. Those sustained reductions were due to the impact of legislative reforms and the implementation of comprehensive early childhood policies. Furthermore, neonatal mortality had fallen from 5.6 per 1,000 live births in 2021 to 4.5 in 2025. There were no official records of maternal deaths related to abortion during the previous five years.

26. The adolescent pregnancy rate had fallen from 68 cases per 1,000 women in 2015 to 28 in 2024, with an even steeper fall among girls aged 10 to 14 years. That achievement reflected a whole-of-society effort involving government institutions, civil society and United Nations agencies, and demonstrated the success of the Government's preventive strategy.

27. Regarding access to contraception, 76% of women who wished to avoid pregnancy were using modern contraceptive methods. The country's fertility rate had fallen from 2.13 in 2014 to 1.4 in 2024. Sexual and reproductive health services were functioning in practice, preventing adolescent pregnancy and maternal and child mortality and ensuring that women could take informed decisions about their health.

28. The Government's policy on abortion was underpinned by the right to life as the most precious of all human rights, considering that if the right to life were not robustly defended, there could be no exercise of any other rights. As article 1 of the Constitution protected the right to life from the moment of conception, the State was bound to protect the integrity of both the mother and the unborn child. No international court had found that provision to be incompatible with the human rights treaties. There was no binding obligation under international law, including the Convention, for States to decriminalize abortion.

29. In accordance with the principle of sovereignty, El Salvador was free to determine its own criminal justice laws and policies. Obstetric emergencies were not treated as offences, and the Criminal Code did not prohibit or punish emergency medical procedures in the context of pregnancy. Both in law and in practice, medical practitioners were guided by the principle that health emergencies, including obstetric emergencies, must be treated as such. No woman would be prosecuted for suffering an obstetric emergency.

30. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Salvadoran legal order did not penalize miscarriage, culpable abortion or attempted abortion. The occurrence of an obstetric emergency alone was insufficient to trigger a criminal investigation. Under Salvadoran law, the legal object of an investigation into the death of a newborn was not the loss of the pregnancy per se, but the possible wilful killing of a being that had acquired independent life. The bringing of charges in relation to neonatal death required forensic expert reports, proof of a causal link and malice aforethought. In other words, criminal investigations could proceed only when there was objective evidence that the baby had been born alive and that there had been wilful wrongdoing after the birth. The standard applied was not one of suspicion but of rigorous forensic evidence.

31. The Salvadoran courts and legal order complied with the case law of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which had established the requirement of strengthened due diligence in the investigation of such cases. As in most jurisdictions, the criminal law of El Salvador provided for exculpatory and extenuating circumstances. In some cases, the courts had ordered expert assessments to determine, for example, whether the defendant had been suffering from a clouded state of mind, a psychotic episode or an emotional state that may have impaired their judgment.

32. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she would be interested to know how the State Party ensured that public-sector restructuring did not disproportionately affect women or result in discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation or gender identity. She wondered how the State Party ensured that labour and trade union rights were fully upheld, including during the state of exception.

33. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** said that she wished to know whether any of the measures taken to promote the sharing of caregiving responsibilities between men and women had been aimed at men.

34. **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, noting that a number of women and children had died during childbirth in prison, said that she wished to know whether any steps would be taken to improve prenatal and postnatal care for women in prison and their children.

35. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the process of institutional modernization undertaken in El Salvador was not intended to undermine the protection of rights but to strengthen operational capacity so that benefits could reach the population in a more direct, timely and transparent manner. The process of reorganizing and merging agencies was based on a clear analysis. Administrative fragmentation had led to the duplication of functions, high operating costs and dispersed procedures that hindered citizens' access to public services. The process of institutional modernization made it possible to protect rights more efficiently and more sustainably over time.

36. Training sessions on leadership and the sharing of responsibilities were organized for men in different parts of the country. Those sessions addressed the deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity and the impact of roles and stereotypes that could give rise to inequality and the unequal distribution of domestic tasks and caregiving responsibilities.

37. **A representative of El Salvador** said that efforts were made to ensure access to healthcare for women prisoners from the moment they entered the prison system. Women underwent medical examinations on admission to prison and were referred to an appropriate medical service or specialist, if necessary. Women prisoners had access to primary healthcare from prison clinics and to secondary and tertiary healthcare through the Directorate General of Prisons and the Ministry of Health. Children in prison were not held behind walls. Those living with their mothers in Izalco Prison Farm had access to an early childhood centre. With regard to women who died in prison, every death within the prison system was reported to the Attorney General's Office so that it could conduct the necessary investigations and identify the persons responsible.

38. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Counsel General's Office had undergone a restructuring process in response to public demand. Among its many powers and responsibilities, the Office acted as a public defender of labour rights, providing advice and legal representation to victims of violations in the workplace. From a gender perspective, the Office recognized the various forms of discrimination faced by women in the workplace, which ranged from openly discriminatory practices, such as dismissal on grounds of pregnancy, to reprisals taken against women who reported workplace or sexual harassment. In such situations, the Office provided women with specialized legal representation. In employment proceedings, priority was given to reinstating victims in employment, where appropriate, and ensuring that they received any outstanding financial benefits.

39. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she wished to know what plans were in place to incorporate the gender perspective into fiscal policy and regulatory mechanisms, especially those relating to the digital economy, artificial intelligence, green energy and financial services. She wondered whether public strategies and cooperation frameworks for promoting economic stability and expanding opportunities enhanced the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups in core economic sectors.

40. She would be grateful to know how the State Party saw to it that women engaged in informal employment, including care work, could earn a decent living, be financially independent and have access to social security schemes. She would like to know whether the ongoing reform of the pension system would address the specific challenges faced by women, particularly women engaged in informal work and those whose careers had been interrupted to meet caregiving responsibilities.

41. She would welcome information on any measures taken to provide women with equal access to credit, savings accounts and other financial services and to ensure that the financial products offered by the private banking sector met the needs of women. Information on any products and services for micro- and small business owners, particularly in rural areas, would also be welcome. It would be helpful to know what steps were taken to address the underrepresentation of women and girls as participants, leaders and coaches in sports and whether any funding was allocated to the establishment of sports facilities or the purchase of sports equipment for women.

42. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she wished to know how many women had benefited from the amendments made in 2024 to the Special Act on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, under which penalties were established for companies that failed to hire at least one person with a disability for every 20 employees. It would be useful to know whether the State Party would establish a specific target for the recruitment of women with disabilities. Given that 70% of rural women lacked direct access to a water supply, she wondered what steps would be taken to facilitate such women's access to drinking water.

43. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights had issued a landmark advisory opinion establishing the right of persons vulnerable to climate impact not to be forcibly displaced. In the light of that opinion, she would like to know how the State Party consulted with women vulnerable to climate change or those displaced by it. It would be interesting to learn whether women climate defenders and environmental lawyers were involved in designing the nationally determined contributions of El Salvador under the Paris Agreement and whether they participated in bilateral and multilateral negotiations relating to feminist climate finance.

44. Lastly, she wished to know how the Constitutional Chamber safeguarded the right to habeas corpus and the right to dignity and moral integrity for women deprived of their liberty.

45. **A representative of El Salvador** said that around 40,000 people benefited from initiatives such as the "Aldea" project, which prioritized women and other vulnerable groups. Although 60% of micro- and small enterprises were led by women, only 24% of women had access to a savings account. In view of that situation, specific measures were taken to strengthen women's access to financial services.

46. Promoting climate resilience and water resource management were strategic priorities for the Government. Women accounted for 70% of persons involved in the management of community water resources. The National Plan for the Reduction of Disaster Risks had been established to anticipate risks and safeguard the well-being of the population.

47. A response plan had been established to guarantee the physical and emotional safety of persons living in State care; to prevent incidents of gender-based violence, child abuse, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence; to ensure the privacy, dignity and respectful treatment of persons in communal areas and rest zones; and to guarantee tailored and appropriate support for vulnerable groups.

48. Under the "Reclima" project, which was implemented in the Dry Corridor, rainwater harvesting systems were established and crop diversification was promoted, empowering women-led households and reducing their vulnerability to droughts. More than 22,000 families benefited from the project.

49. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the "League of Values and Opportunities" programme, which was implemented in partnership with the National Sports Institute, had increased access to sports and sports federations for more than 341,000 children and young people. Under the programme, training had been provided to 900 coaches and instructors, including schoolteachers, and sports equipment had been allocated. Girls had joined the Badminton Federation and the Chess Federation, and a young Salvadoran woman had become a champion skater.

50. **A representative of El Salvador** said that, as a result of the horrific crimes repeatedly committed by criminal gangs, including an incident in which a bus had been set alight with passengers inside, the Constitutional Chamber had issued a ruling in 2015 to establish that criminal gangs were terrorist organizations. On the basis of that ruling, a particular model of prosecution was applied to members of criminal gangs, primarily to prevent them from

intimidating witnesses. Previously, witnesses who had feared for their lives had refused to testify before the courts, leading to very high levels of impunity for serious offences.

51. Under national law, pretrial detention was an exceptional precautionary measure. Anyone who was arrested was brought before a judge and a hearing was held to determine whether precautionary measures should be applied and, if so, which measures would be most appropriate. The use of pretrial detention was always subject to judicial oversight. In order for the measure to be applied against a particular person, a court must first establish that he or she posed a flight risk or might interfere with the course of justice. All rulings issued by the courts, including those relating to precautionary measures, were subject to appeal. A range of alternative measures to detention were applied to perpetrators of ordinary offences who were not members of a gang.

52. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** said that she wished to know whether the State Party planned to adopt a comprehensive law on Indigenous Peoples and, if so, whether Indigenous women would participate in the drafting process. Given that questions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity had been removed from health forms, she wondered what steps would be taken to protect the right to healthcare of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. In the light of reports that transgender women were held in men's prisons, she would like to know when the Constitutional Court's ruling on the legal recognition of gender identity would be implemented.

53. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she wished to know what level of funding was allocated to the establishment of infrastructure for women's sports and whether any laws were in place, including at the local level, to promote their participation in sports. She would be grateful to learn how many women had access to financial services and the types of service to which they had access.

54. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she wished to know whether the State Party would establish a system of penalties applicable to employers who discriminated against employees on grounds of their sexual orientation. She wondered what was being done to ensure a strong civic space for women human rights defenders, including climate defenders and those who were lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex.

55. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the health system used a robust and powerful information and communications technology system to gather data on different population groups. Within the system, specific terms were used to designate groups that faced a particular risk of HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted infections. Those terms were used in HIV registries to ensure the traceability and confidentiality of information and the continuity of the care provided to persons living with HIV/AIDS.

56. As part of the Government's response to HIV, a robust policy of women-centred care had been established to ensure women's access to sexual and reproductive health services. Clinics that undertook sentinel surveillance and monitoring of sexually transmitted infections had been opened in certain hospitals, strengthening the expertise of healthcare professionals in the areas of prevention, diagnosis and treatment. The Government had established a monitoring, evaluation and epidemiological surveillance system for HIV/AIDS, a digital referral system and strategies for the prevention, diagnosis and timely treatment of HIV/AIDS.

57. In tackling HIV, the Government collaborated with the National Commission for the Prevention of HIV, which worked directly with State institutions, civil society, international organizations and people living with HIV to develop prevention, care and treatment strategies. Strategies for combating HIV involved the use of mobile clinics, laboratory testing, outreach workers and outpatient services. Progress was being made towards the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and the achievement of the 95-95-95 targets for the testing, treatment and suppression of HIV established by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Girls were not forcibly sterilized in El Salvador as sterilizations were always carried out with the consent of the person concerned.

58. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the entire prison population had been classified in accordance with a human rights-based approach. On the basis of that classification, a centre for pretrial detainees and convicted prisoners had been specifically

designed to accommodate members of the LGBTI community. At that facility, the administrative and security staff participated in relevant awareness-raising activities. The dignified treatment of LGBTI prisoners was addressed in the training courses implemented by the Prison Staff Training Academy. Transgender women were kept separate from male prisoners in the prison system.

59. **A representative of El Salvador** said that, between 2019 and 2024, a total of \$31.2 million in loans and guarantees had been granted to women entrepreneurs. The Central American Bank for Economic Integration had supported 3,200 women-led companies, granting \$45 million to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and generating 22,000 jobs, 6,908 of which had been for women. In 2024, women had received a significant proportion of the loans granted by the National Commission on Micro-Enterprises and Small Businesses and the Fund for Entrepreneurship and Working Capital. The National Commission on Micro-Enterprises and Small Businesses had granted \$305,000 in loans through a special credit scheme. Of those loans, 94% had been backed by a guarantee scheme.

60. A seed capital programme was implemented for the benefit of craftswomen, women farmers and women survivors of violence. The Homes for Women Programme, which was part of the Social Housing Fund, had allocated over \$41 million of loans to women heads of household, single mothers and widows. Since 2024, women had accounted for 52% of the primary recipients of loans granted under the Social Housing Fund. A total of 55% of the beneficiaries of assistance provided by the housing system were women.

61. Although only 24% of Salvadoran women had a savings account, the data suggested that 90% of those who had such an account used it actively. The Government promoted the use of digital wallets to enable women in markets and rural areas to manage their savings and receive payments without having to rely on the traditional banking system. The “Digi-Chiquihuites” project facilitated access to financial technology services for women micro-entrepreneurs in the tourism sector and returning migrants.

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

62. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she wished to know what measures were taken to prevent and tackle early and forced marriages, to identify potential situations of coercion, and to reduce the geographical and socioeconomic disparities that perpetuated early and forced marriages. She wondered what steps were taken to ensure that women in de facto unions who separated from their partners enjoyed the same rights as married women who divorced. In particular, it would be interesting to know whether women in de facto unions had the same rights to property, a maintenance allowance, custody of children and social benefits, and whether any disaggregated data were available to assess the extent to which separated and divorced women benefited from those rights. She would appreciate details of any steps being taken to ensure equal access to legal protection and family rights for all couples, including same-sex couples.

63. She would like to know whether a mandatory assessment of the risk of gender-based violence was carried out in proceedings relating to custody, access to children and maintenance and whether the safety of women and children was prioritized over the right of violent partners to have contact with their children. It would be useful to know whether guidelines would be issued or reforms undertaken to recognize and prevent violence against children that was intended to harm their mothers. She would be grateful to learn whether family and criminal courts would be issued with clear criteria for suspending or restricting parental contact in cases where women or children faced a risk of harm. Information on any steps taken to work with men and boys with a view to promoting the sharing of family responsibilities would be welcome.

64. Under the Government’s mass incarceration campaign, pregnant mothers were imprisoned, mothers were separated from their children and women faced stigmatization and financial difficulties. In view of that situation, it would be helpful to learn about any measures taken to mitigate the adverse effects of mass incarceration on women and children. She wondered what was being done to protect family cohesion under the state of exception and to ensure women’s access to information and justice. What measures were taken to assist families left without financial support when a parent was in detention?

65. **A representative of El Salvador** said that it was a criminal offence for an adult to cohabit with a young girl or adolescent. In order to tackle that offence, the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), had set up a hotline to which anonymous reports could be submitted. The National Council referred all reports to the Counsel General's Office, which initiated proceedings against the perpetrator. The Council took administrative measures to provide psychosocial and other forms of support to child victims of violations. It also implemented mental health and family education programmes.

66. Since the establishment of the National Cross-Sectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Pregnancy in Girls and Adolescents, the Council had become aware that cohabitation between young girls and adults occurred more frequently in certain parts of the country. The Council's advisory board had taken steps to redesign the Cross-Sectoral Strategy in recognition of the connection between early pregnancy and early unions. Measures were taken to educate families who saw such unions as a means of providing for their daughters.

67. Incarcerated women received psychological support and guidance on their children's development. An early childhood care centre attached to the Council provided inmates with childcare training. The number of children living in prisons had fallen significantly in recent years. The Government had conducted a census of the communities affected by violence with a view to developing evidence-based policies and programmes. The National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence was informed when a child's parents were arrested so that it could take steps to support him or her. Children were no longer neglected or left alone because their parents had been incarcerated.

68. **A representative of El Salvador** said that, in compliance with article 16 of the Convention, national law established that women and men had equal rights within the family. The Counsel General's Office had set up an office within the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence that provided psychosocial support to children, adolescents and women. Mediation services were provided by an interdisciplinary team and a programme called "My First Defence" was implemented in schools to raise children's awareness of social norms and how they were constructed and broken down. The Counsel General's Office had established a register of maintenance payments to guarantee women's right to maintenance following a divorce or separation and to protect them against economic violence.

69. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she would welcome information on the rights and legal protection afforded to same-sex couples. It would be interesting to know whether such couples had the right to adopt children.

70. **A representative of El Salvador** said that she wished to thank the Committee for the extremely constructive dialogue. El Salvador was moving from being a nation marked by exclusion to one in which gender equality was embraced as a cross-cutting and non-negotiable priority in every public decision. The Government recognized that ensuring public safety was the first step towards the exercise of any right. Without freedom of movement and safe communities, equality would be merely an aspiration.

71. Today, in the new El Salvador, the Government was building an ecosystem in which specialized justice, dignified healthcare and economic independence were converging to allow every woman to be the protagonist of her own destiny. The Government treated the Committee's observations with the seriousness demanded by the country's international obligations. It would remain open to scrutiny and dialogue and would not relent in its efforts to protect girls and women. It would continue to work with determination until equality was a tangible reality in every Salvadoran home.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*