



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Summary record of the 1962nd meeting*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 21 February 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

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* No summary record was issued for the 1961st meeting.

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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)

Eighth periodic report of Costa Rica (continued) (CEDAW/C/CRI/8; CEDAW/C/CRI/Q/8; CEDAW/C/CRI/RQ/8)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Costa Rica joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the head of delegation and the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the meeting, explained that the other members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **Ms. Duncan Villalobos** (Costa Rica) said that the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, had carried out a visit to her country in November 2022. The Government expected to receive the Special Rapporteur's report on his mission to Costa Rica in June 2023. Follow-up to the Special Rapporteur's observations and recommendations would be coordinated by the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Monitoring and Implementation of International Human Rights Obligations of Costa Rica. The Commission was composed of representatives of 22 State institutions and a number of observer members, including representatives of civil society.
4. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that the judicial branch had adopted a series of programmes and strategies to ensure that women throughout the country enjoyed access to justice. Firstly, the Assistance and Protection Office for Crime Victims of the Public Prosecution Service provided women victims with legal assistance and psychological support. Local committees for the provision of immediate care and follow-up in cases involving violence against women at risk of femicide had also been set up in 19 of the cantons with the highest rates of socioeconomic inequality and violence. The judiciary employed specially trained staff to address the needs of women of African descent, Indigenous women and women with disabilities. It also guaranteed access to an interpreter for migrant and Indigenous women and had signed a convention with the University of Costa Rica under which its staff received sign language training. A total of 14 medico-legal units and 18 rapid response teams had been set up as part of measures taken to implement the inter-institutional protocol for the comprehensive care of rape victims within the first 72 hours. Under that protocol, rape victims were entitled to receive emergency contraception and antiretroviral treatment for HIV infection. To prevent women from having to travel to judicial offices, the Department of Forensic Medicine sent its staff to Indigenous communities to take DNA samples as part of child paternity investigations. Lastly, specially trained judges and the Special Prosecutor's Office for Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence ensured that female victims of domestic violence received adequate protection, while four integrated victim service platforms had been set up in the most marginalized areas of the country.
5. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that the Immediate Response Team for Situations of Trafficking in Persons was one of the most important bodies operating under the National Coalition against Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons. Responsible for meeting the immediate needs of trafficking victims and their dependents, the Response Team was an inter-institutional body composed of representatives of numerous institutions, including the Ministry of Public Security, the National Institute for Women, the professional immigration police, the Judicial Investigation Agency, the Public Prosecution Service and the National Child Welfare Agency. Members met at least once a month to discuss new measures and take decisions aimed at providing victims and their dependents with urgent primary and secondary care services.
6. The implementation of the National Anti-Trafficking Plan was monitored at the monthly meetings of the National Coalition. Unfortunately, there had recently been a decline in the identification of trafficking cases owing both to legislative amendments restricting the public funds allocated for the care of victims and the fact that, as a general rule, women's access to public services had been limited during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The phenomenon of human trafficking had perhaps also become less of a priority for some member institutions of the National Coalition during the pandemic, since they had

been obliged to focus more of their efforts and resources on the State's response to COVID-19. Given that the number of trafficking victims identified by those institutions had fallen, the number of cases referred for prosecution had also dropped. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Public Security had developed a protocol for detection, referral and reporting, by which the Public Prosecution Service was notified of all new suspected trafficking cases. The Office of the Assistant Public Prosecutor for Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants also provided training on identification and detection of trafficking victims for members of staff at other institutions responsible for providing emergency response services. It should also be noted that a special set of care services for child trafficking victims had been developed in partnership with the National Child Welfare Agency.

7. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that the National Institute for Women had set up special shelters where female victims of trafficking were provided with safe accommodation and a range of support services, including assistance with contacting their family members and the embassies of their home countries. Although no specific institutions or centres had been established to support female sex workers with their reintegration into society, they nonetheless enjoyed access to public health services. The National Training Institute also offered a wide range of grants and free capacity-building programmes to enable them to train for a new career. However, to her mind, more focused efforts and dedicated campaigns would be required to help women without education who had resorted to prostitution out of financial necessity.

8. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that the State party could only provide victims with support once they had been identified as such. She would therefore appreciate further information about the mechanisms that had been put in place to identify victims of human trafficking. She also wished to know what specific action was taken to prevent underage girls from becoming victims of child sex tourism and whether any targeted programmes had been put in place to identify girls who had been exploited in that way.

9. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that the Committee would welcome further information on the measures that had been taken to ensure that all women, including women of African descent, rural women, Indigenous women and women who experienced intersectional discrimination, were able to participate in policymaking processes. In that regard, information about any steps taken to include women in the development of the State party's COVID-19 recovery and relief programmes would be of particular interest.

10. She wished to know what percentage of innovators in the field of technology were women and whether they held the intellectual property rights to their products. It would also be helpful to understand the extent to which women were involved in the development of artificial intelligence technologies, such as chatbots, and other innovations. She would welcome further information on any gender parity accelerators that had been adopted in the fields of technology and biotechnology. It would also be useful to know how women were being included in gender-sensitive policymaking on artificial intelligence and machine learning that was designed to prevent the propagation of digital discrimination and digital violence.

11. The Committee would welcome information on the Government's plans to launch its new action plan on women and peace and security and on the impact that outreach programmes for men had had on the number of women in leadership roles. She wished to know what policies had been established to address the sexual harassment experienced by women in public positions of leadership and, in general, what plans had been put in motion to promote women's leadership. It would also be interesting to understand the extent to which women were engaged in the work of bilateral and multilateral organizations, including the Inter-American Development Bank and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and in the negotiation of free trade agreements and investment treaties. Lastly, she wished to know what measures had been taken to make caregiving a shared responsibility for men and women with a view to eliminating gender stereotypes and accelerating the participation of women in decision-making within the Government and in the context of international cooperation.

12. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that she would be interested to hear what progress the State party had made in the context of the Chiricicos Project, a bilateral initiative with Panama

intended to increase the registration of Indigenous persons. It would also be useful to know what measures had been taken to ensure that it was neither too expensive nor too complicated for migrant women to obtain Costa Rican nationality.

13. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that the National Child Welfare Agency was responsible for implementing measures to prevent underage girls from becoming victims of child sex tourism. The Agency had the power to receive reports of suspected cases of sex tourism and conduct investigations in collaboration with the police, the judiciary and the tourism authorities. Since levels of tourism were on the rise again following the COVID-19 pandemic, it would perhaps be necessary to launch new public campaigns to raise awareness on the issue at airports and other relevant sites. Regular training sessions on the identification of victims had been delivered to police officers, the migration authorities and customs officers, while civil society organizations also participated in notifying the authorities of suspected cases of sex tourism.

14. Her country had made excellent progress regarding the political participation of women. Women currently accounted for around half of all cabinet ministers and elected deputies of the Legislative Assembly. Furthermore, the vast majority of heads of office at government agencies were women. On the other hand, women were still largely underrepresented in positions of political leadership at the local level. However, following sustained campaigning by women's groups, the Constitutional Court had ruled the previous week that political parties would be required to make changes to the order in which they listed male and female candidates for municipal elections, so that women candidates appeared at the top of at least half of each party's ballots. It was hoped that the ruling would result in a greater number of women being elected as mayors. A separate legal reform had also been adopted in 2022 to ensure that women who were elected to positions in municipal governments were allocated appropriate functions and responsibilities when they took office.

15. **Ms. Duncan Villalobos** (Costa Rica) said that various institutions led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship were working in collaboration with a Canadian expert to devise the first Costa Rican action plan for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The first meeting with the Canadian expert had taken place in December 2022, a meeting with civil society organizations was expected to be held in the very near future, and the road map and plan would be put into effect in early 2024. She also wished to point out that more than half of all Costa Rican ambassadors were women and gender parity had been achieved at all levels of the foreign service.

16. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that the two main gender-related policies – the national policy for effective equality between women and men and the national policy for addressing and preventing violence against women – had been prepared in consultation with civil society organizations and women's groups. Under the latter policy, work was carried out to raise awareness of gender issues and promote positive masculinity among men and boys as part of broader efforts to change cultural attitudes.

17. The rules of procedure of all public institutions must contain measures to prevent, punish and handle cases of bullying and sexual harassment. Any such cases could be reported to the Ombudsman's Office or brought to court.

18. **The Chair** asked what budget had been allocated to the National Child Welfare Agency to allow it to combat trafficking in children, especially for sexual purposes.

19. **Ms. Akia** said that she wished to know what legislative, administrative and other measures the Government was taking to support girls of African descent, girls with disabilities and Indigenous, migrant and refugee girls to ensure that they had access to all levels of academic and vocational education, in a safe school environment free from discrimination, harassment and bullying, and that they were encouraged to pursue subjects related to digital literacy and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). She wondered whether the Government had taken any steps to update its education curriculum to provide girls with skills in digital literacy, STEM fields and critical thinking; whether teachers were trained to increase their competence, knowledge and skills related to new technological developments; and whether the Government had taken action to update the curriculum to ensure that female students received age-appropriate and comprehensive sex education.

20. **Ms. Xia** said that she would be interested to learn what measures the State party would adopt to increase women's participation in the labour market, encourage men to assume more responsibilities around the home and help women achieve a better work-life balance. She wondered why women's higher educational achievement was not reflected in the labour market; whether the State party had assessed the implementation of the Protection of Equal Pay for Women and Men Act; and whether any specific initiatives had been launched to improve the situation of women, increase their participation in leadership and managerial positions, and reduce the gender pay gap.

21. It would be helpful if the delegation could provide additional information on the implementation and effectiveness of the Guide to Labour Inspection with a Gender Approach. She would be interested to hear whether the Guide was implemented differently in urban and rural areas, whether employers of migrant women were subject to inspections and what gender gaps existed in terms of unemployment and wages. She wished to know whether employment was covered in the women's survey that was conducted every four years, whether the results of the survey were shared with relevant stakeholders and whether any measures to promote women's rights had been improved in the light of the survey results. It would be useful to have information about measures to assist workers, especially women, employed in the informal sector and the tourism industry, which had been seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

22. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that intelligent community centres had been set up to bridge the technological divide and were free to use. There was also a national policy to promote women's access to technology, under which yearly seminars were organized to encourage girls and young women to study STEM subjects.

23. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that the Government was working to develop an interest in STEM subjects among children from a very early age. Intelligent community centres existed primarily in rural areas throughout the country, where they offered science and technology classes to women.

24. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that a woman had very recently been appointed as Minister of Science, Innovation, Technology and Telecommunications. Regarding women's participation in the labour market, a law had been introduced to strengthen the care system for children and persons with disabilities to allow more women to work.

25. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that discussions were under way at the Legislative Assembly on an amendment that would establish people's right to connectivity in the Constitution. It was hoped that the amendment would be approved in late 2023 or early 2024. Funds from the National Telecommunications Fund (FONATEL) had been used to improve connectivity in all areas of the country.

26. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that the Ministry of Education's programme on emotional relations and sexuality was part of the regular curriculum at all levels up to the final year of secondary education. The fact that the teenage pregnancy rate had declined since the programme's launch was indicative of its success. The programme provided adolescents with the knowledge that they needed to understand their bodies and protect themselves, and it also covered key topics such as positive masculinity. The programme was aimed at bringing about a cultural change in the medium and long term that would empower girls.

27. The surveys carried out by the National Institute for Women were used to determine people's perceptions of various human rights and monitor cultural changes; it did not focus on women's rights specifically. The survey had brought to light some advances in terms of women's economic rights, including a higher level of gender equality in the workplace. Although issues such as gender-based discrimination remained a problem, increasing numbers of women were able to recognize and address it.

28. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that the Ministry of Labour and Social Security had an entire department, which was headed by a woman, to promote employment of women, and the National Training Institute disseminated information about the training courses it offered, free of charge, to boost women's employment prospects in positions traditionally held by men. The National Institute for Women conducted campaigns to raise

awareness among women throughout the country of training and employment opportunities and the grants available to facilitate their access to the labour market.

29. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that her country was part of the Equal Pay International Coalition, a global initiative to reduce the gender pay gap. Work was being carried out under that initiative and the State of the Nation Programme, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), to generate official statistics on the gender pay gap and develop a methodology with which to measure it. Tools were being developed to allow the labour inspectorate to overcome difficulties in terms of identifying gender pay gaps, such as varying types of work and responsibilities that had an impact on wages. The National Institute for Women was promoting a methodology to help companies prevent pay gaps through their own internal review programmes, and it had established a guide to assist employers and inspectorates in addressing wage discrimination against women.

30. **Ms. González Ferrer**, noting that morbidity and mortality rates due to COVID-19 were higher among women than men, said that she would be interested to learn what measures the State party had adopted to improve health-care services for women, especially those intended for women from ethnic minority communities, women with disabilities and migrant women. She wished to know what action was being taken to recognize women's right to legal, safe and free abortion in accordance with World Health Organization (WHO) standards; whether abortion would be legalized as a health-care service, at least in cases of rape; who decided whether the health of a pregnant woman was in danger; whether all aspects of health, including mental health, were considered when assessing the risk to the life of the mother; whether an awareness-raising and capacity-building programme was in place to tackle stereotypical views of abortion among medical staff; whether medical staff were aware of the technical standards and protocols related to abortion; and whether a schedule had been established for refining the Technical Standard for Therapeutic Abortion. She would appreciate an explanation of the measures being taken to update the system for gathering health statistics.

31. She wondered whether any progress had been made in incorporating comprehensive sex education in schools, whether the health-care system provided guidance services for adolescents and young people; whether steps had been taken to ensure that adolescents and women had access to modern contraceptives; how emergency contraception was regulated; and whether women and girls who had been victims of sexual violence were guaranteed access to such contraception. It would be helpful to know whether measures had been implemented to incorporate modern methods of eliminating obstetric violence into the traditions of Indigenous women, how the rights of women with disabilities were guaranteed, especially with regard to their reproductive rights in the light of the guideline for surgical sterilization in persons with disabilities adopted in 2020, and how the State party ensured that migrant women who lacked insurance were able to receive health care. She wished to know what the situation was with respect to access to health care, especially sexual and reproductive health care, of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and non-binary persons, whether disaggregated data was available in that regard, and whether conversion therapies would be banned.

32. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that there was no legislative proposal at present to legalize abortion where there was no risk to the health or life of the mother. According to information supplied by the Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund, there had been 18 applications for therapeutic abortion, of which six had been approved. There had been six appeals for reconsideration but they had all been denied. An institutional programme had been set up to raise awareness of the Technical Standard for Therapeutic Abortion among health-care professionals and, in May 2022, a training course had been provided on the application of the standard and the clinical care protocol. In September and October of that year, gynaecology specialists had received training and awareness courses on approving abortions for therapeutic purposes. Mental health factors were considered when assessing applications for therapeutic abortions in line with the clinical care protocol, which was used throughout the country, and a schedule had been set for refining the Technical Standard for Therapeutic Abortion.

33. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Commission for the Evaluation and Analysis of Maternal, Perinatal and Infant Mortality had been reactivated and its

members had travelled around the country to analyse cases, develop tools and devise action plans to reduce morbidity and mortality rates. The standard for childbirth and post-partum care had been updated, and a gender-based approach that encouraged a humanized management of services and aimed to prevent violence had been adopted throughout the health-care system. All medical staff involved in obstetric care had received training on the standard in early 2022. Standards on obstetric risk prevention and managing high-risk pregnancies were also being updated.

34. A new model of obstetric care had been adopted that took into account the different practices, knowledge, beliefs and worldviews of women of African descent and Indigenous women. A cultural adviser was constantly on hand to ensure that the patient and her family understood all procedures that were carried out during the patient's stay in hospital. Following an assessment of the new model, recommendations had been made to standardize practices across the country and at all levels of health care. In response to those recommendations, the Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund had developed a five-year road map and action plan to ensure respect for women's sexual and reproductive rights in all the country's institutions and a major national awareness campaign had been carried out in February 2023 to ensure that hospital staff took into account women's culture and worldview when providing health care.

35. There were guidelines in place to safeguard the rights of women with disabilities, including their sexual and reproductive rights, and awareness campaigns had been launched with the slogan "*Nada de Nosotras sin Nosotras*" (Nothing about us without us). The autonomy of such women and their wishes regarding sterilization and the use of long-term contraception methods were respected. Campaigns had also been carried out to inform adolescents about contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections.

36. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that emergency contraception was provided to women and girls who had been victims of rape within 72 hours, in accordance with a protocol followed by the judicial authorities and forensic practitioners.

37. **Ms. Hacker** said that she was anxious to hear about concrete remedies regarding maternal mortality, including legal measures to address negligence, discrimination and malpractice. She wondered what budget was allocated to safeguard women's rights to health.

38. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she would appreciate more information about the situation of migrant women in Costa Rica with regard to health care.

39. **Ms. Akia** asked what the constitutional amendment regarding the right to connectivity entailed and when that right would be incorporated into the Constitution.

40. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that labour inspectors had a process whereby they could negotiate with employers to rectify labour law infringements in cooperation with employees. Complaints submitted to the labour courts could be heard through a fast-track procedure, and labour court judges were involved in the training and capacity-building of labour inspectors. With regard to the health-care system, negligence could constitute an offence punishable under the Criminal Code, and different institutions had measures in place to handle cases of discrimination and malpractice.

41. Discussions were under way on proposals to grant institutions set budgets for measures to promote gender equality. The Technical Standard for Therapeutic Abortion had been introduced in late 2019 and published in early 2020, but had fallen by the wayside as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. There had been little discussion of the Standard since then and it remained somewhat controversial.

42. Migrant women received health-care services free of charge during their pregnancy and in the post-partum period, and emergency care was also provided. In recent years, legislative reforms had been discussed in the Legislative Assembly to ensure that unemployed, underemployed and self-employed persons had access to health insurance, which had been very expensive in the past.

43. **Ms. Reddock** said that rural women in Costa Rica had limited access to land and were more likely than men to have no source of income. The unemployment rate was high for rural women and their labour force participation rate was low. In addition, they were less likely

than men to be involved in decision-making processes and their access to health care, education and employment opportunities was hampered by the poor state of the transport network in rural areas. In view of that situation, she wished to know to what extent they had benefited from the National Territorial Rural Development Policy (2015–2030) and the Gender Equality for Inclusive Development Policy in the Agricultural, Fisheries and Rural Sector of Costa Rica (2020–2030). In particular, she wondered whether those policies had improved and diversified agricultural production, increased women's access to land, addressed the deep division of labour along gender lines and alleviated the heavy burden of domestic work on women.

44. In view of the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women belonging to vulnerable groups, including women of African descent, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women, and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, she would be interested to know whether systems for collecting intersectional data would be developed as a tool for addressing such discrimination. The Committee also wished to know whether outreach programmes or mobile units were used to make the Ombudsman's Office and other human rights mechanisms accessible to women living in isolated areas and whether campaigns were conducted to raise rural women's awareness of those mechanisms.

45. The State party might explain whether it would enshrine the right of Indigenous women to their ancestral lands in the Constitution, as recommended by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. It might also explain how Indigenous women's organizations could gain greater recognition as public stakeholders and participate in discussions of policies that affected them.

46. Given that women of African descent had limited employment opportunities and continued to face racism and discrimination, she asked whether any plans were being made to develop and diversify the economies of coastal areas with a view to expanding such women's opportunities. It would also be useful to know whether data drawn from censuses and other sources, disaggregated by the respondents' ethnic affiliation, gender and other characteristics, would be compiled by the national statistics system. The Committee would welcome information on any laws adopted to prohibit hate speech and hate crimes and any mechanisms established to monitor the implementation of those laws.

47. She was curious to learn whether the State party planned to improve working conditions for migrant and asylum-seeking women, who were vulnerable to labour exploitation and workplace violence. The Committee would welcome the delegation's comments on a recently released video that showed a staff member at a retail store viciously beating two migrant women colleagues. The State party might indicate whether it intended to ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). It might also consider making it easier for migrant women to validate qualifications obtained in other countries in order to facilitate their entry into the labour market. She would be grateful to know whether migrant and asylum-seeking women who lacked family support were eligible for the childcare provided under the programmes organized by the National Childcare and Child Development Network.

48. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that one of the main institutions responsible for rural affairs was the Institute for Rural Development, which operated in every region and supported the work of the regional rural development committees. A study of women's ownership of land was being conducted and efforts were being made to enhance women's access to land, training and funding. The Institute for Rural Development made two sources of funding – a non-reimbursable fund and a credit-based fund – available to women undertaking production projects in rural areas. The National Training Institute also allocated funding to rural projects and sent qualified professionals to assist local communities. The number of women working for both institutes had increased in recent years.

49. The National Institute for Women would be signing an agreement with the National Institute for the Cooperative Movement with a view to promoting the establishment of women's cooperatives. Efforts were being made to enhance rural women's access to credit,

infrastructure and support services and to build their capacity to carry out productive activities.

50. Only the remotest parts of Costa Rica were not linked to the transport network. Officials from the National Institute for Women, the Ministry of Agriculture and other government agencies travelled to remote areas to provide training and support to local communities. In coastal areas, measures to promote the establishment of cooperatives were being implemented.

51. Hate speech was prohibited by law and investigated by the authorities when it was reported. When the video mentioned by the Committee had come to light, the police had investigated the incident. The Government was making plans to adopt ILO Convention No. 190.

52. **Ms. Reddock** said that she wished to know what mechanisms were in place to support persons travelling through the country in migrant caravans and whether migrant victims of violence and abuse received support of any kind.

53. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that she wished to know why Costa Rica had not ratified the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement).

54. **Ms. Reddock** said that the Escazú Agreement required States parties to protect environmental activists and human rights defenders, many of whom were Indigenous women. In view of the State party's failure to ratify the Agreement, she wished to know what was being done to protect Indigenous women against acts of violence and violations of their land rights. She would welcome information on the status of the various action plans on environmental matters, including the Gender Environment and Biodiversity Programme, through which measures were being taken to reduce gender gaps in the biodiversity sector and ensure women's equal participation in it. The State party might consider taking steps to increase the number of women who were eligible for the Payment for Environmental Services Programme, which was currently restricted to landowners.

55. **Ms. Reddock** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure that fathers' names were always included in records of births, including those issued to children born to girls and adolescents. In view of the relatively high number of births to girls and adolescents, she wondered whether the State party would consider conducting a national campaign to tackle child sexual abuse, whether the law prohibiting such abuse would be effectively implemented and whether women, girls, the courts and the police would be empowered to address the problem. The State party might describe any measures being taken to increase the reach of the National Childcare and Child Development Network in rural areas. It might also give details of any mechanisms established to protect the rights of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons.

56. **A representative of Costa Rica** said that, following the adoption of Act No. 9406 on strengthening the legal protection of girls and adolescent women against gender-based violence and abusive relationships, the Government had launched a strategy to prevent the sexual abuse of children. As a result, the number of reports of sexual abuse had increased as cross-checks were carried out by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which was responsible for registering births, and the prosecution services, which investigated sexual offences. Subsequently, however, the number of reports of child sexual abuse had declined because girls and adolescents had become less willing to identify the fathers of their children. In response, the Government had taken steps to strengthen the implementation of certain preventive measures that had been provided for in the National Policy for Addressing and Preventing Violence against Women. Efforts had been made to raise the public's awareness of the impact of sexual abuse on girls and adolescents and to enhance the authorities' ability to detect that abuse. Awareness-raising campaigns had also been conducted in schools. The effectiveness of the various measures taken had not yet been assessed.

57. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that discrimination on the grounds of sexual or gender identity was prohibited in law. Intersex and sexually diverse persons who were subjected to discrimination had access to a number of complaints mechanisms. For instance, they could file an application for *amparo* with the Constitutional Court. Attitudes to sexual

diversity were changing and the public was becoming less willing to tolerate discrimination on the grounds of sexual or gender identity.

58. **The Chair**, announcing the end of the constructive dialogue, asked whether the head of delegation wished to make any concluding remarks.

59. **Ms. Caravaca Zúñiga** (Costa Rica) said that she wished to thank all the Committee members for their thought-provoking questions. The Government had made great progress in improving the country's legislative and public policy framework, thereby making it easier for institutions and citizens to bring about the required changes. The National Institute for Women would work closely with other agencies in its efforts to overcome the significant challenges that lay ahead. In so doing, it would pay careful attention to the observations and recommendations made by the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.