



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

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 4 April 1984, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. IDER

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

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

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

1. Miss BAZIYAKA (Rwanda) thanked members of the Committee for their interesting questions on her country's report. Most of the questions dealt with family law and related problems. It should be pointed out that there were two legal systems in that area: customary law and the Civil Code, which was based primarily on the Napoleonic Code. Prior to colonization, there had been only customary law. During the colonial period, a new law of foreign inspiration had been superimposed on the indigenous law. It was applicable to foreigners and registered nationals - nationals whose lifestyle was similar to that of Europeans and who were treated as such. After independence new legislation had been adopted in the area of public law, particularly constitutional and administrative law but no innovations had been made in civil law. The system of written law as it existed in colonial times had been maintained together with customary law and both systems had been applied to all citizens without distinction. In many cases, application of those two systems presented problems and it was difficult for law practitioners to know whether they should apply customary law or written law or whether they should apply both together. The decision was left to the discretion of the magistrates. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that written law contained no regulations concerning marriage and succession and that customary law alone was applicable in that area.

2. Accordingly, it was necessary to consider the status of women in the two systems. Article 96 of the Civil Code established that the minimum age for marriage was 15 years for women and 18 years for men. It was impossible to know the reason for that differentiation as the documents used in the preparation of the Code were not available. Nevertheless, if the contracting parties were under 21 they had to obtain their parents' consent. Under article 110 a marriage to which the parties had not consented freely was invalid. Articles 119 to 126 of the Code established that a woman must obey her husband, must follow him to the place where he decided to establish his residence and must obtain his authorization for any legal act she wished to carry out. Nevertheless, a woman did not need her husband's permission to file suit against him. The Code also provided for parental authority to be exercised by the father and, in his absence, by the mother.

3. The Code drew a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children. The latter included natural children, who could be recognized and legitimized, and children of adultery, who were entitled to maintenance but could not be recognized. An intensive campaign was being waged on behalf of such children and it would most probably lead to the legislature granting the same rights to all children whatever the circumstances of their birth. Single mothers could make application to establish paternity but they rarely exercised that right.

4. The Code granted men and women the same opportunities for obtaining divorce, but in the case of adultery the spouses were not on an equal footing. Adultery by a woman was always grounds for divorce; adultery by a husband was only if there

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were aggravating circumstances. The law did not define what those circumstances were. Again, the same difference of treatment applied as in the case of the penalties for adultery. During the divorce proceedings a woman could obtain permission to leave the conjugal residence. The division of the household goods and the fate of the children was always decided in the divorce proceedings. The woman could receive an allowance for herself and the children. Custody of the latter was generally awarded to the spouse who had sufficient means to assure their subsistence; the welfare of the children was the primary consideration in all cases. In that connection, there was a considerable body of judicial precedents awarding custody of small children to the mother. The Code also provided that widows who wished to remarry must wait until 300 days had elapsed since the death of their husband. As had been pointed out, a new civil code was being drawn up and there was reason to hope that it would bring family law into line with the provisions of the Convention.

5. Under customary law, marriage was the normal state for both men and women. Single mothers were the object of censure and were not held in high esteem by society. Previously marriage had been entirely arranged by the families. The man's family would check the girl's credentials prior to committing their son to a matrimonial bond. Currently, young men and women had a say in the selection of their mate. Matrimony was preceded by various stages: the asking for the hand in marriage, the handing over of the dowry and, finally, the marriage itself. When asking for a girl's hand in marriage, the man's family officially communicated his intentions to the girl's parents. The handing over of the dowry was a ceremony during which the man's parents gave the girl's family a cow or its equivalent in cash. The dowry was a proof of the tie between the two families. Under customary law, the handing over of the dowry was an important formality which had various legal effects; inter alia it validated the marriage and legitimized the children. If a man had not handed over the dowry, the children belonged to the girl's family. If he had the children entered the patrilineal lineage. A woman owed obedience to her husband. She could administer, but could not dispose of, the household property. Generally, all the major household goods, movable and immovable, belonged to the husband. Upon marriage, the woman brought only her personal effects; such property as she could dispose of as owner was inherited, but under customary law a woman could inherit from her parents only if there were no male descendants.

6. Because of their important role within the family, particularly in matters relating to the upbringing of children and the production and preparation of food, women in Rwanda were called the "heart of the home" and were respected by other members of the family. Under customary law separation of the spouses was allowed but given the family-oriented nature of the institution of marriage, the relatives did everything they could to prevent a final break. Nevertheless, if the spouses separated permanently, the woman could remarry.

7. One expert had asked whether women in Rwanda had access to credit. The answer was yes: women had access to credit on the same terms as men. Nevertheless, a married woman did not have legal capacity and had to obtain permission from her husband in order to apply for a loan. The main obstacles facing women in Rwanda in that connection were economic. There were very few women who could meet bank requirements for a loan.

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8. Some experts had asked whether the Convention could be invoked in the courts. The Constitution of Rwanda contained no provision for the implementation of conventions and treaties to which Rwanda was a party. Without such provision it was clear that international instruments had to be translated into laws and regulations in order to be incorporated in the internal legal system. More detailed and clearer information on the matter would be given in the next report.

9. Some experts had requested information about her country's social security system. It had to be pointed out that only a small portion of the population was currently covered by social security. As already indicated, roughly 93 per cent of the Rwandese population engaged in farming and lived in a subsistence economy. The secondary and tertiary sectors were insignificant, and only persons employed in those sectors could benefit from the social security system. The Social Security Act of 22 August 1974 provided the same benefits for men and women. In so far as social security was concerned, the laws contained no discrimination on the basis of sex. The retirement age was 55 years for men and women alike, and pensions were allocated under equal conditions to retired persons of both sexes.

10. Some experts had asked whether Rwandese women could transmit their nationality. Under the law of 28 September 1963, women could transmit their nationality to their children if the father had no nationality or was of unknown nationality, or if paternity could not be established in the case of a father of foreign nationality. In general, the principle of jus sanguinis was applied, having regard to the nationality of the father. A Rwandese woman did not automatically lose her nationality by marrying a foreigner; she could keep it or take the nationality of her husband, whichever she preferred. A woman marrying a foreigner could not transmit her Rwandese nationality to her husband.

11. Questions had been asked about the composition of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development and whether women were actively involved in that political organization. The statute of the Revolutionary Movement provided that all citizens of Rwanda could be members enjoying full rights. As far as women's participation was concerned, it should be noted that women continued to be inadequately represented in all organs, at the central level as well as at the prefectural and community levels. In introducing the report, she had indicated that one woman was a member of the Central Committee and that 9 of the 68 deputies to the National Development Council were women.

12. A number of experts had asked for specific data on the number of women holding jobs, belonging to trade unions, occupying managerial posts and serving as judges, and on the number of female students and drop-outs. Unfortunately, she could not provide the Committee with those figures, as she did not have them at her disposal; however, they would be provided in the next report of Rwanda.

13. Some experts had asked whether any non-governmental women's organizations or trade unions existed in Rwanda. The country did not yet have any government or non-governmental women's organizations. In her introductory statement, she had pointed out that the Revolutionary Movement was currently exploring the best ways to start up the National Organization of Rwandese Women (URAMA). The few initiatives which had been taken in the past had not continued because of a variety

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of problems. Likewise, trade unions did not yet exist in Rwanda; however, the statute of the Revolutionary Movement left open the possibility of establishing agencies or organizations responsible for carrying out programmes for women, youth, students, workers and others.

14. In the matter of voting rights, criteria for ineligibility were clearly defined in Decree-Law No. 17/81 of 22 August 1981. Article 11 of that Decree-Law classified as ineligible to vote persons convicted of homicide or murder, or of crimes against the internal or external security of State carrying sentences of more than 12 months of imprisonment, and soldiers convicted of desertion. Article 12 provided that the exercise of the right to vote would be suspended in the case of persons under arrest or under Government supervision, and persons interned or hospitalized because of insanity or by virtue of other measures deemed necessary for the good of society. Under article 17, the following could not be elected to office: persons ineligible to vote or whose right to vote had been suspended in accordance with articles 11 and 12; persons who had received prison sentences of between 12 months and 5 years during the previous 10 years, or more than 5 years during the previous 20 years; persons in a state of fraudulent bankruptcy, or who, having taken part in the management of a company which had fraudulently declared bankruptcy, had been held responsible in such cases; permanently disabled persons; and persons who had failed to fulfil their military obligations because of desertion.

15. A number of questions had been asked about education. Education had been introduced into Rwanda during the colonial period. At first, only boys had had access to instruction, while girls were supposed to help their mothers with household work. Women's access to education came late in time. Since attaining its independence, the Republic of Rwanda had tried to improve and diversify education for women. For example, a secondary school for the sciences had been established, which facilitated access to university. The National University of Rwanda, established in 1963, had opened its doors to women in October 1968. The First Republic had also adopted concrete measures to increase the number of women in secondary schools. For example, it had allowed the minimum entry score for women to be lower than that for men, a temporary measure which had resulted in the admission of large numbers of girls to such school. Since the International Women's Year, the Second Republic had diversified women's education. In September 1975, an agricultural secondary school for girls had been opened; up to that time training in agriculture had been reserved for men. In the same year, the Rwandese police and army had begun to accept women recruits. In Rwanda, the right of all citizens to education was recognized. Article 27 of the Constitution specified that primary education was compulsory and free. The law concerning education provided that primary school was free for all children living in Rwanda without distinction as to race, clan, colour, sex or religion. Admission to secondary school was contingent upon success in a national competitive examination, which all students were required to take in their last year of primary school. The results of that examination made it possible to select the best students for secondary schools. One objective of the school reform begun during the 1981-1982 academic year was the democratization of education in terms of compulsory education, a reduction in the number of primary school drop-outs and the elimination of inequalities between regions. Integrated vocational-agricultural

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education centres offered three post-primary courses in each school, in which students of both sexes received training in agriculture, carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing and other skilled trades. Those centres admitted all students who had not scored high enough in the national examination to enter secondary school. At the secondary level, there were separate schools for young men and women. However, the curricula were the same for both sexes. At the higher education and university level, women were represented in various disciplines, but there was a tendency for women to prefer the humanities to the exact sciences. She did not have percentage figures for students by sex. Those data would be included in the next report.

16. The experts had asked questions about the Government programme to give effect to the Convention. She reminded the Committee that the Government's efforts to promote the equality of women were one component of the Rwandese people's struggle for development. The Five-Year Development Plan for 1982-1986 contained specific provisions for bringing about greater equality between women and men in training and employment, seeking measures to enhance the role of women in development, and establishing a programme of research, consciousness-raising and training to promote the advancement of women. In its next report, the Government of Rwanda would present the Committee with a concrete and detailed programme which was to be drawn up to facilitate the implementation of the Convention, and would inform the Committee of the difficulties affecting the execution of that programme. The Government would also explain the reasons why the authorities had adopted stringent legislative measures on abortion.

17. In connection with the questions on Rwanda's population policy, she pointed out that the National Population Office (ONAPO) had been established in January 1981. The 1982-1986 development plan had established specific population objectives: to halt the constant increase in the rate of population growth, limiting it to a maximum of 3.7 per cent per year during the period covered by the plan, and to implement any measures which would contribute to a rapid reduction in the rate after the plan had ended. That policy had been adopted after it had been ascertained that the prospects for increased agricultural productivity were not such as to enable production to keep pace with the needs of the population, which would double by the end of the century if measures were not taken to slow down its rate of growth. The objectives assigned to ONAPO included studying questions related to population growth and its effects on socio-economic development; increasing public awareness at all levels of the country's population problems; ensuring the rational use of family planning methods; studying the integration of family planning and primary health care services; and proposing means of attaining a balance between production and population growth.

18. The Government of Rwanda had opted for reversible family planning methods in seeking to halt population growth. ONAPO had been established too recently for it to be possible to assess the results it had attained in its three functions, namely, socio-demographic research, increasing public awareness of socio-demographic problems, and initiating family planning measures. It should be noted that in Rwanda the number of live births per mother had increased from 7.6 in 1970 to 8.5 in 1978. Population policy was aimed at halting and reversing that trend.

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19. With regard to the status of women in rural areas, it should be noted that there were very few economic opportunities open to them. Soil depletion, erosion and the lack of arable land owing to excessive population density (369 inhabitants per square kilometre in the most densely populated prefecture and 135 in the least densely populated) meant that rural families had no surplus production after meeting family consumption. Women in rural areas lived in very difficult conditions. They had no access to drinking water, or if they did, the supply point was often far from the home. The many tasks which they had to carry out in the fields, together with housework and care of the children, left them no time for other activities. All those factors affected women's health, which rapidly deteriorated. The number of health care centres, dispensaries, and maternity and communal hospitals was still very limited, so that women in rural areas had to walk long distances to obtain health care for themselves and their children. To rectify the situation the Government had opted for preventive medicine, so that there were hygiene, nutrition, agricultural and literacy programmes at the social centres. Such social programmes for women in rural areas and their limited economic opportunities had been factors in the establishment of rural pre-co-operative groups for women, in which they could exercise their freedom of association. However, their lack of training and limited economic opportunities denied them access to agricultural credit. Since they worked in a position of dependence, it was the husband who entered into contracts and who executed the formalities necessary to obtain agricultural credit.

20. With respect to the question on the existence of child care centres in Rwanda, it should be noted that although they were needed both in urban centres and in the capital, unfortunately the Government did not have the wherewithal to set up or run them. At present women who worked outside the home hired a young woman who was paid a wage to take care of the children under school age. The Government planned to establish pre-school centres in the capital. Premises were being constructed for that purpose.

21. The problem of prostitution existed only in urban centres and was not very widespread. Rwanda prohibited prostitution, which explained why the Criminal Code provided for sanctions not only against those engaged in prostitution, but also against instigators, exploiters and pimps.

22. She would transmit to her Government the questions and comments put forward by the experts on the Committee. The questions which it had not been possible to answer during the current session would be answered in the next report.

23. Ms. CARON asked exactly what measures had been adopted and how long it would take to amend Rwanda's antiquated Civil Code, which was out of step with the times. She inquired whether a time-limit had been established for the proposal of amendments and for their adoption by the Government. She suggested that a study group should be formed to support measures aimed at ending discrimination against women in Rwanda.

24. Ms. CORTES said that in her country's Civil Code, too, there were provisions which had originated in the Napoleonic Code, some of them discriminatory in nature, which efforts were being made to eliminate. She wished to know whether there was

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room for all children of school age in Rwanda's primary schools and how many years of education were compulsory. She also asked if there were separate secondary schools for each sex.

25. Ms. REGENT-LECHOWICZ said that, given the economic and social conditions under which Rwanda was establishing its political and economic structures, the efforts it had made to promote women's rights were laudable. Rwanda was a country which had attained independence 22 years earlier and in which there still existed prejudices and traditions that prevented women from fully enjoying their recognized rights. With respect to civil rights and the status of women in the family, not only were there laws in force which discriminated against women, but certain traditions continued to exist which were equally discriminatory. It would take some time for the situation to change. She trusted that the Rwandese Government's next report would contain information on further progress.

26. Ms. SMITH said that she wished to receive additional information on the heavy labour performed by women in Rwanda, compared to that done by men. She also inquired about the role played by women in preparing the new legislation, and whether women's interests would be taken into account in it.

27. Ms. BERNARD thanked the representative of Rwanda for clarifying the doubts raised by the members of the Committee. She trusted that the questions which had not been answered would be dealt with in the next report.

28. Miss BAZIYAKA (Rwanda) said that some of the preparatory work for the new Civil Code had already been completed. A group of jurists had prepared a preliminary draft on which discussions had been held at various levels in the organs of the Revolutionary Movement. For example, questionnaires had been distributed to prefectural congresses in order to ascertain whether public opinion favoured the maintenance or abolition of the dowry. The question of the status of illegitimate children had also been brought before the members of those congresses. No time-frame had been established for submitting the preliminary draft, but, given the progress made so far, it should be possible for it to be adopted in the near future.

29. In response to the questions put by Ms. Cortés, she said that there was a double-session system in the primary schools, with pupils divided into two groups, one attending in the morning and the other in the afternoon, so that a larger number of pupils could be accommodated. Since the 1981 reform the length of primary education had been increased from 6 to 8 years. In the last two years of primary education, pupils were given practical instruction so that those who would not go on to secondary school could enter a skilled trade.

30. In response to the questions raised by Ms. Smith, she wished to say that Rwandese men did the heavy work, while the women did the housework and looked after the children. Now that the number of women working outside the home had risen, that division of labour would have to change so that women could also have some leisure. The question concerning participation by women in the preparation of new legislation had already been dealt with in the answer concerning specific measures



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adopted in preparing the Civil Code. It should be pointed out that both men and women were represented in the prefectural assemblies, although the number of women was still comparatively low. Women had also been involved in preparing the draft for the new Civil Code.

Initial report of Norway (CEDAW/C/5/Add.7 and Amend.1)

31. Ms. STOLTENBERG (Norway) said that in 1978 an act giving women the right to free abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy had been passed. After the first trimester they had to seek authorization from a board, which considered each case in order to determine whether abortion was inadvisable for medical reasons, since the incidence of complications arising from abortions was greater after the third month of pregnancy. The number of abortions had not increased after the act had been passed; on the contrary, there had been a slight reduction owing to more widespread use of contraceptives. The highest rate of abortions was among young married women. Starting in the 1970s, family planning centres had been established, to which the entire population, including single women, now had access. Sex education was compulsory in schools from 14 years of age onwards. The Government undertook large-scale campaigns to promote the use of contraceptives by men, but women actually used contraceptives much more frequently.

32. Norway had a unified day-care system that offered places for children under one year of age up to school age. All the day-care centres were run by female pre-school teachers with diplomas, who placed particular stress on the development of the child and on recreational activities. Only a very low proportion of the population was as yet availing itself of the services in question, namely, under 30 per cent of the number of children in the appropriate age range. The Government bore approximately 70 per cent of the day-care centres' costs, and the parents bore the remaining costs. Most local communities had established systems whereby the amount that the parents had to pay gradually increased as their income rose, and generally there was also a certain number of free places. Since there were still not enough day-care centres, children were admitted on the basis of a set of priorities, with the highest priority being given to the children of single parents, handicapped children, children with working parents and children with special problems. The more affluent families had to arrange for such services on a private basis, at a considerably higher cost. The Government's annual allocations for the establishment of day-care centres had gradually risen.

33. The information on university graduates given in the report was inaccurate. The figure of 27 per cent of university graduates represented the percentage of women obtaining the highest academic degrees and not the percentage of graduates. In 1983, 55 per cent of pre-university students had been women. Women generally took up studies in greater numbers than men did. Furthermore, 55 per cent of those completing their secondary education successfully were women. The difficulty was that women and girls were still choosing careers traditionally reserved for women. The Government was trying to counter that trend through publicity campaigns and information programmes. Moreover, scholarships were being granted to women entering fields from which they had traditionally been barred. Intermediate-school teachers were being given training in vocational guidance so that they could encourage girls to take up non-traditional occupations. The Ministry of Education

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was considering the possibility of introducing computer studies as a compulsory subject in secondary schools. There were virtually no private schools in Norway, but the few that did exist had to comply with the legislation requiring that there should be no discrimination according to sex.

34. The Cabinet had 18 members, four of whom were women. Twenty-six per cent of the members of Parliament, 32.8 per cent of the provincial councillors and 22.8 per cent of the local councillors were women. There had been a slight increase in the representation of women as a result of the most recent elections. The proportion of women in the seven political parties was 40 per cent. The number of women in the executive bodies of the parties varied from case to case. The Chairman of the majority party and the Vice-Chairman of the party representing the next greatest number of voters were women.

35. The Equal Status Council was an advisory body with seven members. It advised the Government on organizations, public schools and the local committees on equal opportunity in employment. The Equal Status Council was a body responsible for implementing the 1976 Equal Status Act. The Commissioner contacted the two parties to a dispute and tried to settle the matter immediately. If the two parties could not reach agreement, the case was referred to an appeals board made up of two lawyers, which ruled whether there had been a violation of the law or not. If there had been a violation, the board had the power to decide on a remedy. If one of the parties was not satisfied with the decision, it could bring the matter before the courts. The Equal Status Act applied to all sectors, but there were a number of exceptions concerning, for example, the internal conditions under which some religious communities lived. The internal conditions in question concerned issues that a religious community might regard as falling within the theological sphere. If a religious group believed that women could not be priests, it was not forced to admit women to the priesthood. Exceptions were also made in cases where one sex was given preference for obvious reasons, as in the case of models for men's clothing. The courts could impose punishments or require that compensation should be paid in cases where there had been violations of the law. The principle of equality of the sexes was not laid down in the Constitution because it was extremely difficult to make amendments to that instrument. The Constitution was amended extremely infrequently in Norway. In general it was accepted that the force of the law was sufficient and that it was not necessary to go so far as making an amendment to the Constitution itself.

36. Questions concerning the new legal provision on equal representation of the sexes in all publicly appointed bodies had also been asked. Specifically, she had been asked whether the relevant provision also covered bodies whose members were elected by the public. Naturally, it was impossible to set up a quota system in bodies whose members had been elected by the people. However, in cases where such a body was broken down into various committees following its establishment or where it appointed officials without elections, women must be represented in accordance with the rules laid down. Problems arose in cases where there was no suitable woman to carry out certain duties, which was a situation that occurred quite frequently. In such cases all possibilities of finding a woman were investigated, and, if that endeavour nevertheless proved unsuccessful, an attempt was made not to be too inflexible regarding the requirement in question.

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37. With regard to civil law and family law, the authors had inadvertently neglected to mention in the report a fact that seemed completely obvious to them, namely, the fact that there was complete and absolute equality of the sexes in all cases, in other words, under civil law, under family law and under the legislation governing the relationship between parents and their children, with the sole exceptions of succession to the throne and compulsory military service. In response to the question raised by Ms. Caron, she wished to place on record the fact that women could, on an entirely equal footing with men, own property and freely dispose of it, enter into contracts and initiate judicial proceedings in order to obtain a divorce. Both spouses could retain their surnames, one spouse could adopt the other's surname, or they could use both their surnames, and parents were free to choose their children's surname. Women had the same right as men freely to choose and to retain their citizenship and to choose that of their children. Following divorce, parents could opt for joint custody of the children or they could decide that the parent with whom the child lived should have custody. In cases where the matter was brought before the courts, the law granted custody of minors to the parent best able to fulfil the relevant requirements or to the parent chiefly responsible for the child. It was interesting to note that there was a growing tendency to grant custody to the father. Also in connection with family law, she had been asked whether single people could adopt children. Although the law did not prohibit them from doing so, there was a great number of people wishing to adopt children, whereas there were very few children available, and, since it was considered preferable that children should live with a married couple, in practice there was little likelihood that single persons could adopt a child.

38. She expressed her concern at the interest aroused by the section of the report devoted to violence and prostitution, and sought to correct the erroneous impression gained from a text badly worded. Everyone seemed to think that Norway was a "den of iniquity", where women were constantly being attacked. That was not the case: when the report stated that more cases of violence against women had come to light, what was meant was precisely that, and not that violence had increased. The Government was convinced that there had been much more violence in the days when Norway had been a poor country and that, with the passage of time, the situation had improved, to the point where officials had believed until recently that the problem had completely disappeared. What was happening now, with the increasing awareness of the situation of women, was that a greater number of women were ready to expose the problem, instead of suffering in silence. In reply to the questions raised by a number of experts, she said that, under the law, violence against women was a crime, as were all kinds of violence against persons in general. However, in the case of violence committed by the husband against his wife, the latter must file a complaint in order for the husband to be charged. The possibility of amending the law was now being debated, so that a husband guilty of acts of violence could be charged without the need for the wife to file a complaint.

39. A number of questions had been asked about the "crisis centres", which were intended for various purposes. They provided not only temporary lodging, food and financial assistance for women in distress, but also legal aid, including aid for filing divorce proceedings. Women were also given help in contacting social

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welfare organizations, employment agencies, housing authorities and the like. The centres were financed entirely out of public funds, partly by the central Government and partly by local governments. Some were run by government employees and others by volunteers.

40. Unlike what was happening with violence, prostitution had increased in recent years, even though it was less prevalent than in earlier periods when Norway had been a poor country and prostitution had been the direct result of poverty. It no longer arose from poverty, but was related to drug addiction; drug addicts resorted to prostitution in order to finance the high cost of drugs, and that was occurring with great frequency among the very young. Programmes had been instituted in order to take the drug addicts off the streets and provide them with lodging, work, training and medical treatment. Prostitution was not a crime in Norway, unlike procuring and exploiting the prostitution of others. Occasionally persons were charged who had committed such crimes, and were nearly always men. Norway had ratified in 1952 the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

41. Some experts had observed that the unemployment figures given in the report were very high. It was true that, according to the statistics, the number of women registered as fully unemployed had increased. In 1982 there had been 22,000 unemployed women, and the figure had risen to nearly 25,000 by January 1984. It should also be borne in mind, however, that during the same period the number of women in paid employment had increased considerably: in the biennium 1982-1983 there had been a net increase of 28,000 jobs, which was far higher than the increase in the number of unemployed women, which was 3,000. It should be pointed out that many of the women who had recently become economically active had part-time jobs, in nearly all cases out of choice. They were young women with small children, who could do part-time work outside the home because their husbands shared the domestic chores.

42. Several experts had asked about the number of women in the Norwegian foreign service. While she did not have the exact figures, she knew that the percentage was still very low. The situation was changing, however: during the past seven years, about half of those who had passed the foreign-service entrance examinations had been women, and the number of women applying to the foreign service was increasing. Since there was no reason to doubt that that trend would continue, she was certain that the proportion of women would increase in coming years; that being a very recent trend, however, there were currently very few women in high-level posts in the diplomatic and consular service.

43. With regard to laws governing relations between parents and children, the question had been raised as to the true meaning of the concept of children's "self-determination". As children grew, they acquired increasing rights to take decisions about their own lives. After the age of 12, children had the right to be heard, but not to decide, when in divorce proceedings the question arose as to the parent with whom the children would be living. After the age of 15, children could decide on questions concerning religion and their own education, and had full control over the money they had earned by their own means. As to the existence of the concepts of children's "legitimacy" or "illegitimacy", the law had abolished

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the inequality of children born out of wedlock. All children had equal rights, whatever the circumstances of their birth. Even the terms "legitimate" and "illegitimate" had disappeared from everyday speech and appeared to be outdated. The current expression used was "child of a single person", with the result that the stigma attached to children born out of wedlock had disappeared. Perhaps that was due to the increasing social acceptance of unmarried couples, with or without children.

44. As to the various comments made about the high age of retirement compared with that prevailing in other countries, in Norway there were no movements that favoured a reduction of that age for women. The trade unions wished to lower that age for both sexes, and it was impossible to identify a specifically feminine position in that regard. On the other hand, a few groups of women trade unionists urged priority for another kind of reform, such as a six-hour day without loss of pay, which would make it easier to reconcile family life with paid work when children were small; she did not know, however, what support there was for such initiatives among the female population at large.

45. A few experts had asked why family allowances were lower for second and subsequent children. The money was given to the surviving parent or to the guardian in order to help in maintaining the children, and the sliding scale was probably due to the fact that the cost of keeping two children was less than twice what it was for one.

46. With regard to the comment that it was apparently very difficult to become part of the social security system, there, too, the report failed to state the obvious, namely, that in Norway everyone was covered by social security. The system had very complex regulations but it applied to everyone; the old-age pension also applied to everyone irrespective of whether or not they had worked. Concerning pension benefits for married persons the same considerations applied as in the case of children, namely, that when there were two people in a household they shared certain fixed costs thus the cost per person was lower; that was reflected in the benefits.

47. She was not in a position to reply to the question put by Ms. Peytcheva regarding how Norwegian women had reacted to the Swedish proposal for the establishment of a Nordic nuclear-free area; she could only say that both men and women in Norway were extremely interested in all matters relating to international peace and that various movements had been organized to promote that objective.

48. Ms. CARON warmly congratulated Mrs. Stoltenberg on her clear and candid answers to the Committee's questions. There was only one detail to be clarified concerning advertisements regarding employment opportunities: did not the fact that there were some cases in which it was permissible to specify the sex of the desired applicant pave the way for other less legitimate exceptions? Would it not be possible simply to announce that someone was needed for a specific job - such as wet-nurse or person to model men's clothing? The exclusion of one or other sex would then be based solely on the description of the work thus completely eliminating any possibility of abuse.

49. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ thanked the representative of Norway for her detailed answers to the Committee's questions and for providing additional documents which threw light on some of the questions. She should be commended for supplying such comprehensive information at such short notice.

50. Ms. MACEDO DE SHEPPARD, after adding her own congratulations, said that two small misunderstandings had arisen over two of her questions; she would therefore repeat them. What was the basis for granting a special maternity grant to women who gave birth at home? Why were no social security benefits granted for step-children who were adopted?

51. Ms. BIRYUKOVA thanked the representative of Norway for her answers. In citing the unemployment statistics she had meant to point out that the unemployment rate for women in Norway had been almost double that for men in 1980, 1981 and 1982. The representative of Norway had stated that more women were employed currently than in previous years. While that might be true it did not explain why unemployment among women was greater than among men. She would also like to know what steps were being planned to penalize employers, whether private businessmen or administration officials, who refused to hire a woman or who fired her for discriminatory reasons and whether women received compensation in such cases.

52. Ms. OESER pointed out that she had not asked whether single women could take their children to day-care centres but whether there was a charge for such services and, if there was, whether all women could send their children to those centres or whether some were unable to do so because of the high cost.

53. Ms. REGENT-LECHOWICZ thanked the representative of Norway for her clarifications and confirmed that nearly all her questions had been answered.

54. Ms. STOLTENBERG (Norway), replying to Ms. Caron, said that no thought had been given to eliminating the specification of sex from job advertisements; that had not been considered a problem for the number of cases in which sex was specified was very small. For example, women could not be barred as a group from consideration for a job requiring great physical effort. They had to be considered individually, as did men.

55. With regard to Ms. Macedo de Sheppard's question concerning the reasons for providing a grant to women who gave birth at home, she said it was a somewhat antiquated measure and there were very few women who did not go to hospital to give birth. She believed that the grant was an attempt by the Government to compensate women for saving the State the cost of their hospitalization. The general allowance for the maintenance of children under 16 years was payable for adopted step-children.

56. Responding to the comments made by Ms. Biryukova concerning unemployment among women, she pointed out that according to the statistics of the Norwegian Government unemployment was not greater among women than among men. She would like to know the source for the statistics cited. With regard to the question concerning penalties for discrimination on the job she had already explained at length what mechanisms were available for women in order to secure equal treatment but there

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were also strict labour laws concerning unjustified dismissal and they could be invoked through the trade unions and labour courts. If a dismissal was unjustified, provision was made for re-integrating the employee in her job.

57. Concerning the comments made by Ms. Oeser she said that the rates for day-care centres were not so high as to prevent single women from using them. Nearly all municipalities had adopted a system whereby rates were adjusted to the parents' income; provision was also made for some children to attend free or at reduced rates. The competent ministry controlled the rates and no complaints had been received so far on the subject.

58. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the representative of Norway for her interesting answers.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

59. The CHAIRPERSON invited the experts to comment on the contribution which the Committee could make to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women.

60. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ said that although it had not been her intention that the matter should be dealt with as part of the item under consideration the Secretariat might be asked to help prepare a document as part of the background material for the Conference explaining the problems or obstacles generally encountered in the implementation of the Convention. Information could also be included on activities considered fruitful or positive for the full implementation of the Convention. Both aspects would be mentioned but the document would be very general, in other words it would not contain direct or specific opinions of the Committee nor would it name the countries in which a positive activity or problem had been noted. If the Secretariat agreed the Committee could consider that document at its next session.

61. Ms. BIRYUKOVA said that the World Conference in 1985 would be a major event both for the world community and for the Committee, which could make an important contribution not only through its involvement in the preparations for the Conference but also through its participation in the Conference itself. She believed that that question had been raised during the Committee's second session, when it had been decided that documents on the Committee's second and third sessions should be submitted to the Conference. She considered that it would not be sufficient to present the report only and therefore supported the proposal of Ms. González Martínez. It would be necessary to prepare a document which would reflect the achievements made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Convention and agreed that such a document should contain recommendations and proposals of a general nature. It would be useful to include in the agenda of the fourth session an item on the Committee's contribution to the preparation and holding of the 1985 World Conference.

62. The CHAIRPERSON said that, if there were no other comments, she would ask the Secretariat to prepare a background document setting out the achievements made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Convention. As Ms. Biryukova had suggested, the item on the Committee's contribution to the preparations for the World Conference would be included in the agenda of the next session.

63. Ms. SALEMA pointed out that the Committee's next session would be held in January 1985 and that the last session of the preparatory body for the World Conference would take place in February and March of the same year. She had made that comment because of the short time which would be available between the two sessions and the difficulties which might ensue in connection with the preparation and submission of reports.

64. Ms. BERNARD, Rapporteur, considered that the dates mentioned by the previous speaker must be taken into account; it was also important that the Committee should make some sort of contribution to the World Conference. In that connection, she wished to inform the Committee that, in August 1983, the human rights organization which had met in Norway had asked her to prepare a brief report on the work done by the Committee. Her report could be expanded and supplemented by the inclusion of the achievements made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Convention and any other comments which members of the Committee might deem appropriate.

65. Ms. REGENT-LECHOWICZ said that she agreed with Ms. Biryukova regarding the content of the report and with Ms. Salema's comments. She supported Ms. Biryukova's proposal that the item should be included in the agenda of the next session. In connection with the Rapporteur's proposal, Ms. Bernard's report was a document prepared on a personal basis, since it had not been considered in the Committee; accordingly, as it was not an official document, it could not be used in the way proposed by Ms. Bernard. She considered that the Committee would have to decide between the proposal that the Secretariat should prepare the draft report for submission to the next session and the Rapporteur's proposal.

66. Ms. PEYTCHEVA supported the proposals of the previous speaker that the item should be included in the agenda of the following session and that the Committee itself should draft the report.

67. Ms. BERNARD, Rapporteur, said that the document which she had prepared was an article and not a report; it was not of an official nature.

68. The CHAIRPERSON considered that the Committee should accept responsibility for drafting the report, as otherwise there would be additional financial implications.

69. Ms. CARON said that the Secretariat could prepare a report based on the annual reports approved by the Committee. The preparatory body of the Conference should be informed of the Committee's intention to submit a report, which might be presented even after the next session.

70. Ms. SMITH agreed with the Chairperson and proposed that, in the preparation of the report, account should be taken of the Rapporteur's article.



71. Ms. BIRYUKOVA said that there seemed to be no objection to the inclusion in the agenda of the next session of the item on the report which was to be submitted to the Conference; she therefore requested that a decision should be taken on the matter. The contents of the report could be discussed at a later stage. The report should also cover the difficulties and obstacles which had impeded the implementation of the Convention, on the basis of the discussions during the Committee's second and third sessions.

72. Ms. EL-FETOUH agreed that the Secretariat should draft the report. Nevertheless, the Committee could only recommend; it could not take decisions, as those lay within the competence of the Economic and Social Council.

73. The CHAIRPERSON said that, bearing in mind that the Committee could only recommend and not take decisions and that the body responsible for decision-taking was the Economic and Social Council, it was her understanding that the Committee wished to recommend that an item on the contribution of the Committee to the preparations for the World Conference should be included in the agenda of the next session.

74. It was so decided.

75. The CHAIRPERSON said that the reference material prepared by the specialized agencies would henceforth bear the symbol "CEDAW/BP/L. ..." and the rubric "For participants only".

76. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ said that she was happy to see that the reports of the specialized agencies had been distributed as official documents under the symbol of the Committee. During its future sessions, the Committee could presumably decide what action to take on such documents which had been prepared in conformity with the Convention and at the request of the Committee. At the beginning of the next session and after the reports had been studied, the members of the Committee might wish to have an informal exchange of views for the purpose of eliminating any misunderstanding when the item came to be considered in the plenary Committee.

77. Ms. ILIC welcomed the action taken on the reports of the specialized agencies and proposed that, at the next session, the Committee should consider the possibility of receiving information from the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

78. Ms. BIRYUKOVA said that she had no objection to the Chairperson's proposal regarding the drafting of the report for the preparatory body of the World Conference, provided that it did not give rise to any financial implications.

79. The CHAIRPERSON said that, if there were no objections, she would take it that the Committee accepted her proposal, on condition that there were no financial implications.

80. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.