



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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

Summary record of the 2187th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 6 February 2026, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Haidar

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

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

Seventh periodic report of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (continued)
([CEDAW/C/NLD/7](#); [CEDAW/C/NLD/QPR/7](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the meeting, explained that some members of the delegation would be participating via video link.

Articles 1–6

3. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**, resuming her delegation's replies to the questions on article 6 raised at the previous meeting ([CEDAW/C/SR.2186](#)), said that sexual acts with underage children were a criminal offence in the Netherlands. Article 245 of the Criminal Code established that anyone who had sex with a child aged between 16 and 18 in exchange for payment would be committing the offence of sexual assault; article 246 established the offence of rape against children in the same age group. Those provisions protected children from exposure to paid sex, which could have serious consequences.
4. To address the trafficking of girls, the Government had included in its "Together against Human Trafficking" programme a specific action line focused on awareness-raising and the identification, protection and support of underage victims, including girls.

Articles 7–9

5. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**, replying to a question on article 9 raised at the previous meeting, said that the Netherlands currently applied a "single status" system under which both refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection were entitled to family reunification with their nuclear family, including partners, parents and, in some cases, dependent adult children. However, the House of Representatives had recently passed two bills that would introduce a two-status system that differentiated between refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, while restricting the definition of a nuclear family to the minimum criteria set forth in European Union rules. Partners or family members who were not included in the new definition could still apply for family reunification by invoking the right to family life under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
6. Data on asylum applications by persons of unknown nationality were included in the monthly asylum trends reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and annual State of Migration reports. The Research and Data Centre, an independent institute, issued periodic estimates of the number of people living in the Netherlands without a residence permit.
7. Regarding the cost of applying for citizenship, it should be noted that requests for naturalization for one person cost about €1,000 and requests for naturalization together with a partner about €1,400. Those fees were intended to cover the costs incurred by the Government and unfortunately could not be reduced.

Articles 10–14

8. **Ms. Pia-Comella** said that she wished to know how the Government addressed persistent gender segregation in the education sector and its consequences in the labour market, as well as the underrepresentation of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
9. The Committee noted with satisfaction that students in secondary vocational education could benefit from maternity leave, but it was concerned that disparities in access

might discourage some students from continuing their education. It wished to know what measures the State Party was taking to ensure that all pregnant students and student parents had access to the same benefits, regardless of the type of education or the institution attended.

10. Although the Committee welcomed mandatory age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, it was concerned about inconsistency in the delivery and content of such education, particularly where issues of sexual orientation and gender diversity were concerned. It was also concerned that LBTQI+ students faced discrimination and bullying. It would therefore be interested to hear about practical measures to ensure the provision of evidence-based comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in all schools, and to address diverse gender orientations and identities in education in a structured manner.

11. In respect of Aruba, the Committee would appreciate information on specific measures to support girls' school attendance and their retention in secondary and tertiary education. In Curaçao, it was unclear whether measures such as scholarships or career counselling, had been adopted to promote girls' education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and other non-traditional fields. Were any steps being taken to encourage women and girls to enter male-dominated fields of study at the University of Curaçao?

12. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that Aruba guaranteed equal access to education for women and men at all levels and compulsory education until the age of 17 years. Notwithstanding the high rates of enrolment and retention of girls at all levels of education, the Government had launched targeted initiatives to encourage their engagement and retention, and programmes that promoted entrepreneurship, leadership and participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Health outreach and counselling services in schools contributed to preventing dropout related to early pregnancy and other health barriers. The Government and the Royal Netherlands Navy implemented the Sociaal Vormingstraject programme for young men and women who had dropped out of school, which consisted of four months of military training followed by an eight-month internship.

13. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands, including the Caribbean Netherlands, were legally obliged to ensure a safe school environment for all students and to provide citizenship education. That obligation included the requirement to promote democratic values and equality and to teach children to act respectfully when it came to sexuality. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science supported initiatives organized by COC Netherlands, an LGBTIQ+ rights organization, including the annual "Purple Friday" event held in schools to celebrate and talk about gender and sexual diversity. The Ministry also supported the School and Safety Foundation, which advised schools on creating a safe environment for LGBTIQ+ students. As part of an ongoing revision of the curriculum, it was expected that themes related to relationships, diversity and sexuality would be more explicitly included among new core objectives, providing greater clarity on what schools were expected to teach. However, the constitutional freedom of education meant that schools were free to choose how and when such material was covered.

14. The Government's vocational and higher education policy recognized that pregnant students had unique needs. Students and institutions worked together to determine the necessary support, taking into account the context. The Government had passed a law to strengthen the position of vocational students, which recognized pregnancy and childbirth as valid reasons for absence and had led to improvements in the guidance and support available to pregnant students. Students were permitted to be absent for 16 weeks owing to pregnancy and childbirth. Under the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act, pregnancy and childbirth were recognized as circumstances that might warrant exceptions to the regular educational and examination programme and form the basis for entitlement to study funds.

15. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that Curaçao ensured equal access for women and girls to education at all levels. Female enrolment and participation were high, with girls completing secondary education at rates equal to or higher than boys. Women accounted for about three quarters of higher education graduates and were

especially well represented in education, law, health and the social sciences. However, they were still underrepresented in some technical fields, such as engineering and information and communications technology. The Government had taken measures to address that situation, including by developing career guidance programmes in secondary schools to encourage girls to consider non-traditional careers. The University of Curaçao provided career counselling and advice to support female students, while technical and vocational schools promoted female participation through outreach and counselling. Girls enjoyed equal access to sport and physical education. The Government continued to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex and field of study and to strengthen guidance and role model programmes to further support women and girls wishing to enter non-traditional fields.

16. **Ms. Mu** said that Dutch women continued to face disadvantages in economic participation and employment. Although female labour market participation stood at 69%, only 31% of women worked full-time, whereas 71% of men held full-time positions. The unemployment rate for women aged 15 to 64 stood at 17% – double that of men. Pregnancy discrimination had long been a major barrier to women’s labour market participation: according to a 2020 survey, three quarters of working mothers had experienced such discrimination. She would be grateful for an explanation of the disadvantages associated with motherhood in the State Party and the action taken to address them. In particular, she would be interested to learn how the State Party intended to curb pregnancy discrimination and what action it would take against employers that prevented fathers from taking paternity leave or that discriminated against them for doing so. She also wished to know what measures had been implemented to reduce the gender pay gap, address its root causes and ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market.

17. She would like to know what measures had been taken to reduce sexual harassment against women in the workplace and whether victims had access to complaints mechanisms. Up-to-date statistics on sexual harassment in the workplace, and clarification of how the authorities enforced its prohibition, would be welcome.

18. Regarding the Caribbean Netherlands, she would be grateful for information on female labour market participation and measures to uphold women’s equal rights in the labour market. She wondered how the Government would monitor the effectiveness of the new Act on Childcare in Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba.

19. Lastly, she wished to know what measures the State Party would take to narrow the gender gap in pension benefits and to promote and provide equal access to work and social security for migrant women, domestic workers, women with disabilities and women from sexual minorities.

20. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, with the support of the United Nations, Aruba had adopted its first comprehensive national gender policy to guide its institutional approach to achieving gender equality. The Aruban labour market remained characterized by persistent gender wage gaps and lower female labour force participation, despite women having higher levels of educational attainment. The unemployment rate for women was double that for men. To address the structural drivers of women’s economic disadvantage, the Government was implementing policies recommended by the Central Bank of Aruba, including the introduction of mandatory wage reviews and flexible working arrangements. The Government was working with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) with a view to launching the Family Friendly Workplaces initiative to support working women with children.

21. Furthermore, the Government aimed to position Aruba as a leader in cultural and creative industries, a sector that held significant potential for inclusive opportunities, innovation and women’s economic empowerment. The Bureau of Women’s Affairs had introduced programmes to support women’s entrepreneurship, professional training and access to finance and thereby reduce gender disparities in employment and economic opportunity. The Bureau also worked to increase women’s participation in traditionally male-dominated fields.

22. A recently adopted government circular provided that older women were allowed to continue working upon reaching pensionable age, subject to the agreement of the employer and the employee, and thus could draw a pension while continuing to enjoy the benefits of

paid work. Continuing to work after reaching pensionable age offered greater income security for older women, who might have lower pension entitlements owing to part-time employment, unpaid care responsibilities or career interruptions earlier in life.

23. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands was working to incorporate the pay transparency directive of the European Union into national law. The Government tracked the effects of measures to promote women's labour market participation through labour statistics and the *Emancipatiemonitor* gender equality report, allowing it to formulate evidence-based policy.

24. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Netherlands Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment was taking various steps to address economic inequalities in the labour force and improve work-life balance. The funding of the childcare system was being reformed to make childcare more affordable for most working parents, and child benefit and childcare allowance had been increased. The Government was collaborating with Utrecht University on the research programme "More Hours Works!", which would investigate how part-time employees who wished to work more could do so.

25. The difference in the average hourly pay of men and women currently stood at 10.5% in both the public and private sectors. The Government therefore planned to implement the European Union pay transparency directive, which aimed to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work, by 1 January 2027. Employers would be required to put in place a salary structure based on objective and gender-neutral criteria, while workers would have the right to obtain information on the average pay levels of workers performing the same work as them or work of equal value to theirs. The aim of pay transparency was to improve equal pay for all groups, including disadvantaged women.

26. Policies had been adopted to address the root causes of poverty among older women and to narrow the gender pension gap. Everyone who lived and worked in the Netherlands received a State pension upon reaching retirement age and thus enjoyed a measure of income security. Other policies focused on promoting the sustainable employability and labour participation of women, reducing wage differences and promoting a balance of work and care responsibilities.

27. Among women who had given birth in the previous four years, 43% had experienced pregnancy discrimination, which, moreover, often went unrecognized and unreported. To tackle the problem, the Government provided employees and employers with information about rights and obligations during pregnancy. Various ministries had conducted a campaign focusing on the rights of working pregnant women, while outreach had been undertaken by municipal health services and through digital channels. In 2025, the Government had commissioned a study on the nature and extent of pregnancy discrimination, whose results were expected in 2026.

28. The Act on Childcare in Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba, which had entered into force on 1 January 2026, included measures to make childcare more accessible and affordable. An evaluation of the implementation of the Act would be carried out later in 2026.

29. The Government's general policy of encouraging women to enter the labour market included additional support to meet the needs of women from vulnerable groups. Various programmes and projects targeted, for example, single mothers, immigrants and women with occupational disabilities. Such programmes addressed issues including women's economic empowerment, economic resilience and diversity, were scientifically grounded and were undertaken in cooperation with municipalities and grass-roots organizations. One example was the "Skilled at Work" programme of the Netherlands Organization for Health and Research Innovation, which assisted women – including refugee women and women with little education – on their journey to paid work and economic independence.

30. Efforts to support the employment of women with disabilities depended on their specific situations. The Government encouraged persons with occupational disabilities to find regular employment and had signed an agreement with employers and trade unions to that end. Under the Participation Act, municipalities provided social assistance to individuals who could not support themselves through work, savings or other benefits. The social

security system provided a broad safety net, affording social assistance and other extensive social benefits.

31. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that a light evaluation of the new paid parental leave system in the Netherlands had revealed positive attitudes towards paid parental leave among parents, employers and the Employment Insurance Agency. Uptake among men and women was more or less equal. The Government was working to simplify the leave system in view of concerns that it had become fragmented. A more thorough evaluation of the system would be conducted in early 2026.

32. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the national action programme on sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence provided a framework for addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. Employers had important responsibilities to ensure a safe working environment and respectful interaction among employees, including the obligation to prevent sexual harassment at work. Article 7:646 of the Civil Code, concerning non-discrimination on the basis of gender, contained a provision on sexual harassment. It was often more effective to address the problem through means other than criminal enforcement, which was seen as a last resort.

33. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, despite its progress in women's labour market participation, Curaçao continued to face challenges in relation to equal pay, protection during pregnancy, access to social security, the availability of childcare and eldercare, and harassment in the workplace. The Government closely monitored workplace issues and sought to mitigate them through labour inspections. Women's labour rights were protected under the Civil Code of Curaçao, which guaranteed leave entitlements and workplace protection. Women could assert their rights through the courts and obtain legal aid for that purpose. The Government had not detected a gender gap in pension benefits.

34. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that women in Sint Maarten participated widely in the labour market; were legally protected from discrimination in hiring, remuneration and working conditions; and enjoyed maternity protection and social security. The Government continued to work to increase women's job security, leadership and representation and to address data gaps in the private sector. In Sint Maarten, women held leadership roles in the Government and Parliament and were supported through professional development initiatives and empowerment activities led by the Women's Desk of the Department of Community Development, Family and Humanitarian Affairs.

35. The Government had strengthened its stance against sexual harassment in the workplace and had conducted an awareness programme on the issue. Women could file official complaints with the Ombudsman or the victim support services, and the police could investigate allegations.

36. Policy initiatives, training and institutional support demonstrated the Government's alignment with the goal of ensuring safe, equitable and respectful environments for women. Sint Maarten provided a universal old-age pension that was fixed at 1,407 Caribbean guilders per month in 2026, thus ensuring a basic income floor that particularly benefited women who had experienced career interruptions or had worked in the informal economy.

37. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that statistics showed that women in the State Party experienced worse health than men, and for longer, while public policies failed to account for specific health problems faced by women over 50. She would therefore be interested to know what steps the State Party planned to take to improve the health of older women and migrant women, and how age and gender perspectives were applied in medical and pharmacological research, in the diagnosis and treatment of women of non-reproductive age and in disability assessment and certification. It would be useful to learn how the State Party prevented maternal and infant mortality, which disproportionately affected migrant women and children, including those of Surinamese and Caribbean origin, and what the impact of recent changes in the funding of maternity care, especially for midwifery and postnatal care services, had been.

38. Furthermore, she would like to know how the State Party ensured the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, including access to contraception, abortion and sexuality education, and their availability in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom and for

undocumented women. She wondered whether the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom intended to amend their criminal codes to legalize termination of pregnancy in cases of rape, incest, risk to the life of the pregnant woman or severe fetal impairment and what was being done to ensure that abortion was safe, accessible and affordable for women and girls throughout the Kingdom, irrespective of citizenship status.

39. In the light of increased HIV/AIDS incidence in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, she would like to know what measures were being taken to provide specialized HIV/AIDS services, including antiretroviral therapy, on those islands.

40. The delegation might explain whether, since the adoption in 2020 of the Compulsory Mental Healthcare Act and the Care and Compulsion (Psychogeriatric and Intellectually Disabled Patients) Act, women and girls with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities or living in institutions might be forced to use contraception. She wondered what safeguards were in place to avoid coercion in decision-making about the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls. She was curious to know whether any investigations had been carried out into the sterilization of persons with disabilities in institutional care and how the Government monitored and addressed reports of forced sterilization. She also wished to hear what steps the State Party had taken to implement the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to prohibit the performance of unnecessary medical or surgical treatment on intersex children.

41. In the light of recent data showing that the prevalence of suicide among women under 30 was much higher than among men in the same age group, she would like to know whether the State Party had a plan to help young women and girls experiencing mental health crises and to reduce the suicide rate among them.

42. Lastly, she wondered what steps the State Party was taking to tackle the reportedly long waiting lists and insufficient insurance coverage for gender-affirming healthcare and thus ensure the equal enjoyment of the human right to health.

43. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that women in Aruba enjoyed access to universal healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services and mental healthcare. The Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided education and counselling on maternal and child health, family planning and mental health, which covered such issues as prevention of early pregnancy and support for women affected by violence or abuse. Cervical and breast cancer screening programmes were in place. The Government planned to further strengthen sexual and reproductive health services to meet the needs of the population. A rise in HIV prevalence in recent years had been driven mainly by increased incidence among men. Quality standards were being implemented in eldercare and would be accompanied by separate legislation and funding for long-term care.

44. Healthcare for undocumented persons continued to present a challenge, as some NGOs that historically had served that group had recently reduced or shut down their operations. The Department of Public Health was therefore working to strengthen budgetary and organizational arrangements to ensure that undocumented and vulnerable groups had access to essential healthcare services.

45. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the National Strategy for Women's Health incorporated a lifespan perspective, recognizing that health needs and risks evolved from puberty through the reproductive years to post-menopause and old age. An action plan was being developed in cooperation with a range of stakeholders on the basis of the Strategy, setting out priorities for the coming years. The Strategy provided for structural attention to both women-specific conditions, such as menstrual cycle problems, and women-sensitive conditions, including cardiovascular disease and migraine. The overall goal was to expand and improve the application of existing knowledge, enhance care and support and strengthen cooperation through a broad network of partners and accessible platforms.

46. Abortion services in the Netherlands were highly accessible and of high quality, as reflected in international assessments such as the European Abortion Policies Atlas, which indicated that women enjoyed broad access to abortion care in the country. In recent years, legislative amendments had further improved accessibility. Since 2023, the mandatory five-

day reflection period after the initial consultation had been replaced with a case-by-case approach and, since 2025, general practitioners had been authorized to prescribe abortion medication up to nine weeks of gestation. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport continued to work to ensure the availability of a nationwide network of abortion clinics.

47. The Termination of Pregnancy Act also applied in the Caribbean Netherlands. Abortion medication could be provided by general practitioners up to nine weeks of gestation, as in the Netherlands, after which abortion services were available in hospital, with residents of Sint Eustatius and Saba referred to Bonaire. According to the Health and Youth Care Inspectorate, in 2024, 142 terminations had been registered in the Caribbean Netherlands. Efforts were under way to increase the accessibility of information on sexuality. For example, a youth-oriented website had been developed in Saba and public health teams on all islands provided sexuality education in schools. Information and decision-making support on unintended pregnancy were available and contraceptives were offered anonymously on all islands. The Bonaire health service had also introduced anonymous sexual health consultations.

48. The Government had taken steps to ensure adequate support for women experiencing mental health problems, including recent agreements concluded with care providers across the Netherlands to strengthen local social infrastructure and access to mental health services. The Agenda for Strengthening Mental Health and Mental Healthcare, adopted in December 2025, sought to enhance mental resilience and address challenges across multiple policy domains, with women's health identified as a key theme.

49. Mandatory contraception for women with disabilities was permissible only as a temporary and reversible measure to prevent serious harm to the woman herself. Accounts from residents of a care facility referring to possible compulsory sterilization of fellow residents had been transmitted to the Health and Youth Care Inspectorate for investigation. Efforts were under way to promote open discussion of intimacy and sexuality within residential care institutions and to ensure that women with disabilities had access to appropriate information. Work was under way to strengthen policies on intimacy and sexuality for persons with disabilities, focusing on the protection, promotion and monitoring of their sexual health.

50. To safeguard the rights of intersex persons to self-determination and bodily autonomy, medical guidance was being developed to ensure that intersex children received appropriate care when deemed necessary by an interdisciplinary team of professionals. Parallel research would examine what form of regulation would best guarantee that no intersex person was subjected to non-essential medical or surgical treatment without full and informed consent. That research, organized on a cross-departmental basis and incorporating the perspectives of affected persons, medical professionals and human rights experts, was expected to conclude in 2027.

51. Waiting times for gender-affirming care remained a challenge, as demand for transgender care was increasing. Continued attention to the quality and accessibility of transgender care was essential, as were broader societal efforts to improve knowledge and acceptance of gender diversity. The Supplementary Healthcare and Welfare Agreement addressed issues such as transparency, waiting lists and regional cooperation; while the measures envisaged were not specifically targeted at transgender persons, they could nevertheless have beneficial effects for them. A national transgender care network had been established with the support of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport to address questions relating to access to and quality of care. An evaluation of the quality of transgender care, completed in 2024, had highlighted the need to shift towards shared decision-making and individualized care pathways.

52. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in Curaçao, all women had access to pregnancy and maternity services, regardless of nationality or migration status. Although it placed a considerable financial burden on the health system, the authorities covered the cost of healthcare, including prenatal care, childbirth and emergency obstetric services, for all uninsured migrant women in the country. No woman was denied maternity or other essential care on the grounds of her inability to pay or lack of health insurance. Mental healthcare was regarded as essential in cases of emergency or severe need. In such

cases, mental health services were provided to women, including uninsured migrants, with the costs borne by the public system. Contraception was available through public healthcare providers. Access to abortion remained legally restricted except under specific conditions. Recent policies sought to reduce adolescent pregnancy and to strengthen prenatal and postnatal care for all women.

53. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in Sint Maarten, abortion was illegal except where the pregnancy threatened the life of the woman. However, discussions were under way to review and possibly amend the Criminal Code in order to decriminalize abortion and ensure access to safe reproductive health services.

54. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that, in the light of reports that persistent structural inequalities continued to undermine women's economic security, particularly women belonging to vulnerable groups, she would welcome clarification as to whether the definition of poverty would be revised to better reflect the unique barriers faced by vulnerable women, whether new multidimensional measurement tools would be developed to facilitate a better understanding of the living conditions of persons in poverty and whether additional attention would be devoted to poverty reduction among women in the Caribbean Netherlands, including through systematic data collection.

55. Regarding the childcare benefit scandal in the Netherlands, during which tens of thousands of parents – the majority of them single mothers from diverse backgrounds – had been accused of fraud by the authorities, she would like to know whether all victims had received compensation in a timely manner and in amounts considered adequate. In addition, she would appreciate further details of any measures taken to address the long-term consequences for the affected women's access to loans, mortgages and other financial products, given that many had experienced severe hardship and, in some cases, financial ruin.

56. She wished to know whether the specific needs of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women were integrated into policies to prevent and address homelessness and whether the heightened risks faced by such women, as well as women escaping domestic violence, were recognized and reflected in housing, safety and social protection policies. She would also welcome confirmation regarding any plans to take account of economic violence within the national framework on gender-based violence prevention.

57. She was not convinced that allowing women to work beyond pensionable age was the fairest or most sustainable means of addressing disparities between men's and women's pensions. She would like to know whether the State Party took into account in its approach to the issue the lifelong structural disadvantages affecting women, particularly migrant women and female home workers, who reportedly remained without adequate social and pension protection. Specifically, she wondered whether women from former Dutch colonies who had migrated to the Kingdom of the Netherlands later in life were affected by reduced pension entitlements and, if so, how that situation could be reconciled with the principle of non-discrimination.

58. Despite the State Party's commendable efforts, it had been reported that only about one fifth of national sports federations had a female president and that women constituted only around a third of board members, with women's overall participation in sport standing at approximately 30% nationally. She therefore wished to know whether current strategies to increase women's participation and leadership in sport had been evaluated with a view to improving their effectiveness. Lastly, an update on the national action programme to address sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence in sport would also be welcome.

59. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that women in Aruba had equal access to family benefits, social security, pensions and contributory insurance schemes. NGOs subsidized by the Government played an important role in the delivery of social services, helping to ensure that they remained affordable and accessible for women in vulnerable situations. The authorities were currently developing a plan to strengthen purchasing power. In that context, minimum requirements for meeting basic needs would be identified, which would in turn inform poverty measurement metrics.

60. In Aruba, many women wished to remain economically active beyond pensionable age and felt disadvantaged if they were unable to do so. However, there was no requirement

to work beyond the age of 65. Women who experienced economic difficulties later in life often included those who had not resided in Aruba all their lives, such as late-life migrants. However, pension benefits had recently been increased and an additional increase was scheduled for May 2026.

61. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that multiple legal proceedings had been brought by persons from Suriname living in the Netherlands seeking repair of or compensation for gaps in pension entitlements. From a legal standpoint, however, there was no possibility of taking such measures for persons from Suriname or other former Dutch colonies, as doing so would create precedential effects for all similar cases. Recognizing the feeling of injustice within the Surinamese community because of its specific historical background, previous public authorities had expressed willingness to provide a voluntary gesture of recognition, consisting of a one-off payment of €5,000 to persons of Surinamese origin. That payment was not linked to the number of missing pension years. People from the former colonies, like others who arrived in the Netherlands later in life, who did not accrue sufficient pension entitlements and had little or no additional income could apply for supplementary income provision for older persons, which was a form of social assistance.

62. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that all parents affected by the childcare benefits scandal had received preliminary compensation. Comprehensive individual assessments, through which the actual extent of each family's losses would be determined and any additional compensation calculated, were still ongoing. The process constituted a very large-scale operation requiring considerable time. Under newly announced plans, the Government had committed to accelerating the financial settlement of outstanding cases, strengthening municipal support so that local authorities could better fulfil their responsibilities towards parents, providing support for emotional recovery and improving arrangements for the children of affected families so as to enable them to recover from any developmental or educational setbacks. A dedicated State secretary would be appointed with specific responsibility for overseeing the settlement process.

63. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that data on economic violence were collected through the prevalence monitor on domestic violence and sexually transgressive behaviour. In the context of the development of the action plan of the future national coordinator on violence against women and domestic violence, consideration would be given to additional measures to address that form of violence.

64. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that efforts were being made to ensure that single mothers were visible in data on poverty, although that remained challenging because much of the information in that regard was collected at the household level. Disaggregation was nevertheless undertaken wherever possible. A statistical report on equality to be published in November 2026 would contain specific information on single parents and would also include a separate chapter on the Caribbean Netherlands.

65. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, to promote women's participation in sport, changes were being introduced in the sports sector in the Netherlands to improve safety, including enhanced training of qualified coaches, the appointment of confidential advisers and the development of codes of conduct. Mechanisms enabling the reporting of transgressive behaviour were also being strengthened in order to facilitate research on such cases. Under the relevant national action programme, a major public campaign had been launched to encourage men to speak out when inappropriate behaviour occurred.

66. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands acknowledged that women and LGBTQI+ persons were at heightened risk of homelessness, which in turn increased their exposure to violence. The National Action Plan on Homelessness adopted a housing-first, preventive approach that explicitly recognized women and LGBTQI+ persons as groups at higher risk. It promoted safe, accessible and appropriate shelter and housing solutions with an emphasis on security, privacy and protection from violence, considerations of particular importance for women and LGBTQI+ persons experiencing or fleeing abuse. The plan further envisaged integrated support across all aspects of life, including income, health, safety and social inclusion, thereby enabling

tailored assistance for women and LGBTQI+ persons, whose homelessness was often linked to gender-based violence or situations of family rejection.

67. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that women in Sint Maarten contributed actively to economic and social life as workers, entrepreneurs, caregivers and community leaders and enjoyed equal access to social services, public programmes, civil society initiatives and increasing support for economic independence. Women were able to benefit from social assistance measures, including financial and medical aid, health insurance and childcare support, although challenges relating to income and migration status continued to create barriers for some.

68. The Sint Maarten Sports Federation was currently led by a woman, who had been serving as president since her election in March 2024 and was supported by a board that included several women in key leadership positions. The growing representation of women in sports governance and decision-making at the national level reflected the commitment of the Government of Sint Maarten to inclusive leadership in sectors traditionally dominated by men.

69. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** said that she wished to know how a gender perspective was incorporated into climate-resilience and energy-transition policies, since development programmes, including the National Programme for Rural Areas, did not appear to contain specific measures targeting women or encouraging their participation.

70. She also wished to know what measures were envisaged to address labour insecurity among transgender and bisexual women; how many prosecutions and convictions had been recorded in relation to hate crimes targeting lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women; what additional measures, particularly preventive measures, were being considered to address growing levels of intolerance and violence, beyond efforts aimed at strengthening the resilience of victims; what steps had been taken to incorporate a gender perspective into inclusive education policies; and what measures were in place to ensure that the employment quota for persons with disabilities was effectively implemented in the public sector and specifically benefited women.

71. She would welcome information on measures to protect the labour rights of women migrant workers, to safeguard the mental health of migrant women, particularly young women of Turkish and Moroccan origin, who faced high levels of discrimination, and to address the impact of migration detention on the mental health of undocumented migrant women. She would also appreciate clarification regarding the incorporation of a gender perspective into asylum procedures, including the recognition of gender-based persecution as grounds for international protection, and the measures in place to ensure privacy and protection from violence for women, particularly lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, in asylum reception centres. She wondered whether the short- and long-term effects on women and girls of potential future restrictions on family reunification, as well as the potential criminalization of undocumented persons, had been assessed.

72. In the light of consistent reports of harassment and sexual violence against women by prison staff and the apparent lack of effective complaints mechanisms in prisons, she wished to know whether reparation was offered to victims in such cases and whether the continuity of medical care, including mental healthcare, was ensured in prisons. As many women were imprisoned for short periods that were highly disruptive to their lives, she wondered whether the State Party planned to promote community-based alternatives to imprisonment that would allow convicted women to be placed closer to their homes and thereby facilitate rehabilitation.

73. With regard to women human rights defenders, she would be grateful for information on whether grants for civil society organizations, particularly grassroots groups representing diverse women, were sufficient to ensure the sustainability of their work, which often included the provision of services to the most vulnerable women.

74. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in recent years, the Government of the Netherlands had made regional investments through a programme focusing on areas experiencing population decline. The programme explicitly prioritized women as the primary users of public transport, local schools and healthcare. Concrete

measures included targeted subsidies aimed at maintaining essential bus lines, small-scale primary schools and regional hospitals, while municipalities also received additional support enabling women-focused solutions. Independent evaluations conducted by the Netherlands Court of Audit indicated that those initiatives had stabilized women's access to services, reduced the outmigration of young women, improved health outcomes and increased participation in local employment.

75. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that an equal-opportunities action plan had been established to assist employers in addressing discrimination in employment, including through training on unbiased recruitment practices. The position of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in the labour market was monitored regularly. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands had commissioned a project in 2025 involving the development of practical tools for employers, colleagues, policymakers and interest groups to strengthen the inclusion of bisexual persons in the workplace, with a significant component dedicated to disseminating the results among those stakeholders.

76. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that persons with occupational disabilities were encouraged to obtain employment with regular employers. To that end, under a recent agreement between the Government of the Netherlands, employers' organizations and trade unions, a target of creating 125,000 new jobs specifically for persons with disabilities had been set. More than 90,000 jobs had so far been created under the initiative. The Government was currently working on a new job agreement under which the target group would be expanded. Efforts to improve sheltered employment for persons who were unable to work for a regular employer were ongoing and had produced positive results. The number of persons working in sheltered employment had increased steadily, rising from approximately 4,000 in 2019 to around 11,000 currently, and further expansion was envisaged.

77. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that studies and other data sources concerning the position of women in the sports sector in the Netherlands showed a mixed picture. While women participated in sport at approximately the same rate as men, the majority of sports associations continued to have predominantly male memberships.

78. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands had adopted a comprehensive approach to combating violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons, encompassing a wide range of measures organized around several objectives and taking due account of the particular vulnerability of high-risk groups, including women in the LGBTIQ+ community.

79. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in the Netherlands, undocumented migrants were legally entitled to medically necessary care, including mental healthcare. Healthcare providers were able to reclaim costs when patients were unable to pay. The healthcare services arranged by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum-Seekers included mental healthcare. The Government supported research and local initiatives aimed at reducing barriers to mental healthcare for undocumented migrants, although certain gaps remained.

80. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands recognized the crucial role played by civil society organizations and remained committed to supporting their work. A diverse and sustainable funding base was essential to ensure their long-term independence and resilience. Such organizations were therefore encouraged to mobilize multiple sources of funding, including private donations, philanthropic contributions, membership fees and international or European Union funds, rather than relying predominantly on government grants. Although the Government would continue to provide targeted public funding where appropriate, it did not bear sole responsibility for guaranteeing the financial continuity of every organization in the absence of sufficient alternative resources.

81. **A representative of the Netherlands** said that the rights of women in detention in the Netherlands were safeguarded through national legislation, international human rights agreements and a system of independent monitoring mechanisms. Oversight and review were carried out by the Inspectorate of Justice and Security and several other supervisory bodies.

In 2023, the Inspectorate had published an incident report concerning sexual misconduct in a women's correctional facility. In response, the Minister of Justice had sought advice from the Commissioner for Sexually Transgressive Behaviour and had commissioned an independent study by Leiden University on safety in all women's prisons. Following those reports, the Custodial Institutions Agency had introduced measures to reduce barriers to reporting misconduct, improve the provision of relevant information to incarcerated women and strengthen the capacities of supervisory committees.

82. Mandatory training for staff working with incarcerated women had also been developed to support behaviour tailored to the specific needs of women in detention. The training modules had been developed in line with international human rights principles and relevant standards, including the Convention and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). The composition of staff teams was also adjusted where necessary to achieve a more appropriate male-to-female ratio, and significant investments had been made in strengthening social and psychological safety within those teams so that members felt able to address potentially inappropriate behaviour.

83. Reports had demonstrated that detention regimes for women had too often been derived from detention models designed for men and therefore did not sufficiently reflect the specific characteristics and needs of incarcerated women. As a result, the custodial services had begun the process of redesigning the detention system for young adult women, taking into account regional placement, required security levels, international standards and practices and the perspectives of former female prisoners.

84. When a woman or girl submitted an asylum application based on fear of persecution related to gender or gender-based violence, the Immigration and Naturalization Service assessed the claim in accordance with the relevant procedure. All asylum caseworkers received training on gender-related grounds for protection. Within reception centres, designated safety focal points identified, supported and guided vulnerable persons and provided guidance to other staff members. In the case of asylum-seeking families, individual members of the family were entitled to submit independent asylum applications, including on grounds of domestic violence or trafficking in persons, potentially leading to the granting of an autonomous residence permit not linked to a spouse.

Articles 15 and 16

85. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she would welcome clarification regarding the circumstances in which free legal assistance was made available, particularly for women victims of domestic violence. In that regard, she wished to know whether the State Party intended to incorporate gender-sensitive and intersectional criteria into the assessment of eligibility for free or subsidized legal assistance in cases involving domestic violence, given that current criteria, such as "self-sufficiency" and "complexity of the case", did not appear to take into account power imbalances between women and men, and in view of reports of increasing difficulty in securing legal representation in complex divorce cases, which disproportionately affected women experiencing violence or in situations of economic dependence.

86. She wished to know whether the State Party intended to establish compulsory checks for situations of domestic violence in all custody processes and what specific training was provided to family judges regarding domestic violence in that context. Furthermore, she would be grateful for clarification concerning the measures in place to prevent contact between children and fathers who had murdered the child's mother, as well as any actions taken to recognize, prevent and respond to cases of vicarious violence, in which violence was inflicted on those close to a woman, often her children, for the purpose of harming her.

87. In the division of property following separation, the courts did not appear to take into account differences in income-earning capacity or the impact of the unequal distribution of care work. Many women, particularly those in unregistered unions, reportedly faced serious disadvantages with regard to maintenance payments and property and inheritance protection, which exacerbated structural inequalities and increased their risk of poverty in old age. She would welcome an update on the current situation in that regard and clarification as to

whether legislative reform was envisaged to guarantee the rights of women in unregistered unions in the event of separation.

88. In the light of reports of a lack of safety guarantees for victims of marital captivity and the limited guidance and training provided to judges and authorities on the diversity of religious marriages and the procedures required for their dissolution, she wished to know what specific measures the State Party planned to adopt to protect women and girls from reprisals when they sought to end situations of marital captivity or other forms of harm arising from religious or traditional marriages.

89. While family mediation had been integrated in the Netherlands as an alternative tool for resolving family-law disputes, it was not clear whether the mechanism incorporated a gender perspective or whether it was avoided in cases involving domestic violence or power imbalances; an explanation in that regard would be welcome. Lastly, she would appreciate clarification regarding the possibility for all divorced women to revert to their birth surnames free of charge and without administrative obstacles.

90. **A representative of the Netherlands** said that, when assessing parental authority and contact arrangements, a special protocol applied in cases of homicide. Child protection services were involved in all such cases and, in the vast majority, the perpetrator's parental authority was terminated immediately and a contact ban imposed. Only in exceptional cases was the assessment postponed, until the child was older. No specific protocol existed for cases involving non-fatal violence; however, judges carefully assessed the arguments and evidence in each case, with the best interests of the child as the paramount consideration. Judicial decisions were also informed by advice from the Council for Child Protection.

91. **A representative of the Netherlands** said that former partners, partners and members of the family or community could be prosecuted in cases of marital captivity under legislation that had entered into force in 2023. Where an honour-related motive for captivity was suspected, the police and other professionals were able to request advice, conduct threat assessments and receive additional supervision through the National Expertise Centre for Honour-Based Violence. The legislation allowed for the simultaneous termination of civil and religious marriages through a single judicial procedure and required both spouses to cooperate in religious divorce. Awareness-raising campaigns had been conducted and informational materials had been made available for judges and public prosecutors. In addition to legislative action, the Government had also focused on general educational measures aimed at preventing situations of marital captivity.

92. **A representative of the Netherlands** said that her delegation was grateful for the constructive dialogue with the Committee. The authorities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands were firmly committed to promoting and protecting women's human rights, in partnership with the country's strong civil society.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.