



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-seventh session

### Summary record of the 2045th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 8 February 2024, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Tisheva (Vice-Chair)

## Contents

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

*Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Djibouti*

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*In the absence of Ms. Peláez Narváez, Ms. Tisheva (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

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

*Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Djibouti* ([CEDAW/C/DJI/4-5](#); [CEDAW/C/DJI/Q/4-5](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Djibouti joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Aden** (Djibouti), introducing her country's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports ([CEDAW/C/DJI/4-5](#)), said that her Government stood in solidarity with the women of Palestine, whose most basic human rights were being violated as a result of the conflict with Israel. In Djibouti, despite the challenges of climate change, social change and migration, progress had been made towards inclusive and fair development. The Government's achievements in the protection of early childhood, for example, included the creation of a regulatory framework that defined early childhood as life before the age of 6, the institutionalization of childcare centres and the creation of a platform that united child protection efforts. Primary education had been extended, and investments had been made in school infrastructure and teacher training. Enrolment rates had increased at all levels of education, and there was parity in primary education and the first cycle of secondary education, although gender disparities in education rates widened in higher education and the average number of years of education remained low. A national literacy programme had been launched to improve women and girls' social and professional integration and through sessions on family planning, reproductive health, human rights and women's empowerment. The programme had led to improved learning outcomes during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.
3. In some regions, increased access to health-care providers and drugs, along with enhanced management capacities, had led to improvements in nutrition and health care, including reproductive and maternal health care. Adolescent girls benefited from efforts to improve their access to life skills training and reproductive health education, which helped to delay marriage and pregnancy. Vaccination programmes and programmes to combat transmissible diseases had been set up. A community-based approach had been adopted to address socioeconomic vulnerability and a lack of health-care facilities that rendered access to basic health-care services difficult in some remote areas. More than 80 community insurance providers, each comprising a health fund and a microcredit fund, had been established.
4. Climate change, migration and conflict in neighbouring countries had hindered the Government's efforts to tackle poverty through social protection and employment strategies. Nevertheless, economic development programmes, notably in the transport, logistics and port sectors, had increased employment and economic growth, notwithstanding the fact that further efforts were required to create sustainable jobs. Following an assessment of the vocational and entrepreneurial training needs of women and girls, and in line with market demands, they benefited from three types of training: vocational training for employees, training on entrepreneurship and training for women trainers on entrepreneurship. Women were encouraged to become entrepreneurs, particularly in the e-commerce, tourism and craft sectors, as a remedy to address their over-representation in the informal sector. Structural measures had been adopted to afford women and girls access to economic and natural resources, land and financial services. Those measures included steps to improve their access to modern technology, support in transitioning from the informal to the formal sector, legislation to prevent discrimination in recruitment and sexual harassment in the workplace and the review of maternity leave provisions in the public and private sectors.
5. Djibouti Vision 2035 and its accompanying five-year development plans facilitated partnerships with international and local actors to encourage behavioural change and thus help to bring about gender equality. Actions to promote gender equality and promote women's leadership involved State institutions and civil society and were coordinated by the Ministry for Women and the Family, in partnership with other ministries and civil society organizations. Such actions drew on proposals from communities, Djibouti Vision 2035 and



the National Development Plan and were in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The National Gender Policy for 2023–2030 aimed inter alia to transform gender relations in society, amplify women's voices, combat gender-based violence and establish mechanisms to guarantee gender equality in governance. Women's representation in political and administrative roles had increased, including among ministers and in the Parliament, and the majority of the members of the Supreme Court were women. The Constitution provided for equality before the law regardless of language, origin, race, sex or religion; it granted women the right to take legal action on an equal footing with men and required the Government to adhere to ratified international instruments. The Gender Observatory ensured respect for the principles of gender equality and equity and monitored the implementation of the National Gender Policy and of legislation and regulations relating to relevant international instruments.

6. A range of legal provisions supported the efforts of a wide range of ministries and civil society organizations to combat gender-based violence and female genital mutilation. Such efforts benefited from the technical and financial support of the United Nations. Strong cultural resistance persisted, however, with significant numbers of women and girls subjected to early marriage, female genital mutilation and physical violence perpetrated by their partners. Young women suffered violence for a number of reasons, for example in the context of arranged marriage or for their refusal to engage in polygamy, or owing to their lack of financial independence.

7. A national framework defined the political engagement, services and community mobilization in place to tackle gender-based violence. The response to gender-based violence had been institutionalized and placed inter alia under the aegis of the Ministry for Women and the Family, the Ministry of Health and the National Union of Djiboutian Women, which provided a helpline, guidance and referrals. The Gender-based Violence Information Management System allowed the Government to gather reliable data and detect trends. A one-stop shop addressing violence against women had been established in a hospital in the capital.

8. Human rights and the rule of law had been strengthened through a major project to modernize the judicial system. The project aimed to identify the amendments necessary to align legislation with international standards, improve access to justice for all, particularly in rural areas, and raise awareness of rights. The significant number of laws adopted in recent years included one that had extended paid maternity leave from 14 to 26 weeks and another on protection and care for women and child victims of violence. Communication strategies intended to bring about change were regularly implemented for specific communities, whether directly, via the media or online, while awareness of the challenges faced by the country was raised during international days to draw attention to gender-related matters. The Government engaged with other States and international organizations to share best practices, build capacities and work jointly to fulfil the aims of the Convention.

9. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that the Committee would need some clarification as to whether the State party's legislative and judicial reforms were in line with the Convention. She wished to know whether the State party had undertaken environmental and social impact assessments of the hosting of military bases and the testing of armed drones and remote warfare equipment, and if so, what the key findings had been and how regularly they were reviewed. It would also be useful to know whether an action plan to resettle the persons affected by such activities and restore their livelihoods had been developed in consultation with stakeholders, and whether women's groups were consulted on the renewal of military leases. It would be interesting to hear what percentage of revenue from the hosting of military bases was allocated to addressing human rights violations and what portion was devoted to providing training on alternative livelihoods, artificial intelligence, robotics and other areas of technology to equip women and girls for work in the digital economy.

#### *Articles 1–6*

10. **Ms. Akizuki** said that the Committee would like to know whether there were plans to include direct and indirect discrimination against women in the State party's legal definition of discrimination, how domestic mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing the Convention had been strengthened and what steps had been taken to eliminate discrimination against



women by private individuals, enterprises and other non-State actors. She would welcome information on measures to strengthen the State party's legislation and to bring it in line with the Convention, in particular by changing the discriminatory provisions in its statutory, customary and religious law – which appeared tantamount to reservations to articles 15 and 16 of the Convention. It would also be interesting to hear how many times the Convention had been invoked in court cases and what training was given to judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law enforcement officials on the subject of the Convention and its jurisprudence.

11. She wished to know what programmes had been conducted to raise women's awareness of their rights and of human rights mechanisms and what measures were in place to remove physical and economic barriers to access to justice for women. The Committee would like to know whether the Convention had been translated into the Afar and Somali languages or publicized through audiovisual or other means. Information would be appreciated on how the State party monitored the situation of women's rights and on what mechanisms were available to secure accountability for acts of violence and discrimination against women. Lastly, she would like to hear whether the State party was considering ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

12. **Ms. Aden (Djibouti)** said that, in practice, there were still some shortcomings with regard to women's access to justice. Efforts to overcome them included legislative amendments, financial programmes and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at changing attitudes. When new legal provisions were introduced, programmes were implemented to acquaint the general public with them. The Family Code was being amended to make it easier for women to lodge complaints in the event of domestic violence. The military bases were a key factor in the country's peace and security. They helped the authorities to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and were a source of funding for that purpose. They also contributed to the social and economic development of the country by cooperating closely with the authorities not only on security matters but also on economic and social questions, including those concerning women and young people. Their impact was thus wholly positive.

13. The Government invested heavily in social protection and health insurance. It provided training and finance, including microcredits, for women running small, medium-sized or large enterprises. The law allowed an individual to choose freely whether a court case should be heard in accordance with sharia or the Civil Code. There was no discrimination on grounds of religion or sex.

14. **A representative of Djibouti** said that, with regard to personal status, sharia had been replaced in 2002 by a modern law that was based on the Tunisian Personal Status Code, although certain aspects of the law still reflected sharia. The Family Code was currently being reviewed to weed out provisions that discriminated against women. It was hoped that the revised draft would be ready for consideration by the Government by mid-2024. Women could file complaints of domestic violence with the criminal police or the prosecution service. Since 2009, it had also been possible for associations to institute civil proceedings on behalf of victims of female genital mutilation. Platforms to protect women and children could also be used to inform the authorities of abuse, but perhaps more should be done enhance the competent authorities' vigilance.

15. Duly ratified international conventions took precedence over domestic law. The Convention could therefore be directly relied on in court. It was a mystery why no parties to proceedings invoked it directly; lawyers did rely on international treaties in important commercial cases. The lack of reference to the Convention perhaps indicated that lawyers required more training. The National School for Judicial Studies could improve the training of judicial officers and lawyers in that respect.

16. **A representative of Djibouti** said that article 1 of the Constitution enshrined equality for all before the law, and hence gender equality, and that every legal text must comply with that provision. Women were thus not subject to any discrimination with regard to the ownership of property; while they might not have the means to buy property, there was no legal barrier to their doing so. There were social housing associations, one of which was headed by a woman, which helped women to find housing.



17. A survey was being conducted on the impact of longer maternal leave on employment in the private sector, in response to claims by women that they had been refused employment because they were of childbearing age and might take maternal leave. The law established a minimum quota of women employees in the public and the private sector, and the Government had consistently encouraged women's employment. Women thus participated in the country's economic development.

18. When signing agreements on the establishment of military bases in the country, the Government always paid attention to environmental concerns and the needs of a substantial proportion of the population who were nomads and who moved about from one region to another. For the past two years, a committee had been working on the transposition of the Convention into domestic law, as the Government was keen to harmonize the provisions of the Family Code with its obligations under the Convention.

19. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that her question had concerned the percentage of revenue from the military bases that was allocated to compensation for human rights violations. She wished to know whether agreements concerning the establishment or maintenance of military bases covered funds for the health care or training of nomads, in order to ensure that military operations and the testing of equipment did not have an adverse impact on the livelihood of nomadic women and expose them to social risks. It would be helpful to know whether a fresh environmental impact assessment had been carried out and whether women were consulted when the rent for the bases was negotiated.

20. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she would appreciate more information on substantive as opposed to theoretical legal equality.

21. **A representative of Djibouti** said that the Government's close cooperation with civil society when it prepared its periodic reports to the treaty bodies provided it with an opportunity to strengthen a commitment to compliance with the conventions' requirements. Workshops were organized to raise all stakeholders' awareness of the treaty bodies' recommendations. He would provide a reply in writing to the question regarding military bases.

22. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would like the delegation to elaborate on the capacity of the national machinery for the advancement of women to deliver results in terms of gender equality. It would be useful to the Committee if the delegation would indicate staffing levels, the percentage of the national budget allocated to improve gender equality in the world of work and the reach of programmes at both national and grassroot levels, and would indicate whether there were criteria and professional guidelines for the placement of gender focal points within government ministries. It would be helpful to know the relationship between the machinery for the advancement of women and the roles played by the Directorate for Women and the Family in the Office of the President, the National Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and whether gender targets were embedded in the country's macroeconomic framework and strategic national priorities. The Committee would like to hear more about the range of policy measures, governance tools and architecture available to assist the machinery for the advancement of women and related entities in carrying out their oversight functions, in developing standard operating procedures and in establishing accountability and monitoring systems for effective gender mainstreaming.

23. The delegation was requested to say whether an impact assessment had been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of gender results, to provide data on the substantive impacts of the National Gender Policy that had been implemented until 2021 and to explain how the new National Gender Policy would consolidate gains. It would be useful to have disaggregated data to track progress on sectoral gender mainstreaming. She also wished to know whether there were any statistics on the number of gender-based violence cases handled by the various bodies or protocols guiding the response to gender-based violence. The Committee would like to have some indication of whether the multisectoral teams for combating gender-based violence had received sufficient training to deliver effective gender mainstreaming and to ensure compliance with legal and policy provisions so as to better fulfil the State party's obligations under the Convention.



24. **Ms. Ameline** said that the purpose of temporary special measures was to speed up the implementation of the Convention. Unfortunately, women's rights in Djibouti had not been strengthened sufficiently to contend with the current challenges of climate change, migratory flows or digitization. It would be advisable for the authorities to update the plan on women and peace and security. She said that she would like to know whether, with the assistance of international partners, it would be possible to set up a special mechanism for implementing the Committee's recommendations. Noting that all the various steps taken to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals should promote women's rights and their economic empowerment, she said that a digital dashboard might present a good means of keeping track of progress.

25. The Committee had received reports that the political system still did not benefit sufficiently from the contribution of women. She said that the use of a quota system for women's political participation could present an effective remedy. Temporary special measures, including quotas, could make it possible to make progress not only in political participation but also in economic development in the informal sector and in rural areas.

26. **Ms. Aden** (Djibouti) said that, since it was essential to secure all sectors' commitment to gender equality, every strategic plan, and all the programmes of the various ministries, had to include a gender marker. The Ministry for Women and the Family helped the various sectors to incorporate gender mainstreaming in their policies. The establishment of the Gender Observatory was a first step towards assessing whether targets had been reached and ascertaining what further action should be taken to contribute to women's advancement. Gender focal points had competent staff able to supply complete, up-to-date information.

27. The Ministry for Women and the Family was finalizing a multisectoral platform to collect digitized data disaggregated by sector, age group and geographical area. The obstacles to women playing a more significant political role were cultural, not legal, and the Committee's recommendations were therefore welcome. More progressive legal texts and policies would make for greater social acceptance of the right of women to lodge complaints of domestic violence and ensure greater knowledge of where to file such complaints. While women in both urban and rural areas were familiar with the legal provisions protecting their human rights, services for rural women needed to be improved. The new National Gender Policy gave priority to training the staff of such services, to furthering the independence and education of women and to financing income-generating programmes. The delegation had taken note of the need to speed up implementation of the Convention.

28. The Government had an obligation to enhance women's climate resilience, as climate change would continue to affect them. Relevant programmes and policies would serve the differing needs of both urban and rural communities.

29. Committees and other bodies responsible for making political decisions were required to have at least one female member. The Government recognized the importance of coordinating with technical and financial partners and with international bodies to provide efficient and effective social support to people in need, in particular women, in a way that was in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Convention had been translated and disseminated through awareness-raising activities carried on television and radio in the country's four local languages.

30. **A representative of Djibouti** said that an evaluation of the National Gender Policy for 2011–2021 had been conducted in December 2022. The results had shaped the strategic objectives of the new National Gender Policy, which was in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, on gender equality. The Gender Observatory worked towards sociopolitical and cultural change as a means of promoting gender equity and equality; its research was published biannually.

31. In 2018, a caucus of female parliamentarians had been established in the National Assembly. Just over a quarter of the seats in the National Assembly were currently held by women. An increase in the quota for female parliamentarians had led to a 10 per cent increase between 2011 and 2017, and a vice chair and several chairs of permanent committees had been women. The number of female politicians at the communal level had almost tripled, and a record proportion of women were currently serving in government positions around the



country. The number of women in decision-making roles had passed the 2017 target. The 2035 target for women's representation in the Parliament was 40 per cent.

32. The Ministry for Women and the Family had implemented a strategy for 2018–2022 to end female genital mutilation. To that end, a national survey on that practice and violence against women had been conducted in 2019. The Government had, with international assistance, established a digital monitoring system for gender-based violence. The system was operated by the Ministry of Women and the Family, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the gendarmerie and the judicial police.

33. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know what positive impacts had been recorded since the introduction of the new National Gender Policy, the gender-based violence framework for action and the digital monitoring system for gender-based violence. She wondered whether the State party had adopted any comprehensive strategies and measures to raise awareness of gender stereotypes and harmful practices and to eliminate them, including child marriage and polygamy, in rural and remote areas and among religious leaders. She would welcome information on any measures in place, such as rehabilitation and psychosocial support services, to support victims of female genital mutilation, child marriage or forced marriage. It would be of interest to the Committee to find out whether any mechanisms tracked cases of such marriages and addressed the harmful practice of the stigmatization of women with albinism.

34. The Committee would like to know whether the national strategy to combat female genital mutilation for 2017–2021 had been assessed and, if so, if the assessment had identified challenges and possible remedies. She would be interested to hear whether any measures were available to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to that practice and whether the delegation could provide data on the number of prosecutions, convictions and penalties imposed.

35. Since the State party had no law that specifically criminalized domestic violence, she would like to know how women could obtain a protection order from a court, whether the mediation of domestic violence cases outside court was prohibited and what steps were taken to facilitate women's access to the courts. She wondered whether the State party would consider amending the definition of rape so that it would be based on a lack of consent instead of the use of force or threats by the perpetrator. She would appreciate information on the challenges faced in legal proceedings involving sexual assault and rape, including reporting, investigation and conviction, and would like to know whether the Government would consider criminalizing marital rape and conducting the necessary awareness-raising activities on that subject to lift the taboo surrounding it. It would be of interest to the Committee to find out how the progress and effectiveness of the national referral protocol for gender-based violence was measured and evaluated, whether victims could access shelters that were equipped to address their psychosocial needs and what human, financial and technical resources had been allocated to ensure the referral protocol's sustainability.

36. **The Chair** said that she would like to know how the State party was collaborating with the Governments of countries with military bases in Djibouti to ensure that foreign military personnel and contractors were aware of the legal ramifications of engaging in sexual relations with trafficked individuals, including minors. She wondered whether any mechanisms ensured that cases were investigated in an objective manner and with consideration for the perpetrators' accountability. She would be interested to hear about the measures taken to improve the capability and sensitivity of frontline officials, such as law enforcement and immigration officers and social workers, to facilitate the identification and support of survivors of trafficking in persons. The Committee would like to know how the State party ensured that survivors received effective, comprehensive and gender-sensitive access to justice, including reparation. It would appreciate it if the delegation could provide up-to-date, disaggregated data on the number of reported cases of trafficking and of the prosecutions carried out and the convictions and sentences imposed on perpetrators since 2017.

37. She would appreciate information on the achievements and outcomes of the 2014 national action plan against trafficking in persons and on the timeline for adoption and objectives of a new national action plan. How did the State party intend to improve its



collaboration with civil society organizations and support their work with victims and women at risk of human trafficking? She wondered whether any measures had been taken to facilitate refugee and migrant women's access to income-generating activities, such as through the extension of microcredits and encouragement of self-employment, to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking in persons. Were there any concrete programmes in place, and how would their sustainability be ensured?

38. **Ms. Aden** (Djibouti) said that the survey conducted in 2019 had found that there had been a significant decrease in the number of young girls undergoing female genital mutilation and that another survey would be conducted in 2024. Following a specific strategy to combat female genital mutilation, the authorities had decided to adopt a more general strategy against violence against women, while still placing importance on that issue. The Ministry of Health had primary responsibility for supporting victims. Female genital mutilation mainly persisted in remote areas with limited access to services. The public was aware of redress available to victims. Provisions added to the Family Code stipulated the need for emancipated minors to consent to early marriage and for confirmation from the Ministry of Health that the individual's health would not be put at risk. Relevant awareness-raising programmes on that issue and on female genital mutilation had been integrated into programmes implemented by the Ministry for Women and the Family. The social policy on child protection adopted in 2021 paid particular attention to female genital mutilation and other forms of violence affecting children.

39. While Djibouti had no shelters for girls who had been victims of violence, they could learn about avoiding the risk of such violence at special support and training centres. Girls who dropped out of school could access education programmes in which they learned about their rights and the various legal avenues available to protect them against violence. There were plans to set up centres in the country's interior regions, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, on the model of the legal and medical victims' support centres set up by the National Union of Djiboutian Women.

40. **A representative of Djibouti** said that the Government was considering revising the relevant legislation to prohibit early marriage. To increase the number of cases of female genital mutilation brought before the courts, a law had been enacted in 2009 which gave civil society organizations the right to participate in the relevant legal proceedings. Since parents often arranged for their own daughters to undergo that practice, they were unlikely to file complaints. Experts were also reviewing whether the severity of the penalty prescribed in the Criminal Code was a deterrent to the reporting of the practice. While domestic violence was not specifically criminalized in legislation, harsher penalties were prescribed under the Criminal Code for such crimes. At the end of 2023, the Djiboutian and Ethiopian authorities had set up a joint investigation team to fight against irregular migration and trafficking in persons.

41. **A representative of Djibouti** said that the latest legal provisions on trafficking in persons established a penalty of 5 to 10 years' imprisonment for the perpetrators, with harsher penalties when the crime caused disability to the victim or if the victim was identified as vulnerable, and life imprisonment if the victim died. Training on trafficking in persons had been held for the judicial police, medical staff and members of the judiciary. Most recently, 40 border guards had been trained in the identification and protection of victims. In cooperation with international partners, a handbook of standard procedures had been published.

42. Public awareness-raising activities on trafficking in persons had focused on the most likely entry and exit points for migrants, where trafficking was most likely to occur. In 2023, a national committee on human trafficking had been established as a permanent body, headed by the Minister of Justice and supported by an executive secretariat. It was responsible for ensuring the implementation of relevant policies, analysing and sharing data with the relevant departments and carrying out advocacy work through training programmes, public communication strategies and protection and support services for victims. It also strengthened partnerships with the relevant international organizations.



43. **A representative of Djibouti** said that a law adopted in 2019 on women and children victims of violence included plans to establish support centres that would provide legal and psychosocial services and temporary accommodation for victims.

44. The same law contained a clear definition of discrimination against women. It defined discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion or restriction which had the purpose or effect of impairing the recognition and enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of full and effective equality in civil, political, economic, social and cultural matters.

45. Rather than criminalizing domestic violence specifically, the Criminal Code criminalized acts of violence against people in general. Victims of domestic violence could obtain a free certificate from a doctor to confirm that they had been subjected to violence and could use the certificate to file a complaint. The Convention was one of the main instruments used to raise awareness about women's rights.

46. **A representative of Djibouti** said that, every year, 16 days of activism to combat violence against women and girls were organized in Djibouti. Awareness-raising events drew attention to the relevant legislation and the health risks posed by female genital mutilation and other forms of violence. Training sessions were conducted for judicial police officers on the provision of care to victims of violence and on support for victims during the investigation and interview process. Seminars were also organized for religious leaders from Djibouti and neighbouring countries.

47. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know how the State party addressed the root causes of the damaging social practices of child marriage and female genital mutilation and how it educated the public, religious leaders and community leaders on the harm that such practices caused for young women and girls.

48. **The Chair** said that she would welcome information on the concrete measures taken to provide women and girls who were vulnerable to trafficking with access to income-generating activities and on how the State party ensured the sustainability of such measures.

49. **Ms. Aden (Djibouti)** said that it was important that efforts to combat female genital mutilation should involve raising fathers' awareness of the harm it caused. As the traditional head of the family, a father could play an influential role in putting an end to the practice. The Government had committed to a zero-tolerance policy and a framework for consultation between political and community leaders across Djibouti had been organized to ensure that all actors were engaged in eliminating the practice. Guidance had been translated into local languages so that the public could understand the issue and adopt a new perspective on it. Training sessions on detecting and reporting cases of female genital mutilation were organized for midwives and nurses.

50. A comprehensive framework of policies to protect migrants from trafficking still needed to be implemented. The Government was cooperating with countries in neighbouring regions and elsewhere to improve the safety of migration routes and the support offered to migrants. A reception centre had been set up in the capital city for street children, who were often migrants or the children of migrants. The International Organization for Migration provided assistance by facilitating children's voluntary return to their home countries. Training was required for staff working on migration issues to make it possible for them to identify and address cases of trafficking.

51. **A representative of Djibouti** said that, in 2023, three victims of trafficking had been hosted in the reception centre, one of whom was still residing there. A distinction needed to be made between migrants and victims of trafficking, since migrants were not the only victims of trafficking. Updated statistics on the number of cases of trafficking would be submitted in writing.

52. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would appreciate clarification on the comment made by a member of the delegation on the capacity of minors to give consent to marriage, as it was her understanding that they had no legal capacity to do so. She wondered whether the State party would consider incorporating the message that women formed an integral part of the nation's human capital resources into its awareness-raising campaigns.



53. **Ms. Aden** (Djibouti) said that awareness-raising work needed to be carried out among parents to discourage them from organizing and consenting to marriages on behalf of very young children, because early marriage exposed such children to a heightened risk of psychological and medical harm. However, minors aged 15 and above were considered to be emancipated, and as such capable of giving consent to marriage. It was imperative that the provisions of the Family Code should clearly address all the risks that might arise from child marriage among very young children. Ongoing awareness-raising activities emphasized that women were a vital human resource and had the potential to make a significant contribution to the country's development, which was why it was so important to invest in women and girls and in combating gender-based violence.

*Articles 7–9*

54. **Ms. Morsy** said that she would like to hear how the Government planned to ensure sustained progress, beyond setting quotas, to better address the underlying systemic barriers hindering women's participation in public and political life. She would be curious to know the percentage of women in leadership positions in political parties, trade unions and other associations. It would be useful to the Committee to find out whether women with disabilities had adequate opportunities to participate and have a say in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and community projects. Could the State party provide data on the inclusion of women with disabilities and the representation of women in rural and urban areas in political decision-making bodies and processes?

55. She wished to know what incentives or sanctions were in place to encourage and catalyse women's participation and representation in political leadership in the public and private sectors, including on corporate boards of directors. It would be of interest to hear whether the State party had a comprehensive framework to take the representation of women beyond appointments to a more inclusive participation that would guarantee the qualitative and quantitative engagement of women. The Committee would welcome a response from the delegation on the apparent contradiction between the growing number of women holding management positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the consistently low number of women holding posts as ambassadors. It would be useful to know what factors had contributed to such a limited representation of women in more senior positions and how those factors were being addressed; whether a strategy was in place to increase the number of women in ambassadorial roles; and what other international opportunities existed for women within the public service. Was the Government making a systematic effort to provide ongoing and equal opportunities for women to represent the Government at the international level?

56. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would welcome information on the findings from the 2017 study analysing bottlenecks in the birth registration system and on the impact of covert and systematic discriminatory practices that limited women's rights in the context of birth registration. Further details would also be appreciated on the legal and administrative guidelines applicable to cases where the father of a child was known but was not a national of Djibouti. She wondered whether in such cases the mother was able to transfer her nationality to her child, regardless of the nationality of the father. It would be of interest to know whether mothers and children born to parents of different nationalities were subjected to any negative cultural practices and stigma and, if so, how that situation was being addressed.

57. She would like to establish what measures had been undertaken or were planned to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, including economic deprivation, against migrants, asylum-seekers and victims of sexual exploitation, especially women and girls. Lastly, how did the State party ensure that female migrants who were victims of forced labour, trafficking or sexual exploitation could obtain access to identity papers, education, employment and other social services?

58. **Ms. Aden** (Djibouti) said that the number of women ministers in the Government had risen in recent years from three to six. The objective was for women to hold at least 25 per cent of positions. While there were no formal obstacles preventing women from standing for office and holding high-level positions, it was necessary to implement programmes that empowered women to put themselves forward for and succeed in such roles. That would include programmes designed to foster leadership skills, build their



self-confidence, promote skills such as literacy and entrepreneurship and encourage women's financial independence.

59. Girls were pushed to attend school and continue to higher education, which played an important role in enabling them to apply for senior roles and diplomatic posts. Short-term training courses were also available to women and girls to encourage them to seek employment in traditionally male-dominated fields such as the transport or digital sectors. Mothers were legally permitted to transfer their nationality to their children even if the child's father was of a foreign nationality. Over 75 per cent of births took place in hospitals, where birth registration was obligatory. A birth certificate was issued for each child after birth and had to be collected within one month.

60. **A representative of Djibouti** said that the Nationality Code did not distinguish between men and women for the acquisition and transmission of nationality. The Code had been revised in 2004 to clarify that mothers holding the country's citizenship were permitted to transfer their nationality to their children, even if the child's father was unknown. Children born in Djibouti to foreign parents were given a birth certificate and granted the same rights as children born to Djiboutians, such as the right to attend school. Such children could apply for nationality when they reached the age of majority.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*