



Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Tenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 183rd MEETING

Held at the Vienna International Centre, Vienna,
on Tuesday, 29 January 1991, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. TALLAWY

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Convention (continued)

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session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued) (CEDAW/C/CRP.17)

Second and third periodic reports of Portugal (CEDAW/C/13/Add.22 and Add.22/Corr.1, CEDAW/C/18/Add.3)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Tavares da Silva (Portugal) took a place at the Committee table.

2. Ms. TAVARES DA SILVA (Portugal), introducing her country's second and third periodic reports (CEDAW/C/13/Add.22, CEDAW/C/13/Add.22/Corr.1 and CEDAW/C/18/Add.3), said that the many changes which had followed the social and political revolution in her country 15 years previously had made women and men equal before the law in most respects. There were, however, still improvements to be made in the de facto situation of women.

3. There were many encouraging indicators showing women's position in Portuguese society: in 1989 women had formed 42 per cent of the labour force and, in 1986/87, 58 per cent of students completing secondary school had been girls and 52.9 per cent of university graduates had been women. Although professions such as the judiciary and diplomacy had only been open to women since the revolution, there were already two women ambassadors, and 10.5 per cent of diplomats were women. Women judges represented 14.2 per cent of the total, and women public attorneys 26.7 per cent of the total. Women accounted for 47.7 per cent of law students, 61.8 per cent of students in the faculties of mathematics and computing, and 66.1 per cent of medical students.

4. However, there were problems as well: discrimination and sexual harassment at work, domestic violence, lack of support structures to enable women to reconcile their family and professional responsibilities, and lack of maternity protection for short-term contract workers. The Government's Commission on the Status of Women and other bodies had undertaken a number of programmes, measures and activities to promote equality and counteract the effects of discrimination.

5. She would now take up the questions asked by the Committee (CEDAW/C/CRP.17, annex VI).

General questions

6. The restructuring of the Commission on the Status of Women had not yet taken place. The Commission was already a high-level body under the direct authority of the Prime Minister, but she hoped that the proposed restructuring would give it more resources and even greater power.

Article 2

7. She could not give a precise answer to the question whether the Convention had been invoked directly before the courts, since her department - the Commission on the Status of Women - did not follow all the cases which came to court. However, the articles of the Convention concerning employment had been cited before the courts in cases of alleged discrimination, and she was sure that the Convention would have been invoked in oral submissions to the courts.

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Article 3

8. In reply to question 1, she said that the Commission on the Status of Women was a consultative body and had no enforcement powers. In reply to question 2, she said that government departments were supposed to submit all draft laws which might affect the situation of women to the Commission for its opinion; strictly speaking, of course, almost all proposals would affect the position of women in one way or another, but the Commission could not consider every proposal put forward by every other department.

9. In reply to question 3, she said that the Commission's budget was only 0.003 per cent of the State budget. However, there were a number of other mechanisms besides the Commission for promoting equality, and they had their own budgets. In addition, the Commission received financing from international bodies such as the European Community, UNESCO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

10. In reply to question 4, she said that the global and intersectoral plan for equality between men and women was still only a proposal. It covered political measures in seven areas: (1) culture, education and professional training; (2) employment; (3) health; (4) social security; (5) reconciliation of professional and social responsibilities with family responsibilities; (6) promotion of women's participation in civic, political and public life and decision-making; (7) vulnerability of women in specific situations (e.g. teen-age and single mothers, Portuguese immigrants, migrant women entering Portugal, victims of violence, prostitutes, women in prison and older women).

11. In reply to question 5, she said that the only specific activity aimed at older women had been the preparation by the Commission of a publication called "Women and aging", which was designed to inform women of their rights concerning pensions, retirement benefits, educational and cultural opportunities, etc. Another government commission dealt with the interests of older people, both men and women, who enjoyed special benefits in areas such as health care, social services, transport, etc.

12. Specific activities had been undertaken to help migrant women. In 1988-1989, the Portuguese Institute for Emigration Support (see document CEDAW/C/13/Add.22, p. 7) had begun a training programme for Portuguese women abroad. The training had covered traditional female areas of work, including dressmaking, tapestry, embroidery and cookery. The women concerned all had low qualifications, and it had been considered that such training would be of help to them in setting up co-operatives or small businesses. Twelve courses had been held in five countries (France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium). Sixteen new courses were to be held in those countries in 1991, and it was planned to extend the programme to the United Kingdom and Spain. The courses also included training in women's rights, assertiveness, cultural identity, management and accountancy.

Article 4

13. Women's organizations had proposed that an article equivalent to article 4 of the Convention should be included in the Constitution as a symbolic gesture intended to emphasize the fact that positive action in favour of women was perfectly legal. The proposal had been rejected because the Convention had already been incorporated into Portuguese domestic law.

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Article 5

14. In reply to question 1, she said that Decree-Law 421/80, concerning advertising, had been replaced by another decree-law in 1983 which had itself been replaced by Decree-Law 330/90 of October 1990, instituting a new Advertising Code. The latter did not refer specifically to women, but prohibited any advertising which infringed the "dignity of the human being" or which contained any discrimination on the grounds of race or sex. The Commission for Equality in Work and Employment monitored job advertisements for sexism, and had power to warn - and, if necessary, to prosecute - those responsible. Non-governmental organizations and the Commission on the Status of Women had also submitted complaints about sexist advertising to the Portuguese Advertising Council.

15. In reply to question 2, she said that there was some evidence of a change in attitudes on sex roles. The diversification of school and professional choices by girls and women might indicate that women's aspirations were broadening. It also seemed that there was more sharing of household and family tasks among younger people. Two forthcoming studies should help in assessing the situation. One being conducted by a non-governmental organization was entitled "Sharing of tasks and responsibilities between women and men"; the second, to be conducted by the Commission, was entitled "Sex roles - how women and men see themselves in contemporary society".

16. In reply to question 3, she said that sexual harassment was not specifically prohibited under Portuguese law. The Commission on the Status of Women had produced a leaflet and a brochure to tell women how to cope with sexual harassment, and the Commission on Equality in Work and Employment had conducted a study on the issue, which had revealed that one in every three women claimed to have suffered sexual harassment, generally from colleagues at the same level as themselves in the workplace hierarchy, although harassment by employers or superiors, where it occurred, was much more serious. Women felt powerless to prevent sexual harassment because they received no formal support; they believed that they had no way of complaining, or that complaining would not achieve any results. Sexual harassment had a serious effect on a woman's health, work performance, capacity to find another job and, in some cases, her family life.

17. In reply to question 4, she said that pornography was not prohibited under Portuguese law, but it was subject to certain restrictions. Pornographic materials could only be exhibited and sold in special shops, and not in public places. Pornographic films were heavily taxed, and minors were excluded.

18. In reply to question 5, she said that public opinion had become more aware of violence against women in recent years. There had been no national study on the subject as yet, but the Commission on the Status of Women had undertaken a number of partial studies, and its information service had gained some idea of the dimension of the problem from the women who used them. According to data from 1989, about 30 per cent of the women who consulted the information service had some experience of violence in the family, although they had normally consulted the service for other reasons. The Commission had published and distributed two brochures, entitled "Violence in the family" and "Sexual harassment" and three leaflets, entitled "Violence in the family", "Violence in the street" and "Sexual blackmail". The police had published a brochure entitled "To prevent ... is to protect", advising women how to avoid violence in the street. The Government had no plans to set up shelters for women victims of violence. The facilities that existed were provided by religious organizations.

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Article 6

19. Portugal was still studying the Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic In Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others with a view to its eventual ratification. In the mean time, the Commission had published an information brochure in the series "Information for women" which was intended to help women to avoid or extricate themselves from the world of prostitution.

Article 7

20. In reply to question 1, she said that there were no quotas for women in Portugal, although the Prime Minister had spoken publicly of the need to increase participation by women in political life. In reply to question 2, she said that the statement that "politics is a world of power and, as such, remains a masculine preserve" was merely a statement of fact: women held four government posts out of 61, and women accounted for one in 10 parliamentary deputies, one Constitutional Court judge out of 13 and two civil governors out of 18 at the district level. In an attempt to redress the situation, the Commission had prepared a "Global Plan for Equality", containing proposals designed to increase public awareness of the effective participation of women at national, regional and local level, to identify and eradicate the obstacles which hindered women's participation in civic and political life and to promote the appointment of women to national and international posts. The proposals covered the preparation of studies, data gathering - including the establishment of a data bank of qualified women - and information and training activities, including the introduction of the subject of political participation in schools.

21. In reply to question 4, she said that the Law regarding the Guarantee of Rights of Women's Organizations (see document CEDAW/C/13/Add.22, p. 35) did not include provisions for the financing of women's organizations. However, since 1989 the annual budget of the Commission had included a specific amount for the women's organizations represented on its Consultative Council.

Article 8

22. Following a visit by a high-ranking official of the United Nations Secretariat in 1990, vacancies in the United Nations system were now notified directly to the Commission on the Status of Women, which was able to circulate the notices in good time to women's organizations. No information was yet available on the results.

Article 10

23. In reply to question 1, she said that a number of activities had been implemented to encourage girls to study a wide range of subjects at school. In 1988, the Bureau for Technological, Artistic and Professional Education attached to the Ministry of Education had begun a campaign in secondary schools using written and audio-visual materials, which was designed to encourage girls to study for technical professions. The Commission on the Status of Women and the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training had distributed information packs and posters on the theme "Technical professions - professions with a future", of which 10,000 copies had been distributed to schools across the country. A second edition of the information pack was currently being prepared. The Institute of Employment and Professional Training, the Commission and other bodies had organized pilot courses in non-traditional activities for women, including motor-vehicle mechanics, gardening, plumbing, computing and video producing. Although only a few women

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could take advantage of each course, it was hoped that the effects would spread beyond the immediate beneficiaries and increase awareness among those responsible for training.

24. In reply to question 2, she said that she had little information about the progress achieved in the area of vocational training. However, she could quote the example of two training schemes, one run directly by the Institute of Employment and Professional Training, and the other run in co-operation with other public or private institutions: in 1986 the percentage of women on those courses had been 17.2 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. The percentage of women receiving training under the same schemes in the first semester of 1989 had been 41.1 per cent and 33 per cent respectively.

25. Replying to question 3, she said that progress in education and training was not monitored in a regular or systematic way, but that the overall percentage of girls attending schools was high. The Institute of Employment and Professional Training reported regularly on the situation in that regard.

26. Referring to question 4, she said that she was not aware of any specific literacy programmes for older women, but that they were available for the population as a whole. Women none the less accounted for a higher percentage of students attending adult literacy courses than men.

27. In reply to question 5, she said that a project had been initiated by the Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, on training activities and the need to enhance women's awareness of their role in society. The courses in teacher-training colleges were supplemented by printed and audio-visual materials. It was hoped that the example would be followed by other institutions.

28. In answer to question 6, she said that the high percentage of women teachers at kindergarten and primary school level, and the low percentage of women at higher levels of education, was probably common to many countries, and derived from the roles traditionally assigned to women, which tied them to professions with lower salaries. She did, however, note that there had been a diminishing trend in recent times: in 1984-1985, women had constituted 92.4 per cent of the teaching staff at the primary level, whereas in 1986-1987 they had represented 92.2 per cent. At secondary level, they had represented 62.7 per cent of secondary school staff in 1984-1985, the percentage in 1986-1987 being 62.4. At the higher educational level, the percentage of women teachers had increased from 27.9 to 31.0. It was hoped that the percentage would increase as a result of the greater numbers of women graduating from universities.

Article 11

29. Replying to question 1, she said that the economic situation of older women left much to be desired, and that pensions for unqualified working women were generally low, the lowest being about half of the minimum national salary.

30. In connection with question 2, she said that Decree-Law 9/86 made provision for part-time work by civil servants having dependants or children under 12 years of age. The intention was to make it possible to allow civil servants with at least three years of effective work to be employed on a part-time basis, but it should be mentioned that part-time work was not common in Portugal, since in 1989 only 6.4 per cent of women employed in the Civil Service fell into that category. Part-time work could also be regulated by collective agreements, but such arrangements were not subject to specific regulations.

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31. In answer to question 4, she said that, under article 67 of the Constitution, day-nursery facilities for children were to be provided by the State. Although some progress had been made in establishing kindergartens for children between the ages of three and six, younger children were not well provided for in that respect. Although she had no data for the private sector, in 1984 the percentage of children enrolled in State-administered nurseries and kindergartens was 5.8 in the case of children under two, and 32 for children aged between three and six.

32. In connection with question 6, she said that, since 1989, there had been a coherent and systematic programme of positive action on behalf of the professional advancement of women, partly in the form of government subsidies to employers and financial support to women who set up businesses for themselves or generated employment opportunities for other women. Financing of day nurseries to help women undergoing training had also been made available.

33. Referring to question 7, she said that, despite positive efforts, the differential between the salaries of men and women remained substantial. It was unlikely to disappear until women gained qualifications equivalent to those of men.

34. On question 8, she said that, while she did not have statistics to hand, it was her understanding that few fathers availed themselves of the entitlement to parental leave. An inquiry was currently under way to ascertain the situation in the public service.

35. Referring to question 9, she said that it was difficult to make an overall assessment of the changing trends in the employment of women which had resulted from Portugal's membership of the European Economic Community. While the female unemployment rate had been 8 per cent in 1988, and had fallen to 7 per cent in 1989, it was still twice as high as the rate for men. One noteworthy trend in recent years had been the recruitment of women on short-term contracts.

Article 12

36. Replying to question 1, she said that access to advice regarding contraceptives was provided under article 13 of Law No. 3/84, on sexual education and family planning. No special facilities were available for young people, but she did not think young people had undue difficulty in gaining access to such advice. The problem of AIDS had generated widespread public concern, and all forms of contraception were freely available, although some could only be obtained on prescription.

37. In reply to question 4, she said that Law No. 6/84 established the circumstances in which abortion was permissible; they were mentioned in the annex to Portugal's second periodic report (CEDAW/C/13/Add.22, p. 59). She did not, however, have statistics on the number of abortions actually carried out. The authorities were planning to undertake a study on the implications of the Law, with particular reference to women's health.

38. In connection with AIDS (question 5) she said that action was being co-ordinated by a National Commission, whose efforts were directed equally towards men and women. Ninety-six men and 18 women had died of AIDS in 1989, but the number of women known to be HIV-positive was unknown. The issue was of serious concern to the public health authorities.

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Article 13

39. Replying to the question asked under article 13, she said that there were no specific social support provisions for single parents, but that both unemployment benefit and other allowances were available to parents, whether married or not.

Article 14

40. In reply to the questions asked under article 14, she said that women constituted more than 52 per cent of the agricultural workforce in Portugal. Programmes to advance the status of rural women and to address the problems of illiteracy and family planning had been initiated by Government agencies.

41. Replying to question 1, she said that the reason for the high percentage of independent women farmworkers was that the spouse of the farmer was no longer regarded as a dependant, and enjoyed her own social security rights. That was in line with current European Community legislation regarding workers in the agricultural sector. The social security system thus applied equally to men and women in the agricultural sector.

42. Concerning question 4, she said that no data were available as to the number of companies established by husbands and wives. It should be emphasized that women enjoyed the opportunity to establish enterprises on an equal footing.

43. If question 5 referred to the unpaid domestic work done by women in the household, she would have to reply that the national accounting system did not take such labour into account. However, if it referred to women helpers in family enterprises, it was considered in the total accounting of the enterprise. At the same time, even if such women workers were regarded as independent for the purpose of social security benefits, they were sometimes non-remunerated workers. Such workers accounted for 4.2 per cent of the total number of women workers, and were primarily engaged in agriculture, commerce and the restaurant and hotel sector. Recent legislation had accorded new rights to agricultural workers participating in family enterprises.

Article 16

44. In reply to question 1, she said that legislation had established that both spouses had the same duty to contribute to the costs of family life, according to their means. That duty could be fulfilled by either of them, and the law now recognized that the spouse remaining at home was not to be considered merely as a dependant but rather as a contributor to family life.

45. In addition to specific legislation, a consistent campaign had been waged by the Commission and by women's organizations on the sharing of family tasks and responsibilities. However, no amount of legislation would succeed in the immediate future in reconciling family responsibilities with professional obligations.

46. Replying in conclusion to question 2, she said that article 153 of the Penal Code of 1982 had established new penalties for domestic violence, and that efforts were being made to ensure greater public awareness of the problem of domestic violence. In that context, it should be pointed out that women who were economically dependent on their spouses found themselves in an especially difficult situation, but change could only be achieved if society succeeded in evolving a new concept of the relationships between men and women.

47. Ms. CORTI said that the very useful replies given by the representative of Portugal illustrated the remarkable progress that had been achieved in the short period of time in which Portugal had enjoyed a democratic system. Although shortcomings were still apparent in the area covered by article 6 of the Convention, the Government's efforts were as commendable as its candour. It was particularly notable that the authorities had made special efforts on behalf of rural women.

48. While welcoming the detail provided in the reports and the introduction, she thought that it would have been helpful if details could have been provided on the number of illegal abortions carried out in Portugal, in the context of article 12 of the Convention.

49. Ms. NIKOLAEVA said that she had been particularly impressed by the fact that the representative of Portugal had candidly described the situation of women in her country, in addition to outlining the legislation in force. She would, however, have welcomed more detailed information on the status of rural women.

50. Ms. LAIQU-ANTONIOU congratulated the representative of Portugal on her presentation, on the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and on the great progress which had been made with very little government funding. Women in countries where such circumstances prevailed were to be congratulated on their achievements. Governments frequently boasted of the progress made while providing very little in the way of funds. She commended the attention given by the representative of Portugal to the rights of workers and the position of women in family enterprises, it was to be hoped that other countries would start to emulate the Portuguese example. In spite of what had been achieved, women appeared not to participate to any great extent in politics or in the decision-making process, nor did they participate in the formulation of social and economic planning policies, either at the regional or Government level. The Commission on the Status of Women might consider concentrating its efforts on those areas in the near future.

51. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA DEL REAL also commended the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. Given the difficulties they faced, it was essential that such bodies should have a clear policy and it was to be hoped that the Plan for Equality would eventually become a government project. Further information in that regard, perhaps in the next periodic report, would be most welcome. It was also extremely important for a body like the Commission on the Status of Women to maintain co-operation and co-ordination with trade unions, particularly in matters such as social policy and employment. She wondered what relationship the Commission had with the unions in Portugal, whether women had any position of authority in the unions, whether domestic work was regulated and whether domestic workers had any union backing. She also wondered whether more women were participating in the non-governmental organizations and whether women in the agricultural sector and in rural areas had become involved. More information on the work undertaken with prostitutes, in particular whether women involved in prostitution had sufficient information on their rights to the medical services, for example, would also be welcome.

52. Ms. EVATT congratulated the representative of Portugal on her frank and realistic replies and the enthusiasm of her approach. She wished to commend in particular the extensive and well-structured machinery which had been set up to oversee the implementation of equality and to ensure that the needs of special groups of women were recognized. In addition, she commended Portugal's attitudes to sex roles, to enhancing the participation of women and to the need for changes in education and employment, as well as the work done to improve the position of

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rural women and their social security treatment. The publication entitled "Portugal - Status of Women", reproduced in the annex to document CEDAW/C/13/Add.22, provided a very valuable comparison with Portugal's initial report. It was unfortunate to find that change was slow and had even been minimal in some areas. It might be helpful in the future if the targets to be achieved in education and employment could be specifically identified and the programmes to bring about change monitored continuously. Members would welcome the views of the representative of Portugal on the areas in which she would like to see change and development over the coming years.

53. Ms. AKAMATSU said that her questions had been incorporated in document CEDAW/C/CRP.17 and answered very precisely and frankly. She joined her colleagues in congratulating the representative of Portugal on her work with the Commission on the Status of Women, her enthusiasm and her strong sense of solidarity.

54. Ms. BRAVO NUÑEZ DE RAMSEY congratulated the representative of Portugal and her Government on their work to promote women. It could clearly be concluded from the reports that discrimination against women was now in its first stages of eradication in Portugal, although the process was not as advanced as in the Nordic countries. Portugal had made great progress in improving the status of women, and particularly in helping rural women, who tended to be the forgotten group. There was still a long way to go, but the Committee was confident that the various women's organizations would remain vigilant.

55. Ms. AQUIJ joined her colleagues in congratulating the representative of Portugal and her Government on the reports. It was nevertheless unfortunate that, although women accounted for 52 per cent of the electorate, their political power was so limited. Portuguese women should make greater efforts to see that women were elected to the more important political posts. Even at the level of deputies, they were far fewer in number than might be expected. Much depended, however, on the political will of the Portuguese Government.

56. Turning to the subject of emigration, she asked whether the Commission on the Status of Women had a section or service overseas, whether women tended to emigrate with their families or alone, whether the Commission arranged welcoming services, and whether the women received the necessary advice on how to invest the money they took back home.

57. Ms. ABAKA commended the Commission on the Status of Women for its entrepreneurial development training for women. Many women in her country were failing to make progress because of the lack of managerial skills, and national bodies, particularly in the developing countries, should emulate the Portuguese example and help women to manage their own affairs and make their businesses more viable.

58. Ms. ALFONSIN DE FASAN commended the Portuguese reports for their imaginative presentation and practical approach. The policies adopted and spirit of co-operation had proved to be the most effective means of improving the status of women. The problems faced by domestic workers existed in many countries and a future report might usefully expand on the question of domestic workers and paid domestic work.

59. Ms. TAVARES DA SILVA (Portugal), replying to the questions raised, said that the Commission on the Status of Women had long since realized that both the older and younger generations needed help for different reasons. The younger generation took equality for granted until they entered the labour market or married, at which time they started to understand what discrimination meant. The message was very difficult to put across as far as the younger generation was concerned and a good deal of persistence was required. Action was needed, particularly in the form of information, on the entire area of women's civil and political rights, and in that connection brochures were produced on every conceivable aspect. On the subject of migrant women, the fact that there were some 3.54 million Portuguese living and working outside Portugal certainly caused some concern. On the subject of prostitution, the problem of Portuguese women crossing into Spain to work as prostitutes continued to be a problem and was very difficult to deal with. The women themselves were not prosecuted but those who exploited them could be; again, it was extremely difficult to identify them and even more difficult to take them to court. It had proved best to try and provide the women concerned with information and to try to take preventive action, as well as helping women to find other sources of earnings. There was no specific State help in those areas and it was difficult to get the women concerned together as a group. On the subject of new technologies, many Portuguese women had shown interest in such technologies in recent years.

60. Since abortion was illegal and hence inevitably clandestine, there were no statistics. The only available figure - 100,000 - dated from 1976 and had been quoted when the family planning services were created.

61. She agreed that de facto implementation of the law was very important, and the efforts made in that regard had yielded some results. Regarding co-operation with women's organizations, after a period of abeyance under the previous régime, there had been an increase in the number of organizations, some of which were very active. There were currently about 18 of them, representing political, trade union, feminist, confessional and other groups, the most important being the Consultative Council of the Commission she represented. One of the most positive aspects of the Commission's work had in fact been its co-operation with all of those organizations in the preparation of studies, seminars and other activities.

62. She had not dealt in depth with the question of rural women because of the written information provided on that subject. The basic priority areas for the advancement of rural women were: education, particularly literacy and basic education; vocational training, including counselling on how to make good use of such training; social security; and information. Constant contacts were maintained with women throughout the country, in particular through the extension programme, focused primarily on increased co-operation with local municipalities.

63. Full advantage had been taken of the opportunities for dialogue offered by the post-revolutionary period, when demands have been forcefully voiced in a way that was perhaps not possible in a normal situation. On the subject of regional extension, that was one of the Government's current priorities, and one woman was now specifically responsible for regional development in the Government.

64. Like Ms. Bustelo Garcia del Real, she hoped that the Global Plan for Equality would become a government programme. She also agreed that co-operation with social partners was extremely important. Such co-operation was evidenced in particular by the fact that women members of trade unions sat on the Commission's Consultative Council, and that the Commission for Equality in Work and Employment, attached to the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, was a tripartite institution, with women representatives. The rights and working conditions of domestic workers were

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regulated by law. Although there was still room for improvement, there were some basic legal safeguards in respect of such issues as rights, remuneration and leave. Regarding women's position in the trade unions, she said that, in the two trade union confederations, women's participation amounted to about 30 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.

65. With regard to machinery for the advancement of women, the main organ was the Commission on the Status of Women, although there were also women deputies in the legislature. She herself was particularly concerned about the need for special structures in the field of education. Although there was a protocol agreement between the Commission and the Ministry of Education, she would like to see it developed further. An updated version of the report on the status of women, with special reference to specific groups including rural women, had been issued in December 1990, was currently being translated into English and would be submitted with the next report. On the question of specific targets, she said that the priority target area was that of employment, where discrimination was most likely to occur. Other important targets were political participation and reconciling employment with the domestic burden of women.

66. She agreed with Ms. Bravo Nuñez de Ramsey that Portugal was behind the Nordic countries and still in the early stages of eradicating discrimination. Areas in which positive developments had taken place included the labour force, education and legislation. There was also a tradition of assertiveness and of non-discrimination, for instance in the language itself. The feminization of names and titles - minister, doctor, etc. - was established practice. Another example of equal status was that a married woman was not required to take her husband's name; indeed, he could take the name of his wife, and the children could take that of the mother or the father.

67. She agreed that there was a need for significant efforts to improve the participation of women at the local level. Women had been at the forefront of many of the popular movements during the revolution. At the top of the scale, women's representation in the legislature was now 10 per cent. Regarding emigration, the Institute for Emigration Support was the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Commission co-operated with the Ministry with regard to the inclusion of women's issues in the courses organized by the Institute.

68. She agreed with Ms. Abaka on the importance of support for women entrepreneurs. One of the largest non-governmental organizations was the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, and an important fair was currently being held in Lisbon to demonstrate and publicize the activities of women entrepreneurs. Special banking facilities also existed to provide support for women's projects.

69. Ms. Alfonsin de Fasan had stressed the need for co-operation, a view shared by the Commission, particularly in view of its limited size. All ministerial departments were represented on the Consultative Council, thus enabling the Commission to maintain liaison, convey information and requirements and make recommendations.

70. With regard to emigration, she said that the peak in women's emigration had been in the 1960s, when women had represented about 40 per cent of all emigrants; since then, the figure had never dropped below 30 per cent. She could not say how many women emigrated with their families and how many alone, but she believed that the great majority emigrated with their families.

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71. The next report would provide more ample information about recent developments.

72. Ms. SINEGIORGIS associated herself with the congratulations offered by other members to the Portuguese Government and delegation, and said that Portugal also deserved credit for its efforts to improve the status of women in Macao.

73. The CHAIRPERSON, thanking the representative of Portugal on behalf of the Committee, said that the Government's obvious grasp of the need for co-ordination and the successful co-operation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Government would warrant further contacts between the Committee and the representatives of the Portuguese Government, to see how other countries could be helped in solving the recurring problem of the lack of co-ordination machinery. She hoped that an informal meeting or a seminar could be arranged in the future for that purpose. She also hoped that due attention would be given to the important matter of monitoring court cases involving women's claims, so as to enable the Committee to gain a clear insight into the workings of the judicial system.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.