



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Seventy-second session**

Summary record of the 1666th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 21 February 2019, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Gbedemah

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

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

Eighth periodic report of Ethiopia (continued) ([CEDAW/C/ETH/8](#);
[CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8](#) and [CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8/Add.1](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ethiopia took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chair** said that she wished to welcome the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations Office in Geneva. At the invitation of the Committee, other members of the delegation would be speaking via video link from Addis Ababa.
3. **Mr. Girma** (Ethiopia) said that primary education was provided free for all citizens in a child-friendly learning environment. The Government paid for teachers' salaries, built schools and provided instructional materials. Currently, more than 36 million children were enrolled at the primary level. Improving the quality of education was a challenge being addressed by the General Education Quality Improvement Programme, which aimed to enhance teacher training and curriculum development. The Government had employed various strategies to encourage girls to enrol and remain in school, including by offering grants and providing hygiene materials and access to separate washrooms and latrines. In addition, the Government was trying to recruit more female teachers as a means of attracting and retaining more female students. Specific incentives in rural areas included free meals, school uniforms and learning materials. Guidelines had been developed to discourage sexual harassment in schools, and the Government was conducting monitoring to ensure that they were being followed.
4. As to children with disabilities, Ethiopia had a special needs strategy and an inclusive approach to education aimed at integrating students with disabilities into mainstream schools. However, the Government advocated the education of students with complex disabilities in special schools. In that connection, a roadmap had been developed with stakeholders, and special schools were being opened throughout the country. At the same time, schools and universities were being renovated in order to better accommodate students with disabilities. However, the achievements in that area had fallen short of expectations, and the Government would therefore intensify its efforts. Teacher training programmes included human rights education, as did the school curriculum, which promoted respect for the human rights of all children, including children with disabilities.
5. The 70:30 strategy, developed 10 years earlier, aimed to encourage 70 per cent of university students to study science and technology and 30 per cent to study social sciences. Disaggregated data showed that 48 per cent of undergraduates were female. At 33 per cent, the illiteracy rate remained high. However, it had fallen over the previous 10 years as a result of a literacy programme.
6. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, said that she would like clarification of whether primary education was compulsory. She wondered to what extent education served as a strategy to address the issue of child marriage, whether a system was in place to identify girls who failed to attend or complete school and whether there was a chain of accountability for girls' schooling. She would like to know what fields women studied in university and whether the State party would consider temporary special measures to encourage more girls to study science and technology. According to the State party's replies to the list of issues ([CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8/Add.1](#), para. 44), a directive on sexual harassment existed for the secondary and tertiary levels of the education system, but she wondered when the Government would introduce a policy rather than a directive for those levels. She also wondered whether a policy on sexual harassment in primary schools existed and whether the Government had statistics on sexual harassment cases, and on the sanctions applied in such cases.

7. **Ms. Manalo** said that she would be interested to know to what extent students, especially at the tertiary level, were aware of the benefits they had received as a result of the State party's implementation of the Convention.
8. **Mr. Girma** (Ethiopia) said that primary education was free for all across the country. Additional data on education would be provided in writing. The directives on sexual harassment applied to all levels of the education system. Those directives had not yet been translated into a policy. Clubs and student government bodies in schools helped to raise students' awareness of human rights issues.
9. **Mr. Gezaw** (Ethiopia) said that, although primary education was free, it was not yet compulsory. However, the Ministry of Education was currently assessing other countries' experiences with a view to developing a policy to make primary education compulsory. Schools raised students' awareness about their human rights in a number of ways, although schoolgirls were not yet sufficiently aware of their rights under the Convention. However, that was true of Ethiopian citizens in general. Under the National Human Rights Action Plan, the Ministry of Education and the Human Rights Commission would review the curriculum with a view to enhancing human rights education.
10. **Mr. Usmael** (Ethiopia) said that there had been a shortage of health-care practitioners, especially physicians, for a number of years. A strategy to develop human resources had been introduced as part of the effort to achieve universal health coverage by the end of 2020. Key measures taken by the Ministry of Health had included expanding medical schools, which were expected to produce more than 3,000 graduates per year, and opening medical colleges in all regions to train the mid-level workforce, including midwives.
11. A strong multisectoral response to the HIV pandemic had yielded good results, curbing the spread of HIV and also of tuberculosis and malaria. Both the incidence and the prevalence of HIV infection had decreased. Data disaggregated by age and sex would be provided in writing.
12. **Ms. Zelalem** (Ethiopia) said that there were currently 43,000 health extension workers, 98 per cent of whom were women. The Ministry of Health was working to increase the number of family planning users by 6.2 million by 2020, and to that end was carrying out capacity-building activities among health professionals. Guidelines were in place for the provision of family planning services to women with special needs and training was provided on family planning for people with disabilities.
13. As to abortion services, continuous training was provided to mid- and high-level professionals. Abortion-related deaths had decreased, and abortion was no longer one of the five leading causes of maternal mortality and morbidity. Health extension workers were given training on the identification and referral of cases of leprosy. Nationwide, five rehabilitation centres performed reconstructive surgery.
14. **Mr. Getachew** (Ethiopia) said that, thanks to the National Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy, 2007–2015, mortality among adolescent girls had fallen by half, dropping from 4.6 per 100,000 population in 2000 to 2.3 per 100,000 in 2016. The prevalence of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections had also declined. Apart from reproductive health, the strategy covered a range of factors contributing to adolescent health, including nutrition, substance use and mental health.
15. Although the teenage pregnancy rate had dropped in recent years, the Government acknowledged that the decline had been relatively slow. Under the new National Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy, the goal was to reduce the rate to 3 per cent by 2020. A programme had been introduced to facilitate access to contraception for married adolescent girls. In the four regions in which it had been implemented, the programme had enabled some 50 per cent of married girls to obtain access to contraceptives. A school health programme had recently been established to enhance students' understanding of health issues, including issues surrounding teenage pregnancy. Plans were being made to offer health services at government youth centres, of which there were over 2,000 in the country.
16. **Ms. Chalal** said that, in 2017, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission had developed a system for monitoring the performance of the regions in the area of health care. It would be interesting to learn what recommendations the Commission had issued on the

basis of the assessments conducted to date. It was still not clear what measures were being taken to address the problem of obstetric fistula.

17. **Ms. Zelalem** (Ethiopia) said that the Government was committed to eliminating obstetric fistula by 2020. To achieve that goal, it was working with the Ethiopian Public Health Institute to collect data on fistula care and treatment. Centres that treated fistula had been established in the regions and strategies for identifying persons requiring treatment had been introduced.

18. **Ms. Reddock**, noting that the Federal Civil Servants Proclamation (Proclamation No. 515/2007) provided for childcare facilities in the workplace, paternity leave, increased maternity leave and job security during pregnancy, said that she wished to know whether those provisions had been extended to the private sector. If so, it would be interesting to learn what monitoring and complaints mechanisms had been established to ensure that private sector employers were implementing the provisions. She would also like to know what measures were being taken to establish day-care centres in private sector workplaces, whether any such centres had, in fact, been established there and whether fathers, as well as mothers, were making use of them.

19. Working women had reportedly suffered increased levels of harassment and violence in recent years, and she wondered whether the hostility they had experienced was in any way related to the affirmative action measures introduced pursuant to the Federal Civil Servants Proclamation to promote the recruitment of women candidates for the civil service. If so, she wished to know what steps were being taken to combat negative reactions to the changes taking place in the area of women's employment and whether programmes for raising awareness of gender issues and preventing gender-based violence were included in economic empowerment programmes at all levels.

20. It would be interesting to know whether the country's first gender-disaggregated data set, which covered all sectors of the economy, included intersectional data based on new categories and indicators not previously used in the national data collection system. Information on steps being taken to further improve the collection of gender-sensitive and intersectional data would be welcome.

21. The Committee wished to know whether women working in the informal sector had access to social security and protection benefits and, if so, what form those benefits took. It would also like more information on the Micro and Small Enterprises Strategy. In particular, what kinds of jobs were available to women through the Strategy and were those jobs covered by social security and protection schemes?

22. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that maternity protection was provided to private sector and public sector employees under Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003 and Federal Civil Servants Proclamation No. 515/2007, respectively. Furthermore, Ethiopia had ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and its provisions had been incorporated into Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003.

23. The Federal Civil Servants Proclamation provided for the establishment of day-care centres in government agencies, and both fathers and mothers were entitled to use them. Under the Labour Proclamation, affirmative action measures had been implemented to promote the employment of women in the private sector. Programmes aimed at raising awareness of gender issues were conducted. The Government was taking steps to ensure that persons working in the informal sector benefited from social protection, including health care and health and safety mechanisms.

24. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that employment and recruitment were unaffected by gender-based discrimination, and salaries were established on the basis of equal pay for equal work. Under the Labour Proclamation, inspectors ensured that women in the private sector were protected against workplace violence and that action was taken against any person found to have violated the provisions of the Proclamation. Private sector enterprises were monitored to ensure that they implemented the Labour Proclamation and protected the rights of their employees. The Government had allocated 10 billion Ethiopian birr (Br) to establish a fund for the development of self-employment opportunities for young persons. It took steps to monitor working conditions in the informal sector and determine

whether workers' rights were being violated. Every five years, the Central Statistical Agency collected gender-disaggregated data on employment conditions and opportunities. The Social Protection Policy had been established to address a wide range of social problems, including issues related to employment. Under the policy, a number of mechanisms and strategies for the protection of women had been put in place.

25. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that, in accordance with the Federal Civil Servants Proclamation, day-care centres had been established in a number of federal ministries and agencies. Other ministries were expected to introduce such facilities shortly.

26. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that 75 day-care centres had been established in government agencies across the country. The provision of day care and the extension of maternity and paternity leave had benefited both mothers and fathers. The Government was taking steps to encourage private sector employers also to provide day care.

27. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that the employment opportunities created through the Micro and Small Enterprises Strategy included jobs in manufacturing, the food industry and small enterprises.

28. **Ms. Verges** said that she would welcome information on any measures taken to assess the impact that the Micro and Small Enterprises Strategy had had on women's income and employment prospects. It would also be interesting to know what proportion of the persons benefiting from the Strategy were women and what proportions of those women lived in urban areas and in rural areas. She would appreciate further information on the ways in which the Strategy facilitated market access for women entrepreneurs. She would also like to know what measures were being taken to increase women's access to bank loans, whether there was any means of coordinating the large number of credit mechanisms that existed in the State party and whether the Federal Cooperative Agency provided only financial services to cooperatives or also gave them technical support. In addition, she wondered whether the National Women Development and Change Strategy had been adopted. Lastly, she would like to know what forms of social support, including health insurance, were available to women working in the informal sector.

29. **Ms. Song**, noting that women's land rights had been strengthened through a joint certification scheme, said that she wished to know whether women were able to file complaints concerning violations of their land rights and, if so, how many such complaints had been made. She would also like to know whether, in the view of the Government, legislation on land ownership required further strengthening in order to ensure the protection of women's land rights.

30. She would appreciate information on the proportion of the State budget allocated to public services in rural areas and to the development of rural infrastructure. She also wished to know what measures for the advancement of rural women had been prioritized, whether a national action plan for rural women had been established and what measures were being taken to eliminate poverty affecting women in rural areas. In addition, she would be interested in learning whether the Government had established a national action plan on the prevention and management of natural disasters and, if so, whether a gender perspective had been fully incorporated into the plan.

31. She wondered whether school teachers received training in gender equality, whether gender equality was included in the educational curriculum for refugee children, whether refugee women had access to vocational training courses and what measures were taken to prevent gender-based violence in refugee camps. Information provided by alternative sources indicated that women in detention frequently experienced gender-based violence, which conflicted with the information in the State party's replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8/Add.1, para. 72). She would appreciate a comment from the delegation in that regard. Was there a mechanism for protecting women against mistreatment by prison officials, including verbal and physical abuse?

32. She noted that the Government planned to conduct an assessment of the impact of the Lega Dembi gold mine, whose operations had been suspended, and would like to know when the assessment would be completed, whether the results would be made available to the public and whether, in the light of the assessment, the Lega Dembi and Sakaro gold mines

would be reopened. In considering whether to reopen the mines in question, would the Government take account of the views of the local population?

33. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that the Government was working to remove the economic barriers faced by women in Ethiopia by improving their access to finance and providing networking and training opportunities for them. One example of its efforts was the Micro and Small Enterprises Strategy. Six million women had received economic empowerment training in 2017/18. Training programmes of that kind were implemented at the federal, regional and grass-roots levels. The Association of Ethiopian Microfinance Institutions, which was the main source of financing for women entrepreneurs, had been particularly active at the grass-roots level. In recent years, the Association had enabled more than 13 million women in Ethiopia to accumulate savings of around Br 3 billion and more than 2 million women to access around Br 13 billion in credit.

34. Approximately 440,000 women were engaged in small-scale enterprises. The Government had created market and networking opportunities for about a third of them by providing commercial premises and organizing trade fairs. Efforts had also been made to help women entrepreneurs to secure public sector contracts. Over the previous seven years, the number of women involved in cooperatives had increased from about 1 million to about 6 million. The cooperatives also operated banks that provided credit and savings opportunities for women.

35. Around 35 per cent of women owned land, either individually or jointly with a partner, and around 1 million women had been assisted in obtaining the required certification. The land certification procedure operated smoothly at the federal level, but some difficulties had been encountered in rural areas. It was hoped that women's land rights, particularly in rural areas, would be addressed as part of the revision of the Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation currently under way. The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth had launched the Ethiopian Women's Development and Change Package in 2017. It placed particular emphasis on ensuring equality between women and men in the economic sphere.

36. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that the legal framework for the community-based health insurance scheme had been endorsed and implemented in all the regional states and city administrations, although the level of implementation varied among them. It had already been rolled out in a number of regional states. Currently, 18 million individuals were registered under the scheme. Coverage stood at 47 per cent of *woredas* (districts); the target was to reach 50 per cent of *woredas* by the end of 2019. Certain services, including family planning services, maternity and neonatal care, and treatment for tuberculosis, leprosy, HIV/AIDS and malaria, were not covered under the community-based health insurance scheme. As for the national health insurance scheme, the legal framework had been established, but arrangements for its implementation had yet to be finalized.

37. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that, following complaints from the local population, the Government had suspended the mining licence awarded to the Lega Dembi gold mine pending the outcome of an assessment of its environmental and health impacts. The assessment was being undertaken with funding from the Government of Canada. The necessary legal framework was in place to ensure that the operators of the mine would be held to account and required to pay compensation in the event that its activities were found to have had adverse environmental and health impacts. Their licence would not be reinstated until those impacts had been remedied.

38. There had been many reports of gender-based violence at detention centres, including at federal detention centres. The Government employed all available measures to bring the perpetrators of such human rights violations to justice. High-ranking members of the security services suspected of perpetrating such acts had been arrested, and their victims had testified against them. If the defendants in those cases were found guilty, the State would take measures to ensure that the victims were adequately compensated.

39. Following the entry into force of the Refugee Proclamation some months earlier, the Government had begun to implement the out-of-camp policy, which granted the nearly 1 million refugees in Ethiopia the right to reside outside refugee camps, have access to a wider range of services and employment opportunities and send their children to primary school free of charge. Prior to the entry into force of the Refugee Proclamation, the country's refugee

camps had operated 58 primary schools, 80 early childhood education centres and 9 secondary schools. In 2017, the gross enrolment rate among refugee children at the primary level had been 70.5 per cent. That figure had since increased.

40. The Government attached great importance to the prevention of sexual violence and harassment against women in refugee camps. The Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees worked in close collaboration to ensure that incidents of sexual violence and harassment were reported and investigated.

Articles 15 and 16

41. **Ms. Verges** said that she would appreciate further information on the measures taken to implement the family laws in force in the State party. In that regard, she wondered what efforts had been made to raise women's awareness of their rights and the legal mechanisms available to them. It would be useful to receive statistics on complaints submitted by women regarding violations of those rights and on any cases brought before the courts under the laws in question. She wondered whether a time frame had been set for the adoption of family laws in the regional states of Afar and Sumale.

42. She wished to know what measures were planned to amend article 7 of the Family Code, which permitted girls to marry at the age of 16 in certain circumstances. It would also be useful to learn what measures the Government had taken to expand the prohibition of bigamous and polygamous marriages to encompass marriages registered with customary and religious courts. She would be grateful if the delegation could clarify the purpose of the State party's reservations to the provisions of the Maputo Protocol concerning marital rape and polygamy, as the information contained in the State party report did not seem to indicate any fundamental disagreement in that regard. Lastly, she wished to know whether the inheritance of private property would be addressed as part of the review of the 2005 Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation currently under way.

43. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that great importance was attached to the protection of the family in Ethiopia. The revised federal family law had been extended to the regional governments, which had also enacted family laws that were largely in line with international agreements. However, owing to their cultural, religious and social norms, two regional states had yet to adopt family laws. The Government was taking measures, including awareness-raising measures, to ensure that those two regional states adopted family codes in conformity with the Convention and other international agreements. There were special family courts at the federal level and in certain regional states, which operated in accordance with international standards. Their staff were highly trained.

44. Various actors, including the justice sector, the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, and regional women's and children's bureaus, were working at the grass-roots level to raise awareness of women's and children's rights, including women's property and marriage rights, although further efforts were needed in that regard.

45. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that Ethiopia had entered several reservations to the Maputo Protocol. One of the reservations concerned marital rape, which was considered to be a concept incompatible with the sanctity of marriage and the intimacy of the family. The acceptance of the provision in question, without reservation, would have required amendments to domestic legislation. One of the other reservations concerned bigamy and polygamy.

46. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that, under Ethiopian law, persons aged under 18 years, which was the minimum legal age of marriage, were able to marry if they applied for and obtained an exemption from the Attorney General. In the previous 10 years, no such applications had been received.

47. **The Chair** said that, if no applications for exemptions had been received in the previous 10 years, it would seem that the provision in question could be abolished.

48. **Ms. Manalo**, referring to the State party's position with regard to polygamous marriages, asked whether the State party placed a higher value on freedom of choice for individuals or on the international law principle of *pacta sunt servanda*.

49. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that the Civil Code and the Commercial Code contained provisions that restricted the rights of women with disabilities, including their rights to marry, to give evidence, to vote, to exercise parental authority over their own children, to open a bank account and to manage their own assets. She wondered whether the State party planned to repeal the provisions in question in order to ensure conformity with the constitutional principle of equality for all women.

50. **Ms. Toe Bouda** asked when the bill on the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would be adopted and whether its adoption would result in the abolition of the restrictive provisions that required NGOs not only to register, but also to obtain permission prior to engaging in a particular project.

51. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she wished to know what measures would be taken by the State party in the near future to protect women and girls from violence, how the State party would address prevalent patriarchal and discriminatory attitudes that deterred women from reporting incidents of violence, what time frame had been set for the adoption of the new comprehensive law on gender-based violence and whether the State party required the Committee's assistance in that regard.

52. **Ms. Reddock** said that it was commendable that the State party had provided registration cards in 2017 to the approximately 200 Rastafarian families living in Shashamane. In that connection, she wondered what mechanisms were in place to provide social and other services for those families, in particular for women and children, and what efforts were planned to resolve their often uncertain citizenship status.

53. **The Chair**, thanking the delegation for the information provided, said that the State party was invited to submit any outstanding replies in writing. The Committee wished to encourage the State party to accept the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention, for which purpose a model instrument of acceptance and further instructions would be transmitted to its permanent mission in Geneva.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.