



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

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

### Summary record of the 2094th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 9 October 2024, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

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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)**

*Fifth periodic report of Saudi Arabia (continued) (CEDAW/C/SAU/5; CEDAW/C/SAU/Q/5; CEDAW/C/SAU/RQ/5)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Saudi Arabia joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation of Saudi Arabia to continue replying to Committee members' questions.

*Articles 7–9*

3. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that women accounted for 20 per cent of the members of the Shura Council, which was in accordance with the minimum quota that had been set for their participation and was a positive development in terms of the empowerment and participation of women in public life.

4. **A representative of Saudi Arabia**, providing an overview of the work of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, said that hundreds of projects had been implemented to support women and girl refugees and women and girls displaced in conflict areas. Activities included providing food and non-food items, shelter, psychosocial support and training; facilitating access to basic education for girls living in or outside camps and reducing girls' dropout rate, including by providing them with hygiene kits and improving toilet facilities in schools; and combating all forms of exploitation of and violence against women and girls and promoting social cohesion between refugees and their host communities. Millions of women and girls in multiple countries had benefited from the Relief Centre's projects. The Relief Centre itself employed more than 80 women and counted on some 8,000 women volunteers working in the field to manage relief programmes and help people in disaster areas.

5. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the Government was committed to engaging women in policies and measures for adaptation to climate change and ensuring their equal access to training and resources. Women actively participated in a number of local projects, such as the Saudi Green Initiative, aimed at addressing the negative consequences of climate change and protecting the environment.

6. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the Government's Saudi Vision 2030 programme had laid the foundation for various reforms designed to empower women, including in decision-making, and to eliminate obstacles to their participation and foster sustainable development. As a result, women now occupied leadership positions in public office, including as ministers and ambassadors, and in investment funds and human rights institutions.

7. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, to ensure the participation of women in development, the National Observatory of Women's Participation in Development had established a number of indicators covering health, education, the economy and other sectors, with a view to measuring and analysing the progress made, the gaps remaining and the challenges ahead, and that such information was shared with decision makers.

8. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** added that the National Observatory conducted data collection on the subject in cooperation with the General Authority for Statistics, which published statistical data on its website.

9. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that when a male foreign national acquired Saudi citizenship, so too could his wife, provided that she renounced her previous nationality. In addition, Saudi and foreign mothers alike had the right to register the births of their children.

10. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that a ministerial decree had been passed to ensure that children of foreign mothers had the right to education, health, employment and other human rights on an equal footing with Saudi children. Children born in Saudi Arabia to a foreign father and a Saudi mother could receive Saudi nationality, provided that they had

not been convicted of a crime or sentenced to imprisonment for a period of more than 6 months, that they were proficient in the Arabic language and that they had applied for Saudi Arabian nationality within a year of reaching the age of majority.

11. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** added that tertiary education was available to all persons in Saudi Arabia, irrespective of whether they were Saudi or foreign nationals.

12. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that efforts to combat domestic violence and other forms of violence against women and girls included awareness-raising activities and other initiatives, such as those with a focus on family protection or on helping women victims to file complaints and begin legal proceedings. A programme had been launched to assess the experience of victims of violence against women and girls with a view to improving the care and services provided to them. In cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Saudi Human Rights Commission was working on an initiative to combat gender-based violence.

13. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** added that the education sector was critical to efforts to raise awareness of human rights and issues such as violence against women and girls. For that reason, the Ministry of Education was working with human rights bodies in Saudi Arabia to implement relevant programmes in schools.

14. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, under a memorandum of understanding signed with OHCHR in 2012, around 100 programmes and workshops had been held to disseminate information on the Convention and other human rights instruments. Among the specific topics covered were domestic violence and awareness-raising on women's rights.

#### *Articles 10–14*

15. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, in the light of the country's single-sex education regime, she wished to know what temporary special measures were being taken to ensure that girls had equal opportunities to take part in sports and physical education, and what timeline was envisaged for physical education to be taught at all girls' schools. Given that, in higher education, women graduates far outnumbered men graduates, she wondered why the women's unemployment rate remained so high and their labour market participation rate remained so low; what temporary special measures were taken to bridge that gap, in accordance with the goals of the Government's Vision 2030; what was being done to encourage girls to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects; and how the Government intended to tackle stereotypes about gender roles, in particular to enable the equal participation of women in the oil and gas sector. She would be interested to know how many women students had pursued higher education opportunities abroad without a guardian, how many male students were studying in universities abroad and what the Government was doing to promote overseas opportunities among girls. Data on the number of women university deans and chancellors would be helpful, as would information on the progression rate of girls with disabilities in special education. Lastly, she would like to know whether the Anti-Harassment Law had been applied to the education sector with a view to tackling emerging issues such as cyberbullying and what was preventing the Government from introducing a prohibition on child marriage, given that it already seemed to occur so rarely.

16. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she wished to know what the main barriers to women's employment were and whether any measures were planned, in addition to existing programmes and initiatives, to address the low rate of women's participation in the labour force. She wondered what specific action had been taken to ensure the effective implementation of Ministerial Decision No. 2370/1 in order to narrow and ultimately close the gender wage gap, and what progress had been achieved. She would like to know whether any measures, such as training and incentives, had been introduced to encourage women to choose non-traditional career paths and, if so, the extent to which those measures had contributed to the elimination of horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market. The members of the Committee would like to learn more about the implementation of a national policy to encourage equal opportunity and equal treatment in employment and occupation in the public and private sectors and the monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination laws. The delegation might also specify whether there were plans to prohibit retaliation in cases of workplace discrimination and what measures had been taken

to prevent and combat workplace harassment and to ensure a safe work environment for women.

17. She would be interested to know whether compulsory or shared parental leave had been introduced, what challenges had been encountered in promoting the equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities and whether the Government might consider increasing paid maternity leave to the international standard of at least 14 weeks. Regarding women migrant domestic workers, she wondered how the authorities enforced the Regulations concerning Domestic Workers and the Like; whether they had established labour inspection, monitoring and complaint mechanisms to provide them with redress in cases of rights violations; how they ensured that all allegations and complaints against employers were investigated and prosecuted; and what measures had been taken to ensure that women migrant domestic workers could leave abusive employers without being penalized and could seek assistance without fear of imprisonment or deportation. The delegation might also provide information on any initiatives to raise awareness of the rights of women migrant domestic workers and on any measures that were taken to provide due process to persons in shelters and detention centres, including to screen for trafficking indicators. Lastly, she wondered whether the Government might consider the country's accession to the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

18. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that integrated educational policies were being implemented from primary level upward to promote equal opportunities between boys and girls, in accordance with Vision 2030. The policies ensured that boys and girls studied the same school curriculum. It was worth noting that at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, in 2023, 40 per cent of the Saudi students who had won prizes and medals had been girls. Similarly, girls had been recipients of 40 per cent of the over 50,000 educational scholarships that had been granted in Saudi Arabia; a significant portion of those girls were studying civil engineering or technology subjects.

19. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, while many women and girl students were taking science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, it was true that their entry to and participation in the workforce was very low. There were still obstacles in the labour market, including in the technology sector, which continued to be regarded as a male domain. Efforts to overcome those obstacles, to understand the disconnect between women's educational achievement and the needs of the labour market and to close the gender gap included the launch of an initiative to empower women and increase their participation in the digital sector.

20. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, under the Labour Law, discrimination in employment was prohibited, including on the basis of gender, family status, ethnicity and disability, and that employers were obliged to take all necessary measures to prevent discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity. Other legislative measures that were in place included a ministerial decision introducing a code of conduct for large corporate employers and a unified law on the private sector.

21. Training had been provided to equip women with the skills needed in various job sectors, leading to a significant increase in the number of women in the labour market. A number of other initiatives, such as an equal opportunities programme, financial incentives for the private sector and digital training for women, had also been launched to promote women's employment.

22. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, regarding women migrant domestic workers, an initiative aimed at improving contractual relationships had been launched under the National Transformation Programme, which was part of Vision 2030. The *kafalah*, or sponsorship, system had been abolished.

23. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that individuals, groups and institutions were able to submit complaints regarding a failure to ensure equal pay. The compliance of institutions and companies with legal salary requirements was monitored, and they faced penalties for non-compliance. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development had launched a service enabling migrant workers to change jobs without their employer's consent and to leave and re-enter the country by submitting an electronic request, which entailed notification of the employer. Reports of conflict at work involving migrant workers

had decreased by 50 per cent following the introduction of a national indicator to monitor their working conditions.

24. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, under the amended Labour Law, women could receive 12 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, which could be extended by 4 weeks with partial pay, in accordance with the relevant ILO convention. Men could receive 3 days of paternity leave.

25. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that it would be desirable to extend paternity leave. Maternity leave had been extended, *inter alia*, to allow for needs such as breastfeeding, which was encouraged.

26. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that under the Anti-Harassment Law, the necessary measures to combat harassment in the workplace were to be taken and anyone who violated them, in either the public or private sector, would be held accountable. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development conducted inspections to ensure compliance with the law.

27. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that violations of domestic workers' rights, including the hiring of persons under 21 years of age, discrimination on any grounds and physical abuse, were prohibited under the national legislation. Domestic workers must be remunerated in accordance with their contracts and receive a minimum of eight hours of rest per day and one day of leave per week. Abuse of domestic workers, including for leaving their place of employment, was criminalized; victims, witnesses and persons disclosing such abuse were protected under the law. If a contractual relationship was abused, victims, with their consent, could be transferred to another employer or choose to leave the country. Government-run shelters providing medical, physical and psychological support to domestic workers were available nationwide; checks were carried out to ensure that the shelters' residents were not victims of trafficking.

28. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she hoped that, in its next periodic review, the State party would provide more specific information on the implementation of its legislation and on violations.

29. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, in view of the extremely low rates of inclusion of women in the oil and gas industry, the Committee would welcome the implementation of a strong education system for girls based on science and technology, as that would help them to enter that industry. Such a system would serve as a global example and help to dismantle cultural and gender-based stereotypes about women in the workplace.

30. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she welcomed the actions taken to recognize women's health and the focus on prenatal and postnatal maternity care services. In view of the establishment of the National Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health, it would be useful to know whether the legislation provided for a gender-based approach to programmes for mental health promotion in terms of research, analysis and concrete measures. Social and cultural norms that could pose obstacles to women accessing mental healthcare, including the guardianship system, financial dependence and educational inequalities, had to be taken into account.

31. Women's access to healthcare was reportedly affected by the guardianship system. Foreign mothers of children with Saudi nationality could not access health services for their children without the consent of the father, even if they had custody over the child. The Personal Status Law required women to breastfeed their children. She wished to know how the Government guaranteed the rights and autonomy of women from all religious communities in law and practice; whether women required their guardian's permission to access certain forms of healthcare, such as sexual and reproductive care; and whether women had full autonomy over their reproductive rights, including in the postnatal period.

32. Abortion was criminalized under the draft penal code, and healthcare practitioners performing abortions could face a fine and a prison sentence. The Committee would like to receive information on any plans to expand the legal grounds for abortion, for example by including rape, incest and severe malformation of the fetus; to remove requirements for a male guardian and a medical committee to consent to an abortion; and to decriminalize abortion in all other situations.

33. The Committee had received reports that migrants found to have AIDS were immediately detained and deported and that pregnant domestic workers faced high health risks, were unable to access healthcare and suffered abuse owing to the gaps in their protection, with the risk of deportation and repatriation. She wondered how the State party ensured, in law and practice, that migrant women, including those living with HIV/AIDS, had full and affordable access to comprehensive healthcare, and what legal and policy guarantees existed to ensure the equal access of female migrant workers to health services.

34. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she commended the Government's initiatives to advance economic empowerment for women and provide for women's recreational activities, but that alarming disparities remained in access to socioeconomic opportunities. It would be useful for the Committee to know of steps taken to combat biases and stereotypes that limited women's business opportunities, access to finance and potential. She wondered how the State party would implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Global Digital Compact from a gender-based perspective. The Committee would like to find out how gender-responsive regulatory mechanisms were ensured for business operations, especially in the energy, oil and gas sectors. It would be of interest to find out how the Government used such regulatory mechanisms to assess economic and social impacts, guide investments and encourage the use of technologies in the digital economy. The Committee would like to know why women constituted only 16 per cent of beneficiaries of the citizen's account programme, despite the fact that they potentially faced greater negative impacts than men from the reforms under Vision 2030. Data on the total number of business licences issued, disaggregated by sex, sector, business type and geographical location, would be appreciated, as it would facilitate a comparative analysis of the gender gap.

35. The Committee would like to hear more about the funding of services to boost economic growth and recovery in the wake of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Specifically, the Committee would like to find out whether the funds applied to deferred payments, finance loans or credit facilities had been made available to women, and whether women-led businesses had been given access to financing guarantees or gender-friendly modalities to enhance accessibility. She would also like to receive current gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries, as that would help to indicate how the digital gender gap could be addressed.

36. The proposed overhaul of social protection legislation was commendable. Information on the progress made and expected outcomes of the reform, including a time frame for its completion and a road map for implementation, would be useful. She wondered whether the legislative reform was guided by comprehensive, current or baseline data on equality in social assistance and by the flexibility of social insurance and employment opportunities for vulnerable workers and workers in the informal sector, including women with disabilities, migrants and domestic workers.

37. Lastly, the Committee requested information on investment to increase female participation in sports and create sporting facilities, including on the quantitative and qualitative metrics and indicators used to monitor performance.

38. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the Ministry of Health provided a broad range of healthcare services to Saudi women, including reproductive services. A comprehensive service to ensure safe childbirth, with prenatal, natal and postnatal programmes, had been launched in 2020. Under Saudi legislation, neither men nor women required the permission of a legal guardian to receive healthcare services.

39. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, by law, any medical act must always be in favour of the patient. Abortion was permitted for medical reasons only when the life of the mother was in danger and had to take place within the first 20 weeks, to protect the right to life.

40. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the regulations on mental health promotion were aimed at creating a comprehensive definition of mental health, ensuring the mental health of all citizens and empowering target groups. Programmes and activities on mental health had been launched to that end.

41. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that Saudi legislation guaranteed comprehensive and integrated healthcare for all nationals and residents. It was mandatory for all employees to be registered in health insurance schemes by their employers.

42. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, under Saudi legislation, HIV/AIDS was considered a contagious disease and was treated as such to protect the population. People with HIV/AIDS, regardless of their nationality, were guaranteed the right to education and work and were able to receive counselling and psychological and mental support to prevent the spread of the disease. Medical centres were not permitted to refuse healthcare services for patients with HIV/AIDS.

43. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that migrant workers were bound by fixed-term employment contracts, after which they could leave the country or change employer. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development had launched a programme to enable migrant workers to find legal employment; the programme supported their economic and social well-being and helped them to communicate with businesses. Among the programme's beneficiaries there were fewer women than men.

44. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that a programme had been established to provide assistance with the cost of essential services. It was implemented on a household basis and was distinct from the broader social security system.

45. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that, under Vision 2030, policies and measures had been implemented to increase women's participation in the labour market and the number of women in key posts. The number of working women had reached 1.5 million in late 2022, and women now constituted around 35 per cent of the Saudi workforce. Legislation to combat ill-treatment and harassment was in place. Such reforms would enable the country to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 8.

46. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that banks had launched finance programmes specifically for women, including some that provided loans or mortgages at favourable rates, thus enabling women to become property owners. Another programme was aimed at facilitating loans for women, including divorced and widowed women, so they could become homeowners. The Social Development Bank had invested 13 billion riyals to support women's projects. Through collaboration with rehabilitation centres, it was hoped that tens of thousands of women nationwide would be able to benefit from non-financial services, including capacity-building programmes and business incubators.

47. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that there were 6 Saudi women ambassadors and over 200 women diplomats, representing about 30 per cent of the total. The number of women diplomats had increased significantly between 2010 and 2024. Dozens of women held keys posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Saudi women were working in international organizations and participating in negotiations. Over 240 Saudi women were working for institutions abroad.

48. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that 7 women chaired sports committees and that over 90 women either chaired or sat on boards of directors of such committees. A total of 15,000 women were registered with the various sports federations. There were 135 women's sports clubs and 37 women's sports teams. A total of 517,000 female students had registered to participate in the schools championships. In partnership with the Ministry of Sports, Saudi girls' schools had built some 250 sports halls, and sports facilities had been established at 590 schools for both boys and girls. Efforts had been made to encourage more women to become sports teachers.

49. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that all residents of Saudi Arabia, including persons working illegally in the country, had been granted equal access to the financial and medical assistance made available during the COVID-19 pandemic. Women's participation in the economic life of the country had increased during the pandemic.

50. **Ms. Tisheva** said that it was still not clear whether the country's mental health programmes incorporated the gender perspective. She wished to know whether any plans were in place to broaden the grounds on which a woman could have an abortion or to decriminalize abortion in all other circumstances. She would welcome information on the

number of healthcare professionals who had been convicted of carrying out illegal abortions over the past two years.

51. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would welcome information on the funds allocated to promote women's participation in expanding sectors such as sports, artificial intelligence and the digital economy.

52. **Ms. Akia** said that she wished to know what was done to promote women's equal participation in the agricultural sector and the blue economy and to provide training in agribusiness and value-added agriculture for all women, including women with disabilities, women in rural areas and Bidoon and Shia women. She wondered what steps were taken to increase such women's access to innovative technologies, infrastructure and financial support.

53. She would be grateful for data disaggregated by gender and nationality on the number of persons sentenced to the death penalty, the number of such penalties that had been executed and the dates of their execution. The Committee would like to know whether the Government would consider placing a moratorium on the death penalty, especially in cases where the defendants had not been charged with the most serious offences or had not enjoyed the right to due process.

54. She would appreciate information on any measures taken to put an end to the discrimination and human rights violations faced by female migrant workers, asylum-seekers and refugees. It would be interesting to know whether the Government intended to ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and whether it would consider adopting specific legislation to protect the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers.

55. She wondered how many women, including women with disabilities, women in rural areas, migrant women and older women, were currently involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating initiatives to address climate change and reduce disaster risks. It would be of interest to find out about any steps taken to ensure women's equal participation in all decision-making relating to climate change and disaster risk management. It would be useful to learn whether the Government had incorporated the gender perspective in its climate financing and climate change adaptation measures with a view to addressing the specific needs of all women in the country, including women with disabilities, women in rural areas and Bidoon women.

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

56. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that, notwithstanding the fact that the delegation maintained that the system of male guardianship had been eliminated and women were free to take decisions relating to their lives, the Committee had received reports that many public and private entities continued to require women to obtain a guardian's permission in order to access their services, and such entities often did so without facing any consequences. In view of that situation, she wished to know how the Government monitored the extent to which its officials complied with laws relating to male guardianship and whether it imposed penalties on public or private entities that required women to obtain the permission of a guardian in order to use a particular service. Did public officials receive training in laws relating to male guardianship?

57. She would be grateful for information on the exceptional grounds on which a court might authorize the marriage of a minor. Given that it was often girls' mothers who encouraged them to get married, it would be interesting to know whether any measures were taken to raise families' awareness of the harmful effects of early marriage and, if so, what the impact of those measures had been. Did judges receive training on issues related to early marriage?

58. She wished to know whether the law relating to inheritance would be amended to ensure that women and men had equal rights to inherit assets and property. Given that women's rights in marriage were far more restricted than those of men, it would be interesting to know whether any legislative measures would be adopted to grant women equal rights in marriage and to repeal provisions requiring wives to obey their husbands. The Committee would like to know whether the law might be amended to ensure that women and men had

an equal right to request and obtain a divorce and to make decisions relating to their children following a separation or divorce. Did the Personal Status Law apply to non-Sunni women, or were they subject to a separate legal system that granted them different rights?

59. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that rural women were real partners in the Government's efforts to achieve sustainable development and food security. The Government's "Reef" Sustainable Rural Development Programme, which aimed to facilitate access to markets for small farmers, reinforced the principle of gender equality in the allocation of land and the provision of environmental services. A total of 50,000 women had participated in a programme that trained women and girls in beekeeping, while 5,800 women in rural areas had benefited from a programme that promoted land ownership among women running small farms. A programme that established business incubators for small farmers had benefited increasing numbers of women in recent years.

60. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the Government dealt with refugees in a humanitarian manner, in line with Islamic values. Saudi Arabia had taken in refugees from Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic and had provided them with documentation and access to healthcare and education. The refugees had been distributed among the different regions and enjoyed the same right to freedom of movement as Saudi nationals. The Government had provided assistance to millions of refugees around the world through international relief agencies.

61. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the competent authorities were reviewing the question of whether Saudi Arabia should ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

62. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that national law prohibited discrimination and established that all citizens had an equal right to education, healthcare and employment. The implementation of the law was monitored by various government agencies, human rights bodies and civil society organizations. Efforts were made to protect victims of human rights violations and to provide them with remedies and to bring disciplinary and criminal proceedings against the perpetrators of such violations. The legal framework prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination was continuously reviewed. Plans were in place to improve mechanisms for collecting disaggregated data.

63. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that inheritance was regulated by the Personal Status Law, which was based on Islamic sharia. The Law specified over 30 situations in which men and women had equal rights to inheritance or where women had greater rights than men.

64. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the Personal Status Law did not contain any provisions that discriminated on the basis of gender and that it did not suppress women's rights and freedoms. Article 11 of the Law established that both parties to a marriage must give their consent to it, that both men and women had the right to leave a marriage and that all life events must be registered in due time, including divorce.

65. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the Personal Status Law had established clear regulations relating to the custody of children. The main purpose of the Law was to protect women's human rights and ensure that the best interests of the child were respected. The term "obedience", as used in the Law, had a restricted meaning. Any confusion over the meaning of the term probably resulted from the mistranslation of the Arabic word into other languages. The Law was clearly explained on the website of the Human Rights Commission.

66. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she would appreciate the delegation's comments on reports that Saudi women who had set out to seek asylum in other countries had been intercepted while in transit, allegedly with the support of the Government.

67. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the cases mentioned by the Committee had probably been referred to the Government by the special procedure mechanisms of the United Nations, and that the Government's responses had been published by the special procedures.

68. **The Chair** asked whether the head of delegation wished to make any concluding remarks.

69. **A representative of Saudi Arabia** said that the delegation had taken note of the Committee's comments and questions. The Government would pay close attention to the concluding observations issued by the Committee, and the standing committee for the drafting of reports would monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. The Government was determined to take all necessary measures to empower women in Saudi Arabia and to eliminate discrimination against them.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*