

URUGUAY

CEDAW A/43/38 (1988)

182. The Committee considered the initial report of Uruguay (CEDAW/C/5/Add.27 and Amend.1) at its 107th and 113th meetings, held on 17 and 22 February 1988 (CEDAW/C/SR.107 and 113).

183. The representative of the State party informed the Committee that the Government of Uruguay had ratified the Convention in October 1981 and had presented its first report in November 1984. Subsequently, in 1987, an amendment had also been presented to the secretariat where a more critical view of the status of women in Uruguay had been taken.

184. The attainment of equality was not exclusively the realm of the legislative powers, but of human consciousness and overall participation which enabled the law to be implemented. Uruguay had a legal framework which did not discriminate against women. Very early, its population had achieved participatory democracy along with wide-ranging social legislation measures, flexible social structures, a very high level of education and therefore of literacy and finally an advanced social and labour legislation on the rights of women, which was considered one of the most advanced in Latin America.

185. In reality, however, different values, behaviour and habits of Uruguayan society indicated that there was discrimination against women. In Uruguay 53 per cent of the urban population was made up of women. They were concentrated in the urban centres (58 per cent), given the fact that rural conditions were not favourable to women where only 42 per cent of the rural population were found. According to the 1985 census, only 4 per cent of women were illiterate as against 5 per cent of men. Segregation continued to be a problem since women chose careers in the social services areas and education. Women occupied positions which required lower qualifications and, therefore, were paid less than men. From 1975 until 1987, unemployment rates revealed that women constituted the majority of the unemployed and that it was more difficult for them to obtain their first employment than for men. Furthermore, women's labour was considered as supplementary and considered seriously only when market and production requirements demanded, which in fact had very little impact on qualifications or training. She added that 61 per cent of the economically active female population was between 20 and 44 years of age.

186. Regarding maternal and child care, she said that infant mortality rates were 27.6 per 1,000, which was a moderate index considering the situation in Latin America. Additional efforts were being undertaken by the Government to improve the situation, especially in the poorer sectors of the population where the need was greatest.

187. Uruguay's Constitution had given women the right to vote in 1934 and women had exercised that right in 1938 for the first time. In 1942, two women senators and two deputies were elected to Parliament. Law 10:783 of 1946 gave women a series of civil rights including equal rights; article 11 gave patria potestas to both parents and article 2 gave married women the right to administer and

decide over their property.

188. She also informed the Committee that after ratification of the Convention in 1984 a major National Programming Council (CONAPRO) had been founded by the four national parties, trade unions and student organizations. CONAPRO was to study diverse themes of national concern in order to prepare a common plan for the following governmental period. Women had demanded that a Sub-Commission on the Condition of Women be created. That group was made up of representatives of different women's organizations, such as the Association of Women Journalists and the National Council of Women. Five documents had been prepared on women in education and culture, women and labour, women and law, women and health and on participation. Each document had as an introduction an appropriate article of the Convention. The documents had been approved by CONAPRO in 1985.

189. Several organs oversaw the implementation of the Convention such as the judiciary tribunals and general labour inspection and, regarding working conditions, the General Labour Inspection Board. In 1987 the Women's Institute had been created by presidential decree. The Institute would be the catalyst in social initiatives regarding women, the repository of the concerns of non-governmental organizations and would also act as an advisory body to the Government, co-ordinate different action plans and oversee the implementation and follow-up of the legislative reforms and other policies to improve the status of women. The Minister of Education, the only woman minister, had created a Sala de la Mujer to collect and disseminate information on women's issues.

190. Other areas of interest to the Committee were the facts that the Government had eliminated any discriminatory provisions regarding divorce and the provisions of the Convention could be invoked in Court. Also, it should be recalled that Uruguay had adopted laws as far back as 1914 that had been restricted women's and children's employment in areas of dangerous machinery, as well as in 1918, to provide chairs at the work-place and in 1950 to protect women from being fired on account of pregnancy.

191. To conclude, she stated that, although no legal obstacles were found, difficulties such as traditional values, habits, attitudes and behaviour of Uruguayan society inhibited the progress towards equality. In addition, she admitted that in the collective consciousness of her society the importance of women's political, economic and social active participation was not yet recognized, but with the different groups and institutions set in place in the last two years, change would be stimulated.

192. Members of the Committee welcomed the introductory statement of the government representative and congratulated her on her very comprehensive presentation, which filled in many of the gaps encountered in the report. It was noted that Uruguay had granted women the right to vote in 1932, being one of the first Latin American countries to do so. The Committee had studied the first report prepared by the Government (CEDAW/C/5/Add.27) of 24 June 1985, but many members of the Committee had not received the updated version (CEDAW/C/5/Add.27/Amend.1 of December 1987) referred to by the representative. That was to be regretted since many members would necessarily address problems referred to in the first report of 1985, which might have been remedied by 1987.

193. It was felt that conditions outlined in the report referred specifically to the legislative aspects of equality, but that very scant information was provided on the de facto situation of women in Uruguay. For future reports, updated and more complete statistical information by sex would be required. At the present time, there was no way of comparing or really knowing the situation of women in Uruguay since the data furnished were old and not complete. The report showed that, indeed, Uruguay had very advanced legislation, which was commendable, but the experts wished that more information had been provided on the application of the law. It was commented that there were no references to traditional behaviour such as machismo, to cultural patterns and historical determinants. Admiration was expressed for the women of Uruguay who had struggled against the military dictatorship and suffered under torture or disappeared. It was asked what had happened to those women. Furthermore, the report did not reflect the changes that must have followed the change from military dictatorship to democracy, since there were no women in parliament and women's participation in the political parties seemed utterly subdued by comparison. It was asked what were the plans of the Women's Institute for the forthcoming elections in Uruguay, and whether it would mobilize the population and women to run for office. In that regard, questions were asked about the budget of the recently created Women's Institute, how it differed from the Sala de la Mujer and whether it would be devoted only to the study of law or to raising consciousness.

194. Experts then commented on the statement contained in Uruguay's report that there existed no discrimination on the grounds of sex in the country. Perhaps it would help the Committee to hear what the Government of Uruguay understood by discrimination. It puzzled the experts that under article 5 of the Convention the report stated that no sexually motivated prejudices or customary practices of discrimination existed.

195. It was noted that the President of the Supreme Court and the Minister of Education were both women and that there were many women journalists. Explanation was requested on the system of elections in Uruguay. Information was sought on the availability and accessibility of day-care centres to both urban and rural women, work of the media on eliminating gender stereotypes, employment statistics and the participation of women in the trade unions.

196. Reference was made to article 488 of Uruguay's Labour Law, and it was asked whether that provision could apply to the implementation of any article of the Convention, for example, article 2. With reference to article 8 of Uruguay's Constitution, which stated that all persons were equal before the law, it was asked how that principle was realized and whether women could take legal action in the court system on account of sex discrimination. In addition, clarification was sought on the reference in that article to "talents and virtues" and how those qualifications affected women. It was noted that the Constitution regulated concerns between Government and citizens, and it was asked whether it also legislated citizens' relations to each other.

197. Additional information was sought on the dissemination and publication of the Convention by the Government, and as to whether it had been translated as well as distributed among women's groups and other sectors of the population. In that regard, it was also asked whether women's organizations had played any role in the preparation of the State party's reports.

198. It was noted that legislation introduced to protect women workers concerned only maternity

protection. It was asked why reference was made to article 4 of the Convention when reporting on different protective legislation banning certain types of work for all women and how it could be considered to accelerate de facto equality when it was in fact discriminatory. Surely there were women workers who had no children and women who did not engage in remunerative employment but who bore children. It was also asked what the criteria, or philosophy regarding maternity protection in general were.

199. Experts questioned the statement contained in article 43 of the Constitution, which provided that juvenile delinquency be dealt with in a special way allowing for the participation of women. They wondered whether that meant that the Government equated women and children.

200. Clarification on the meaning of article 41 of the Constitution was requested, especially in relation to the compensatory assistance paid to parents with numerous dependent children.

201. Additional information was also requested as to whether housework and child-rearing responsibilities were shared equally by men and women. It was understood that Uruguay was a predominantly Roman Catholic country and information was sought on the impact of the Church on the advancement of women. Some experts pointed out that there must have been transitions recently when the process from a military dictatorship to democratic government had taken place which also must have affected the life of women, since military dictatorships usually thrived on male superiority. It was also difficult to believe that customary practices relating to stereotyping of sex roles had totally disappeared. Therefore, experts requested more comprehensive explanations on how article 5 of the Convention was being implemented.

202. It was questioned whether the Women's Institute had been developing strategies to do away with patriarchal stereotypes through radio and television campaigns and whether any other practical steps had been taken in that regard.

203. With reference to the social problems associated with fostering violence against women and penalties attached to them, it was asked how many individuals had been sentenced for committing rape, assault or battery or for being associated with the exploitation of women through prostitution. It was further asked why police officials were mentioned with regard to the crime of procurement. Since the laws on prostitution had been passed in 1927, experts asked whether there had been new laws or a decrease in the practice. It was noted that the female literacy rate was optimal. Experts further asked what ways women could use to gain influence in the political decision-making process since there were no women in parliament, how women could be more involved in the formulation of policy, and what was the breakdown between men and women at the Supreme Court and in the judicial system in general.

204. Information was sought as to whether any inquiries had been made on the lower percentage of women entering into higher education and whether the traditional occupational choices of women caused any concern.

205. The limitations on the work of women and young persons below the age of 18 years was considered as leaving the door open for discrimination and one expert asked whether revisions of

some those articles contained in the Constitution were foreseen.

206. It was questioned whether women registered for employment on a regular basis or whether there was any hidden unemployment among women. It was also asked to what extent women and men performed equal work and if and how the principle of equal pay for work of equal value had been applied. Information was also sought with regard to the use of gender-neutral job evaluation schemes.

207. Although average earnings were given in the report, the actual salaries were not, and more information was requested on the actual remuneration of women and men by profession. Another question related to the unconstitutionality of hiring incentives, and an explanation was sought on why had it been considered so since other differences to the detriment of women, such as the different retirement age for men and women, were not considered unconstitutional. It was asked whether it was compulsory for women to retire at a lower age than men and what was the difference between the pension benefits of men and women. Experts were gratified that the Government of Uruguay had denounced ILO Convention No. 89 banning night work for women.

208. Specific information related to family planning programmes was requested, as well as the availability of abortion or the Government's policy on it and information related to maternal and infant mortality. It was also pointed out that article 116 of the Civil Code contained a provision of social discrimination which merited closer scrutiny; it was asked if there had been any thoughts of revising it.

209. Information was also requested on the particular situation of elderly women, and it was asked whether any groups of women such as disabled women had been identified as disadvantaged.

210. It was noted that the minimum age to enter into marriage was only 12 for women and 14 for men. That seemed very young, and it was asked whether there had been discussions on reviewing that provision. It was also observed that a woman could obtain a divorce by expressing her wish to do so on the grounds provided for divorce through article 187 of the Civil Code. It was asked whether that was a privilege for women, which was adequate, especially if the promotion of equality was being sought.

211. Before replying to the questions raised by the members of the Committee, the representative of Uruguay distributed written material about the Institute of Women and statistical material on issues of health, employment and education. In response to questions and comments, she explained in detail the functions of the Institute of Women, which had been created by presidential decree of 1987 and operated within the Ministry of Education and Culture. Composed of representatives of governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations, the Institute would concern itself with initiating legislative reforms and other policy actions in order to achieve equal participation of women in society; taking political decisions; and proposing the necessary measures to implement the decisions adopted by the Conference on Women, Population and Development. It would establish commissions as the need arose and its members would be experts in areas relating to the status of women. It would elaborate its own rules or procedure and its members would work on an honorary basis. The Institute did not have its own budget and was not independent.

212. As the country had received many immigrants from Mediterranean and Christian countries, the daily life of women very much followed the traditional pattern, namely, their primary duty was to do household work. Only among the younger generation was greater democracy gradually being introduced in the domestic sphere. There were still prejudices in everyday life as regards male superiority. However, the Ministry of Education and Culture was working on trying to eliminate existing stereotypes and prejudices. Concerning the influence of the Catholic Church, the representative said that since 1918 Uruguay had been a secular State. The Church was not against equality of the sexes, and religious education was mandatory neither at the primary, the secondary nor the university level.

213. Referring to the large feminist movement in the country, she mentioned a number of non-governmental organizations, such as the Plenary of Uruguayan Women, the Association of Women Journalists, the National Council of Women, the Study Group on the Condition of Women, the Uruguayan Association on Family Planning and Research in Reproduction and the women's groups, "Enucentro" and "Concertación Nacional de Mujeres". She also noted the existence of women's groups in all four major political parties.

214. As regards the statistical material she had distributed, it gave a breakdown of the population by sex in the areas of education and employment, but not in the more intimate aspects of daily life.

215. The reference in the Constitution to "talents and virtues" meant that no distinction was to be made based on titles of nobility, as in colonial times. The Constitution also made reference to the basic rights of individuals and their interrelationships. The Sala de le Mujer consisted mainly of non-governmental organizations and its members worked on an honorary basis. The Convention had been given publicity in the country. Translations of its text were not necessary, as the only official language was Spanish. She said that the amendment to the report had been prepared by the Institute of Women based on the work of various non-governmental organizations. In the preparation of the reports (document CEDAW/C/5/Add.27) women in non-governmental organizations were consulted. Both reports and the summary of discussions held at the current session in connection with her country's reports would be made public on 8 March 1988, International Women's Day.

216. Women could file law suits with the appropriate courts in cases of sexual discrimination. No statistics were as yet available as to the number of such suits actually filed. The representative said that in 1988 the Institute of Women would hold a workshop for television broadcasting on the status of women at the national level.

217. In response to questions on rape, battery and prostitution, she said that rape was considered a crime, but she did not have any statistical data on its incidence. Violence in the family constituted a problem. Non-governmental organizations had devoted a study to it, and the establishment of a women's police commission was planned. The representative said that there were some houses for battered women and the Institute of Women was planning to obtain more government assistance in that area. No official figures were available to show whether prostitution had increased or decreased.

218. With regard to the crime of procurement, the reference to police officials meant that any crime committed by a person exercising public power would constitute an aggravating circumstance. That

did not constitute a special problem in her country.

219. In discussing the electoral system, she explained that voting was direct, secret and compulsory, there was a proportional representation system and that Parliament was composed of two chambers. The president and vice-president were elected by simple majority through the system of vote by division. The reason why there were not enough women in public office could not be found in the voting system. The obstacle lay rather in a lack of political ambition on the part of women, which the representative referred to as the “self-discrimination” of women, the double work duties imposed upon women and patriarchal structures within the political parties. Some women were criticized for their dual loyalties to both the political party and the improvement of the status of women.

220. As an example of the influence of women in Parliament, she mentioned the former Uruguayan member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women who had promoted a bill on the status of women, which had initiated the establishment of parliamentary commission on the status of women.

221. Women’s participation in the trade unions was mainly at the grass-roots level. In some councils, only few could be found at the upper echelons and at the executive level. Of the five members of the Supreme Court, one was a woman.

222. Of the 273 people employed in the foreign civil service, 76 were women, and in the foreign trade service there were two women directors. In the near future, three foreign trade departments would be headed by women.

223. The representative gave statistical information by sex on primary, secondary and university education. She said that patria potestas was a combination of rights and duties and that low-income families could not be obliged to provide their children with an education that was beyond their means. The statistics demonstrated that there were more men than women in higher education because at the university level the twofold work-load of women had a greater impact than at the lower levels of education. At the primary level, 95 per cent of all teachers were women, although there were no women in the primary education councils. In the secondary education councils there were two men and one woman at the technical university level there were three men and no women.

224. As regards the “invisible work” of women, it was explained that in Uruguay the economically active population included those segments involved in the production and processing of primary commodities and the production of all other articles and services for the market, including domestic service. As women working within the family performed part of those activities, the contribution provided by women working as housewives had not been included in the economic activities shown in official statistics.

225. The representative said that one of the objectives of the Institute of Women was to deal with the problems of older women.

226. She said that maternity leave lasted from six weeks before delivery until six weeks after, unless medical implications necessitated a longer period of leave. Women received their full salary during

maternity leave. During pregnancy and after birth in hospital, medical allowances were given as family subsidies. Lactating mothers were allowed to interrupt their work for fixed periods of time. If a woman was fired on the ground of pregnancy, she was entitled to payment of six months' salary, which was understood as a sanction against her employer.

227. Abortion was illegal. Punishments were reduced or completely waived if it was performed during the first three months of pregnancy for serious socio-economic reasons, if it became necessary for therapeutic reasons and if the pregnancy had been the result of a rape. Uruguay was one of the countries with the highest abortion rates, although no official statistics were available. The policy of the country was in favour of family planning and a project existed to provide low-income women with free contraceptives.

228. Women participated fully in the country's cultural life. In the area of sport, professional soccer did not exist for women.

229. The representative stated that monitoring centres for women in the villages were being set up, but that rural women did not receive full health-care coverage. A study was being conducted on ways to extend health care to the entire rural population. Rural women had also very scarce child-care facilities.

230. With regard to married women's names, they kept their maiden name, to which they could add their husband's name. There was no difference between children born within or outside wedlock. All children carried the names of both parents. Marriage of females below the age of 12 and of males under 14 was considered null and void, and up to the age of 21 both boys and girls needed the consent of their legal representative.

231. Concerning divorce, she remarked that the existing regulation, in effect since 1913, constituted discrimination, and it had not yet been eliminated. In cases of divorce under the joint property régime, acquired goods were divided on a 50 per cent basis; in the property separation régime, acquired goods were returned to whomever they were due.

CEDAW A/57/38 (Part I) (2002)

167. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic report of Uruguay (CEDAW/C/URY/2-3) at its 541st and 542nd meetings, on 24 January 2002 (see CEDAW/C/SR.541 and 542).

(a) Introduction by the State party

168. In introducing the periodic report, the representative of Uruguay noted that while her country's authorities had intended to send a representative with direct expertise in the gender area, that had regrettably not been possible, owing to budget cuts made as a result of the economic and financial problems that the country had recently experienced.

169. The representative went on to explain that, during the period between her country's submission of its initial report in 1985 and the present, there had been a steady evolution, and progress of various kinds had been made in the effective implementation of women's rights.

170. At the governmental level, progress had been made in several areas, including the establishment of the National Institute for Family and Women's Affairs, the Commission on Women's Rights in support of the Institute's activities, the Tripartite Commission on Equal Opportunities and Treatment in Employment and the Interministerial Commission responsible for designing and implementing policies to reduce domestic violence, as well as the enactment of supplementary norms relating to women workers in the public and private sectors who are pregnant or breastfeeding and the prohibition against their dismissal and, lastly, the implementation of various actions to improve health education, programmes to control teenage pregnancy, programmes on sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and cancer prevention programmes.

171. The representative also stated that in recent years there had been various parliamentary initiatives to promote women's rights, such as the establishment of the Commission on Women's Human Rights and the Commission on Gender and Equity.

172. The representative mentioned, in particular, the initiatives carried out by the Municipal Administration of Montevideo, which had, inter alia, established a Commission on Women to deal specifically with all questions relating to women; that had been the starting-point for similar actions in other municipal administrations throughout the country.

173. The representative also noted that while there had been issues on which final answers had not yet been reached, very intense debates had been opened up that would undoubtedly culminate in specific advances; among those issues were the establishment of the post of Ombudsman or Public Defender, and abortion, on which there were a number of initiatives that legislators were considering.

174. The representative pointed to a number of advances in the international arena, including the ratification of legal instruments, such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention,

Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, in 1996, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in 2001.

175. The representative said it was regrettable that the progress cited had been insufficient, as various obstacles, particularly scarce resources, had slowed the implementation of the actions envisaged. For that reason, action by international organizations, such as international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), was of major importance, particularly on all issues relating to women; many of the advances made would not have been secured without their effective efforts. The representative also mentioned the actions carried out in the domestic violence area, with regard to both the national telephone service and shelters for victims, and the NGO studies, research and analyses which had yielded concrete data essential to diagnosing certain situations (ethnic minorities), thereby making it easier to resolve them and facilitating the Government's task.

176. Lastly, the representative stated that, while much remained to be done, there were ever greater efforts to make equal rights for women a reality, not only in the legislative area but also in practice.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

177. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Uruguay on its second and third periodic report, while regretting the fact that the report was submitted with some delay and does not comply with the Committee's guidelines.

178. The Committee, while thanking the Deputy Permanent Representative for her oral presentation, regrets the descriptive and general nature of both the report and the discussion, as a result of which the Committee has not been afforded a complete picture of the legal and social status of women in Uruguay, or of the progress made in the implementation of the Convention since the country prepared its initial report, considered in 1985.

Positive aspects

179. The Committee commends the State party on its prompt ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

180. The Committee takes note of the fact that the Constitution guarantees the protection of the rights of women and men, as individuals and as groups, and that reference is made in particular to the right of amparo.

181. The Committee notes with satisfaction that a significant number of Uruguayan women are highly educated and have a high rate of participation in the labour market.

182. The Committee notes the importance of the National Programme for Women to promote actions to improve the status of women. The Committee acknowledges the efforts of the State party to implement the Convention by initiating various programmes.

183. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Citizen Security Act defines domestic violence as a distinct offence.

184. The Committee commends the State party on its initiative to encourage the participation of women's non-governmental organizations in programmes for the implementation of the Convention.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

185. The Committee notes that deep-rooted, stereotypical attitudes concerning the roles of men and women constitute an obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

186. The Committee is concerned that, despite the existence of Act 16,045 of June 1989, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, the Convention has not been incorporated into domestic legislation. In particular, it regrets that article 1 of the Convention, which defines "discrimination against women" is not part of Uruguayan legislation.

187. The Committee recommends that the State party give further consideration to the incorporation of the Convention into domestic legislation. It points particularly to the importance of the incorporation of article 1 of the Convention and requests that the State party report on progress made in this regard in its next periodic report, including information on whether the Convention has been invoked before domestic courts.

188. The Committee expresses concern that Uruguayan women make little use of existing judicial remedies for the protection and enjoyment of their rights, including the remedy of amparo.

189. The Committee requests the State party to include more information in its next periodic report on mechanisms and procedures available to women for the protection and promotion of their rights.

190. The Committee expresses its concern that the National Institute for Family and Women's Affairs, as a national mechanism for the advancement of women, has no real power to initiate and implement regulatory measures designed to eliminate discrimination against women. The Committee is concerned that the national mechanism may have inadequate financial and human resources.

191. The Committee recommends that the State party clearly define the mandates of the various institutions and commissions and the level of interaction between them. The Committee encourages the State party to allocate the national machinery to the human and financial resources required to ensure the effective implementation of governmental policies and programmes for gender equality. It also encourages the State party to mainstream a gender perspective within all the ministries, and to establish mechanisms for assessing its impact.

192. The Committee expresses concern at the continuing existence of stereotypes relating to the role of women in the family and society, and at deep-rooted attitudes and conduct based on the assumed superiority of men in the public and private spheres. It is a matter of concern to the Committee that

the State party attaches little importance to this problem and thus encourages the persistence of such stereotypes, which are an obstacle to the implementation of the Convention.

193. The Committee urges the State party to adopt measures to eliminate social stereotypes in Uruguay. It urges the State party to concentrate on increasing women's participation in all areas, particularly decision-making, and on prevailing on men to share family responsibilities. It urges the State party to strengthen its awareness-raising programmes, and to take action to change stereotyped attitudes and perceptions as to men's and women's roles and responsibilities.

194. The Committee expresses concern that, despite the efforts made, a comprehensive approach is not being taken towards the prevention and elimination of violence against women, particularly as regards domestic violence, crimes of honour and the punishment of offenders. The Committee notes that despite the legislative action taken under the Citizen Security Act, violence against women, particularly domestic violence, remains a serious problem in Uruguay.

195. Recalling its general recommendation 19 on violence against women the Committee urges the State party to assess the impact of the current legal, policy and programmatic measures to deal with the various forms of violence against women, as well as to adopt a specific domestic violence act, incorporating measures for prevention, punishment of offenders and protection of victims. Bearing in mind that account must be taken of the underlying causes of violence against women, and domestic violence should be investigated with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of legislation, policies and programmes to combat it, the Committee also recommends that the State party continue the training and awareness-raising programmes for judicial personnel, law enforcement officials and members of the legal and health professions, as well as awareness-raising measures to ensure that society will not tolerate any form of violence against women. The Committee encourages the State party to strengthen its collaboration with civil society and non-governmental organizations with respect to violence against women. It also recommends the allocation of funding commensurate with the high priority that efforts to combating such violence should have.

196. The Committee expresses concern that the Penal Code still contains several provisions that discriminate against women. The Committee is concerned at article 116 which provides for mitigation of sentence where a rapist marries his victim. It is also concerned at article 328, which provides that "protecting the honour of the perpetrator, the spouse and a close relative" may be a factor mitigating sentence in cases of induced abortion.

197. The Committee calls on the State party to give priority to the repeal of these articles of the Penal Code so as to bring the Code into line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its general recommendations, in particular 19 on violence against women, and 24 on article 12 - women and health.

198. The Committee notes that although Uruguayan women are highly educated and have a high rate of labour-market participation, this is not reflected in their employment status and conditions, particularly with respect to private-sector pay. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned at the high proportion of women in the service sector, especially personal services, an area in which pay is traditionally low.

199. The Committee recommends that both in the public and in the private sector the State party endeavour to ensure strict compliance with labour legislation, and take action to eliminate discrimination in employment and with respect to pensions and private-sector pay, as well as promoting participation by women in sectors traditionally regarded as male.

200. The Committee is concerned at the low participation of women in politics and government administration, particularly as regards decision-making.

201. The Committee urges the State party to take appropriate action and implement broad strategies, including temporary special measures under article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, with a view to promoting greater participation by women in public life, particularly decision-making and promoting changes in attitudes and perceptions, held by both women and men, as regards their respective roles in the household, the family, at work and in society as a whole. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party take account of general recommendations 21 concerning equality in marriage and family relations, and 23 concerning women in public life, that it should strengthen and step up action to promote awareness of the importance of the role, activities and many contributions of women in the community and in the family, and that it should in general promote equality of men and women with respect to rights and opportunities.

202. The Committee notes with concern the high pregnancy rates among adolescents, and that young adolescents make up a high proportion of this group. It also notes the high rate of deaths related to abortion among adolescents.

203. The Committee recommends that the State party examine the situation of adolescents as a matter of priority, and urges it to take action to ensure that effective reproductive and sexual health services are provided and that due attention is paid to the information requirements of adolescents, including through programmes and policies to provide information on the different kinds of contraceptives available and how they are to be obtained, on the basis of the principle that family planning is the responsibility of both the man and the woman. The Committee requests the State party to include information on the impact of programmes to reduce and prevent pregnancy among adolescents in its next periodic report.

204. The Committee expresses concern that the Civil Code still contains provisions, including those with respect to early marriage, that discriminate against women.

205. The Committee urges the State party to actively promote the elimination of discriminatory legal provisions that still exist, particularly in the Civil Code in matters relating to the family, and to bring Uruguayan legislation into line with the Convention, including article 16.2 relating to minimum age for marriage.

206. The Committee is concerned that there is limited awareness, including among legal and law enforcement personnel, of the provisions of the Convention and the procedures available under its Optional Protocol.

207. The Committee recommends that educational programmes on the Convention, the Optional

Protocol and women's rights be introduced, in particular for the judiciary, law enforcement officials and lawyers. The Committee also recommends that steps be taken to increase the number of women occupying high positions in the judiciary and law enforcement agencies.

208. The Committee is concerned that the report does not contain information on the situation of minorities in the State party, and in particular, that of black women.

209. The Committee requests the State party to include information on the situation of minority women in its next periodic report.

210. The Committee is concerned that the report did not contain information on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the State party.

211. The Committee recommends that, where appropriate, the State party implement the commitments of the Platform for Action. In particular, it recommends the immediate adoption of an equal opportunity plan which can place the National Programme for Women on a solid legal basis. It also encourages the State party to mainstream a gender perspective within all ministries and to establish procedures for assessing the impact of such mainstreaming.

212. The Committee asks the State party to respond in its next periodic report to the concerns set out in the present concluding comments, under article 18 of the Convention. It also urges the State party to draft future reports in accordance with its guidelines, providing not only a description of the legal framework, but sufficient information supported by statistical data to clarify not only the legal situation of women but also the situation in practice, including obstacles encountered.

213. The Committee urges the State party to accept as soon as possible the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the length of the Committee's sessions.

214. The Committee requests the State party to disseminate these concluding comments widely in Uruguay and to promote public discussion of them, so as to bring to the attention of politicians, government administrators, non-governmental women's organizations and the general public the action that must be taken to achieve de jure and de facto equality of men and women. It also requests the State party to continue to ensure wide dissemination, particularly among human rights and women's organizations, of the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".