



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
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Summary record of the 765th meeting (Chamber A)

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 23 January 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Dairiam (Rapporteur)

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In the absence of Ms. Šimonović, Ms. Dairiam, Rapporteur, took the Chair.

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

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

Combined second and third periodic reports of Azerbaijan (CEDAW/C/AZE/2-3; CEDAW/C/AZE/Q/3 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Azerbaijan took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan), introducing the combined second and third periodic reports of Azerbaijan (CEDAW/C/AZE/2-3), said that Azerbaijan remained fully committed to implementing the Convention. The consolidated reports outlined the legal, structural and policy changes that had taken place since the submission of the initial report. One of the Government's current priorities was to address more difficult issues such as domestic violence and trafficking in women. The success of such efforts depended not only on appropriate national policies and measures but also on long-term changes in culture and attitudes. The consolidated reports had been prepared chiefly by the State Committee on Women's Issues — renamed in February 2006 the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Issues — with the involvement of a number of Government ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other institutions. The State Committee was committed to cooperating with women's NGOs in efforts to implement the Convention.

3. The reporting period had been characterized by the continuation of the territorial dispute with Armenia and various problems associated with the transition period. Those factors had contributed to the delay in the submission of the consolidated reports. A revised version of the reports, in which a number of inaccuracies had been corrected, had been provided to Committee members.

4. In Azerbaijan, equal rights and freedoms were guaranteed for all, and gender-based restrictions on the enjoyment of rights were prohibited. However, it was not until the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality in October 2006 that the concept of "discrimination against women" had been defined as such in the

Azerbaijani legal system. Under that definition, discrimination on the grounds of gender included sexual harassment and unequal treatment of women and men. The new Law covered, inter alia, gender relations in the activities of political parties, NGOs and trade unions, and gender analysis of legislation. A draft National Plan of Action on Family and Women's Issues for 2007-2010 had been elaborated by a task force consisting of Government and non-government representatives and had been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

5. Various laws existed to ensure the equal rights of women in all areas of life. In the workplace, for example, the law established the right to equal pay for work of equal value. It also contained provisions on parental leave and employment protection designed to address any inequality that might arise from the particular needs of women with regard to pregnancy, childbirth and childcare.

6. Gender stereotyping remained a problem in Azerbaijan. In addition, women were the victims of many forms of violence, including domestic violence, and many had also suffered as a result of the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh. The Government had elaborated the Comprehensive Programme of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Combat Domestic Violence in a Democratic Society for 2006-2015. The issues of domestic violence and early marriage were also addressed in the State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development for 2006-2015 and the draft National Plan of Action on Family and Women's Issues for 2007-2010. In 2006, Azerbaijan had joined the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence.

7. Trafficking in human beings, a phenomenon which had emerged during the transition period, was a major cause of concern. In 2004, a national plan to combat trafficking in persons had been put in place, and in 2005 the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons had been adopted. Prostitution was prohibited in Azerbaijan and was punishable by a fine. Incitement to prostitution was subject to penalties under the Criminal Code.

8. The Presidential Decree on implementing State policy for women, adopted in 2000, had provided for measures to increase women's participation in political and public life. As part of the State Programme on

Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development for 2006-2015, an assessment would be conducted to identify obstacles to increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, and annual reports would be prepared on the national situation relating to gender equality. With regard to international representation, the female staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took part in various international events and conferences. As for nationality issues, Azerbaijan had ratified the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women in 1996.

9. With regard to education, the tables of figures in the report contained certain inaccuracies which had been corrected in the new information provided to Committee members. Measures were being taken to improve gender education through gender analysis of textbooks and training courses on gender-mainstreaming. Chairs in Gender Research had been established several years previously at two institutions of higher education.

10. The Labour Code contained special provisions relating to women's needs in connection with motherhood and family obligations. The State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development and the State Employment Strategy for 2006-2015 included measures to promote women's employment and entrepreneurship and to ensure gender equality in the development of small businesses.

11. Women's right to health care on an equal footing with men was enshrined in law. A family planning and reproductive health programme had been elaborated and implemented, and a number of family planning centres had opened in different regions of the country. With regard to social and economic benefits, there were no laws in Azerbaijan restricting women's entitlement to credit or family benefits or their right to participate in cultural and sporting activities.

12. Turning to the situation of rural women, she said that social and medical services were less developed in rural areas than in the towns, and that women sometimes had to travel significant distances to access them. In that context, special programmes were being implemented to promote the development of mountain regions.

13. Under the Constitution, all Azerbaijani nationals had equal rights before the law, including for the purpose of concluding contracts and managing property. The Family Code contained provisions

relating to marriage contracts. Such contracts were not compulsory, but the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Issues supported the signing of them.

Articles 1 to 6

14. **Mr. Flinterman** said that no information had been provided on court cases in which the Convention had been cited. The responses to the list of issues stated that the Ministry of Justice did not have a database that made it possible to keep a record of such cases. Did that mean that no record was kept of court cases in general in Azerbaijan? He also wished to know whether the judiciary, the legal profession and NGOs were familiar with the Convention and whether they were provided with training on the use of the Convention in court proceedings.

15. He was pleased to note that a definition of discrimination modelled on article 1 of the Convention was included in the draft law on State guarantees to provide equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women. He asked whether that law was the same as the Law on Gender Equality that had recently been adopted. He also wished to hear the actual wording of the definition. Noting that the law regarded certain practices as non-discriminatory, he welcomed the inclusion in that category of temporary special measures to accelerate the advancement of women. However, he was surprised that the exclusion of women from military service and the different marriage and pension ages for men and women were also regarded as non-discriminatory.

16. Having commended the fact that the Ombudsman had a mandate for the protection of women's rights, he asked to what extent the Ombudsman referred to the provisions of the Convention in her work. If she concluded that a serious breach of the law had occurred, could she initiate court proceedings?

17. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** requested clarification of the definition of discrimination contained in the Law on Gender Equality, which seemed to be somewhat narrow, focusing on formal equality rather than substantive equality. It was not in line with the definition set out in the Convention and also seemed to contradict the information provided in the responses to the list of issues. A full translation of the Law would be useful.

18. Although many programmes and legislative measures had been put in place for the advancement of women, little information had been provided about specific results achieved. She wondered, therefore, whether sufficient resources were being made available for the purpose of implementation and whether the entities responsible for implementation had the necessary capabilities. More information was needed about the specific powers of the national machinery for women and the human and financial resources allocated to it. Noting that the Chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Issues held the equivalent of ministerial rank, she asked why that person was not an actual minister heading a ministry for women. She would also like to know why the name of the State Committee had changed.

19. As Mr. Flinterman had noted, there were no records of court cases relating to the implementation of the Convention. However, it appeared that no cases of discrimination in general had been brought before the courts either. She wondered, therefore, whether women were aware of the procedures available to them under the Convention and whether adequate legal aid was provided to enable them to bring such cases.

20. **Ms. Pimentel** requested more information on the action being taken against private foreign companies that were permitting discriminatory practices. The Committee welcomed the preparation of a draft law on domestic violence and would appreciate information on its content and current status. She also asked whether the training provided to law enforcement officials had led to improvements in judicial practice in cases of violence against women.

21. **Ms. Neubauer** commended the Government of Azerbaijan for adopting the law on gender equality, which she hoped would accelerate the promotion of women's rights in the country. In her capacity as an independent expert, she had reviewed the law at the draft stage for the Council of Europe and had found it to be more like a political declaration than a law. She had been particularly concerned about the Government's understanding of direct and indirect discrimination, special temporary measures and gender equality, as reflected in the draft law. She had also found that it had not offered a basis for establishing or strengthening mechanisms and structures to ensure gender equality or adequately spelled out the mandates of the State Committee on Women's Issues or of the gender focal points.

22. She wondered how such issues had been tackled in the law as adopted. Furthermore, if there was an obligation to observe gender equality in employment, it would also be interesting to know whether the law provided for enforcement mechanisms and legal remedies, in cases of non-compliance. Information would also be appreciated concerning the definition and adoption of special temporary measures, mechanisms to monitor the law, legislation to increase the representation of women in political life and decision-making, and any action taken to tackle gender stereotyping.

23. **Ms. Saiga** asked whether the fact that the State Committee on Women's Issues had become the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues meant that it benefited from an increase in its human and budgetary resources. She expressed concern that the change in its name reinforced the maternal and domestic stereotype of women. She enquired about the relationship between the State Committee and the focal points responsible for gender policy in ministries, as well as any similar mechanisms at the regional or municipal level, and raised the question of their coordination or linkage. Noting that the draft National Plan on Family and Women's Issues followed on from a plan for the period up to 2007, she asked about the results of the evaluation of the previous plan. She expressed regret at the small amount of information provided on education and the social services. Lastly, she asked whether any steps had been taken, within the framework of action to assist refugees and internally displaced persons, to address the issue of unaccompanied minors, especially girls, who were particularly vulnerable to trafficking.

24. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her capacity as a member of the Committee, expressed concern about the lack of concrete results achieved by Azerbaijan, notwithstanding the many plans and laws adopted. There was still low representation of women in public office and generally in the labour market. She wished to know what the political framework was for the implementation of the various plans and whether a specific budget existed for the work of the focal points within the ministries. She requested an explanation of the apparently conditional nature of the agenda for the equal representation of women. The Committee would also be grateful for sex-disaggregated data to assess the situation on the ground and for information about possible benchmarks. She asked if there were any

consequences for ministries or government departments that did not achieve gender goals, whether the focal points had the technical resources and training to discharge their responsibilities and whether they benefited from international support.

25. **Mr. Gurbanov** (Azerbaijan) said that the 2,300 NGOs operating in the country, 77 of which were women's organizations, were well aware of the practical implications of Azerbaijan's ratification of the Optional Protocol, particularly for the possibility thereby afforded of submitting individual complaints. The Government was guided by its provisions, as it was by other international human rights instruments to which Azerbaijan was a party. Members of the judiciary were familiar with the norms set out in the Convention: a Presidential Decree issued in August 2006 on the qualifications of judicial bodies and the training of judges had provided for the establishment of specific programmes in that regard. Moreover, in their decisions the courts were required to conform to the norms laid down in the relevant international treaties.

26. The Ombudsman's office was a new institutional structure to which complaints could be addressed; it had a broad mandate for human rights and was entrusted by law with a specific authority in cases of discrimination against women; the incumbent was a woman, a fact that testified to the developing role of women in Azerbaijani society. While the draft law on violence against woman represented an important advance, the Government recognized that further measures needed to be taken and was continuing to explore means of taking action, in particular against domestic violence. Programmes were also being developed against trafficking in persons. The gender equality law reflected recent changes introduced into legislation, including the Criminal Code. Several articles in the new laws concerned acts against women; they covered such issues as violence against women, sexual harassment, trafficking, deprivation of freedom, impairment of physical well-being, torture, interruption of pregnancy, reproductive health, sterilization and embryo implantation. Other important new legislation included a law that had been passed in December 2006 on a national plan for the protection of human rights, which contained a specific article on discrimination against women; moreover, further positive developments could be expected in the coming years to

ensure full compliance with all of the State party's treaty obligations.

27. The development of statistics on the representation of women was an ongoing concern. Women were indeed represented in the judiciary: out of 308 judges, 37 were women, 23 in Baku alone. While there had been an increase in the number of women applying for positions in judicial bodies, more needed to be done: steps were being taken to develop the interest of women in such work. Steps were also being taken, with the help in particular of the British Council, to provide support services for women convicted of crimes. A special law had been submitted to Parliament on the rehabilitation of such women, and a committee had been set up to address the issue of imprisonment as it affected women.

28. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Issues had the potential to become a large ministry. Since its establishment, its budget had grown more than threefold and its membership had risen from 20 to 55. Its name had been changed because there would otherwise not have been any specific State structures for questions relating to children and the family; while such questions were interconnected with women's issues, they in no way impinged on the Committee's competence in that regard. Indeed, its authority had thereby been increased. The question of its representation in the field was important and would be raised again next year; it benefited from the cooperation of the office of the Ombudsman, which had been instrumental in setting up rehabilitation centres for women throughout the country. In the various regions, the Committee drew on the technical support of those centres and of a number of women's NGOs.

29. The independent Republic of Azerbaijan was only 15 years old; it had achieved significant progress in so short a time, in particular in developing in the population an understanding of gender equality. There had been considerable opposition to the adoption of a law on the subject. The Council of Europe, together with NGOs and United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund, had been of great assistance in drawing it up, but its adoption had been largely due to governmental resolve. As for the draft law on violence, it was currently being reviewed by NGOs and would

subsequently be submitted to international experts before going to Parliament.

30. In response to a question on the coordinating role played by the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Issues, she said that, since its establishment in February 2006, the State Committee had organized a coordination council for women's issues made up of representatives from the various ministries. Unlike the focal points, the State Committee and the coordinating council had the power to actively promote women's issues. She noted that during the Soviet era there had been quotas for women's representation but currently, because of the upheaval and drain on resources caused by the conflict with Armenia, increasing women's representation had not been a priority. Currently, there was one woman deputy-minister, and one regional ombudsman, with whom the State Committee worked closely, was a woman. Although much remained to be done, she was confident that there was a renewed will to increase the participation rate of women.

31. **Ms. Irada Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that her Government had made it a priority to meet its international commitments and promote education for women. Currently, 24 per cent of university students, 30 per cent of secondary level students and 40 per cent of primary level students were girls. Approximately 90 per cent of the female population was attending or had attended school. Legislation was being prepared to further promote the educational rights of women in accordance with the Convention. There were more than 130,000 women teachers in Azerbaijan; in the capital approximately 45 per cent of teachers were women. More remained to be done to increase the number of women administrators; currently only 17 per cent of school principals were women. Her Government would continue to work to implement the Millennium Development Goals and provide equal education for all, in particular young girls.

32. Turning to the educational situation of refugee and displaced women, she said that the conflict with Armenia and the resulting loss of territory had caused the loss or destruction of many schools and educational facilities. More than 60 per cent of the teachers who had been employed in those schools were women. Many young women were likewise living in temporary camps, and her Government was working to meet their educational needs. She stressed the importance of

receiving assistance from international partners in that regard.

33. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) added that her Government had made the reintegration of refugees a priority. One important measure was to ensure that by 2008 all refugees would be able to move from temporary to permanent housing. Efforts were likewise being made to provide refugee women with educational opportunities in order to prepare them for reintegration into society. They were provided with training in areas such as languages and computer skills, and many had in fact been able to find employment.

34. **Mr. Zalov** (Azerbaijan), with regard to the issue of trafficking in children, said that there were 225 specially trained staff in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the regions working in the area of combating trafficking in children. There was a special unit on trafficking as well as a branch devoted specifically to trafficking in minors in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In the past two years, 14 cases of trafficking in children had been investigated and 25 perpetrators prosecuted. That showed that the adoption of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons had been effective in helping to curb trafficking, including the trafficking in children.

35. **Mr. Gurbanov** (Azerbaijan) said that he did not believe that there was any fundamental discrepancy between the provisions of the Convention and the rights guaranteed to women under Azerbaijani law. Articles 24 to 71 of the Constitution contained comprehensive guarantees of the rights of all persons, and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women likewise contained provisions to ensure equal rights for men and women in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of public life and to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination. Although those texts did not literally reproduce the language of the Convention, the principles on which it was based were accurately reflected.

36. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) pointed out that the drafting and adoption of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women had not been an easy process because the issue was a sensitive one in Azerbaijani society. The Law was meant to complement existing legislation and pursuant to it the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Issues was empowered to ensure the implementation of human rights guarantees for women and monitor

progress made. For example, a survey of the number of women in Government ministries had shown that the number of women was generally satisfactory, but the new legislation would facilitate the task of ensuring that women were also well represented at the decision-taking level.

37. She acknowledged that there were fewer women in public institutions, especially at the higher levels, than during the Soviet era, when strict quotas had been applied. That could be attributed to the problems during the post-Soviet transition, when social upheaval, conflict, and population displacement had forced many women to accept any kind of work. Her Government was taking steps to address that problem. She noted that there were a number of high-ranking women in her delegation and pointed out that, for example, in the foreign service, there were many women in middle-level posts, some of whom would certainly be promoted to high-level posts in the future. The poor representation of women at higher levels was due to insufficient education rather than discrimination. That was why improving the educational level of women was a priority.

38. **Ms. Shin** expressed concern at continuing stereotypes about women in Azerbaijani society. The report called women the second sex, and she wondered if women were truly valued as individuals or merely as mothers. Sex-selective abortion was practised, and men were considered the head of the family and breadwinners whereas women were seen as responsible for maintaining the household and child-rearing. Such mindsets must be changed. Education could play a vital role, and she wondered whether children were taught in school about sharing responsibility for the home and family. She noted that there were gender research centres in the cities but asked if such centres existed in the regions and if the State party had a comprehensive plan to educate children and the public about gender issues. Although the media tried to deal with gender issues, their efforts were often of poor quality. She enquired whether there were any measures being taken to improve programme quality and increase awareness of gender issues among the media.

39. More information would be welcome on whether the provisions of the draft law on domestic violence fully addressed the need to prevent such violence, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators. According to the report there were crisis centres for women victims, but they were run by non-governmental

organizations, not the Government. The report also stated that there were no accurate statistics about domestic violence because often the victims did not report it. In that regard, she underscored the State party's obligation to actively survey women and encourage reporting. She wondered if non-governmental organizations, which were most familiar with the problem, would be invited to participate in the consultations relating to the draft law. Finally, she requested information on the needs of women refugees and displaced persons who were the victims of domestic violence.

40. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** said that an unwillingness on the part of society and the Government to interfere in private family matters could not be used as an excuse to fail to act to promote women's rights in a society still full of stereotypes. If the Government failed to act firmly, other efforts to improve the status of women would have little effect. She wondered if the delegation could give any example of an area where the Government had not acted in order not to interfere in family life. Although a number of measures had been adopted to promote women's rights, she asked if they had had any practical effect and whether there were any plans to review school textbooks to eliminate stereotyping.

41. **Ms. Simms** said that, in spite of laws and measures to prevent trafficking of women, many women, including girls, continued to leave Azerbaijan, ostensibly for work or to get married. She wondered if there had been any study of why those women were leaving. Many no doubt left involuntarily, forced by international criminal gangs into sexual exploitation and prostitution. Those responsible must be punished, even if they were powerful or influential, as an example for the public good. She noted that prostitution was banned and could be punished by a fine or community service but stressed that a clear distinction must be made between victim and perpetrator and asked if it was the prostitute or the customer who was punished, because without customers there would be no prostitution.

42. **Ms. Gabr** asked what measures were being taken to raise public awareness of the taboo issue of domestic violence in preparation for Parliament's scrutiny of the draft legislation. The delegation should provide information on the criminalization of sexual harassment in the workplace and in places of learning. She would also appreciate details of the penalties for

rape. Did the Government plan to establish a focal point on trafficking in women? It was unclear whether the working group mentioned was empowered to draft legislation and receive complaints. What specific efforts were being undertaken to ensure that refugees and internally displaced persons did not fall easy prey to traffickers?

43. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that she would provide Committee members with a copy of the draft law on domestic violence, which, she was pleased to announce, had the support of a majority of Parliamentary deputies. Azerbaijan had joined the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence, which provided an additional basis on which to lobby for the draft law. The media was actively involved in raising public awareness, with all newspapers incorporating a Women's Section and most television channels broadcasting in-depth discussions of women's issues as part of a Woman's Hour.

44. **Mr. Zalov** (Azerbaijan) said that problem families were monitored by social services, which implemented a range of measures to prevent domestic violence. Responding to a request for precise data, he said that in 2006, 5,342 crimes against women had been registered in Azerbaijan, including 3,857 assaults, 2,477 beatings, 618 injuries, 148 sexual assaults, 35 cases of rape, 24 cases of cruel treatment, 335 cases of serious hooliganism and 45 cases of inducement to suicide, all criminalized under relevant articles of the Criminal Code.

45. In the reporting period, one in five crimes against women had been found to be motivated by jealousy or other domestic grounds. Over the past five years, there had been an increase in the number of beatings of women, which explained the rise in the level of violence against women. He assured the Committee that all cases of violence were duly investigated, with prosecutions achieved in 95 per cent of cases. Over the past two years, 371 cases of trafficking had been recorded, 332 cases brought to court, 360 individuals prosecuted and 40 criminal organizations disbanded. Altogether, 298 persons had fallen victim to traffickers.

46. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that women were just as guilty of harbouring negative gender stereotypes. As for the draft law on domestic violence, it had — like its counterpart on gender equality — been prepared on the basis of broad

consultations with civil society and international stakeholders, to ensure conformity with international legal standards.

47. **Ms. Irada Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that gender issues were now a subject of study at several higher educational establishments in Azerbaijan. The subject was also being introduced in schools, including in the context of an optional course in reproductive health. She disagreed that all textbooks promoted patriarchal attitudes. A new generation of gender-sensitive textbooks was now available, including five million copies of over 100 new titles, freely distributed to pupils.

48. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that education was accessible to all and that each year a large percentage of pupils from the rural districts gained access to higher educational establishments. There was also a special quota for refugees.

49. **Ms. Baghirova** (Azerbaijan) said that she failed to understand the question relating to unwanted interference in family life. National law provided for equal opportunities for men and women in the economic, political, social, cultural and other spheres, and family life was not in any way excluded. State policy was geared towards ensuring an enabling environment for gender equality, with a view to eliminating negative stereotypes.

50. **Mr. Gurbanov** (Azerbaijan) said that, under the new article 144.1 of the Criminal Code, only 14 cases of trafficking in persons had been recorded in 2006. A national programme was aimed at improving living conditions and creating jobs for refugees and internally displaced people, with a special focus on the resettlement of tent city dwellers. The very existence of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime proved that human trafficking was not an issue that could be regulated by individual States. It was a global problem, requiring a global response.

51. **Ms. Huseynli** (Azerbaijan) said that not only were internally displaced persons eligible for food assistance, but they were also exempt from tuition fees at fee-paying higher educational establishments. The majority of refugee families had lost a "head of family" as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and were thus eligible for a special benefit. Internally displaced

persons were also exempt from paying community taxes.

52. **Mr. Flinterman** said that the Committee needed to be informed of the scope of the definition of discrimination in domestic law so that it might determine the extent to which a State party complied with its obligations under the Convention. He took it that the definition prohibited both direct and indirect discrimination and was aimed at achieving de facto as well as de jure equality.

53. His questions relating to military service and the pensionable age of men and women had yet to be answered. He wondered, also, why so many complaints of violations of women's rights reached the Ombudsman, apparently before other domestic remedies had been exhausted. The delegation had provided no data relating to cases brought before domestic courts. Was there too high a threshold, or inadequate access to legal aid? He would appreciate further details on the training programmes for civil society and the judiciary that had been mentioned. Did they include a focus on international human rights instruments?

54. **Ms. Shin** asked when the draft law on domestic violence was likely to be adopted. She would also appreciate responses to her other questions.

55. **Ms. Neubauer** said that several of her questions also remained unanswered. In an annexe to its next periodic report, the State party should include the full text of its law on gender equality and other relevant legislation in line with the reporting guidelines (contained in HRI/GEN/2/Rev.1/Add.2).

56. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) reiterated that the law on gender equality had been drafted on the basis of broad consultations with NGOs and international organizations and that the same procedure was being followed for the draft law on domestic violence. She would give each Committee member a CD containing the texts of all relevant legislation. Since the law in question had only just been adopted, there had not been time to include a copy in the combined reports.

57. With regard to girls in refugee camps, the problem was not only one of violence, but also of early marriages. Since many refugee families lived below the poverty line, they had their children married to more prosperous men. Although such marriages were

prohibited, they continued to take place, particularly in certain districts. The issue was currently being addressed, including through religious channels.

58. **Mr. Gurbanov** (Azerbaijan) said that he would be happy to provide Mr. Flinterman with an English translation of the legislation in question, so that he could judge for himself to what extent the definition of discrimination laid down in the Convention had been incorporated in domestic law. Although women were not drafted into the armed forces, they could volunteer for special functions. On the whole, women were well represented in the Ministry of Defence and in law-enforcement agencies.

59. The Ministry of Justice had for the past six years been working on a draft law to strengthen the protection of human rights, which included training for the police and judiciary based on United Nations documents. Moreover, seminars had been held under the TISIS programme to enable judges to acquaint themselves with the provisions of United Nations instruments. Azerbaijan also had a special relationship with the world-famous Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature judge training institute in Bordeaux, France. A training centre had, moreover, been established under the Ministry of Justice, with a special focus on international legal instruments, including the Convention. The Government was doing its best to ensure that the judiciary was informed and that it had the right to propose legislation. All countries were seeking to strengthen their legislative basis and ensure that women were informed of their rights. Azerbaijan was no exception in that regard.

60. **Ms. Hijran Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that an effective mechanism did exist within the Ministry of the Interior to coordinate government efforts to implement the Convention.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.