



**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 753rd meeting

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Chairperson: Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani (Vice-Chairperson)

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In the absence of Ms. Manalo, Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

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

Tribute to the memory of the victims of the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the participants observed a minute of silence in memory of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and other victims of the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003.*

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

Combined initial, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth periodic report of Cape Verde (CEDAW/C/CPV/1-6, CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/6 and CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/6/Add.1)

2. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Cape Verde took places at the Committee table.*

3. **Ms. Lima** (Cape Verde), introducing the State party's combined initial, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth period report (CEDAW/C/CPV/1-6), said that, although Cape Verde was late in submitting the report, the many and wide-ranging actions it had taken since ratifying the Convention in December 1980 to advance the cause of women bore testimony to its genuine commitment to that instrument. Since Cape Verde had gained independence in 1975, the advancement of women's rights had been one of the central elements in its national political agenda. While great progress had been made with regard to the status of women, however, full gender equality had not yet been attained. Cape Verde was determined to address the remaining gaps in that regard.

4. Under the totalitarian regime that had preceded independence, Cape Verdean women had been denied not only their rights, including the right to vote and reproductive rights, but also access to education on an equal footing with men, to certain professions and to loans and credits. From 1975 to 1990, the country had pursued a path of development based on democratic

principles and respect for human rights. The process of democratic transition had been accelerated by the introduction of a multiparty system in February 1990 and the first democratic elections in 1991, in which broad public participation had clearly demonstrated the country's choice for the democratic rule of law and decentralization of power. The Constitution, adopted in 1992, provided for a broad range of rights, freedoms and guarantees for Cape Verdean citizens, enshrining the dignity of the person as an absolute value.

5. The economy had slowly opened up to foreign investment. Tourism and light industry had begun to flourish and social and economic indicators had improved. Cape Verde's improved human development index (HDI) reflected positive developments as regards economic and social rights.

6. The greatest obstacle to the advancement of women had been Cape Verde's patriarchal sociocultural heritage. Despite the clear impact of investment in education on the status of women in some sectors, in others there was obvious resistance to their advancement.

7. The participation of women in politics and decision-making, while long-standing, had varied greatly in degree and form over the years. For example, the number of female deputies in the National Assembly had fluctuated widely. Women currently accounted for 15 per cent of parliamentary deputies, and their representation was even lower in the legislature and municipal executive branch. Although the number of women in the central administration was lower than that of men, their participation was increasing with every election. However, their participation at that level had often been negligible in the past. The Government recognized the need to encourage participation of women at all levels, both in politics and in other areas of public life, in order to eliminate traditionalist ideas that helped to keep women on the sidelines.

8. Between 1990 and 2000, there had been an overall increase in the rate of employment of the population as a direct result of an increase in female economic activity from 25 to 38.6 per cent, compared to a decline in male economic activity from 47.8 to 42.3 per cent. Analysis of the economically active population by socioprofessional category revealed that women accounted for 0.6 per cent of senior technicians, 4.9 per cent of specialists and 4.3 per cent

of professional technicians and mid-level professionals. Unskilled workers formed the largest proportion of the population (26.8 per cent), the majority of whom were women. In 2000, 47.8 per cent of women had been engaged in activities that required a low level of training or education but generated a lower income for women than for men. Women were often relegated to domestic work and prevented by family members from receiving an education. In response to the high level of unemployment among women in the poorest sectors of society, the Government was promoting vocational training and access to income-generating activities and microcredits for women in the immediate term and investing, over the long term, in access to education at all levels, thus facilitating their access to better-paid professions.

9. A broad range of civil society organizations and NGOs were active in the area of human rights and development of democracy in Cape Verde. They had contributed greatly to the organization and mobilization of civil society and to the advancement of the women's agenda through initiatives inter alia to reduce illiteracy, particularly among rural women, to create kindergartens, introduce family planning policies, promote the participation of women in development, help formulate legislation relating to gender issues and facilitate access by women to microcredits and loans.

10. In 1994, the Government had established the Institute on the Status of Women, recently renamed the Cape Verde Institute for Gender Equality and Equity, which aimed to create the conditions and institutional mechanisms necessary for the promotion and implementation of public policies to advance gender equality, equity and parity and empower women. To those ends, the Institute had established partnerships with civil society organizations working in areas such as health, education, promotion of the family, income generation and prevention of violence against women, while focusing on the most vulnerable women, thus facilitating significant progress in advancing women's rights. In order to achieve more concerted action with public sector and civil society organizations, and in line with the guidelines in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, it had developed a national gender equality and equity plan for the period 2005-2009, which guided related Government policies. Its main challenges were to combat violence against women and ensure equality of economic opportunities and equal

representation by men and women in policymaking positions.

11. Despite economic progress, some groups, including women, remained in conditions of social exclusion and poverty. Unemployment was highest among persons aged 15 to 24, but overall was higher among men (55.9 per cent) than among women (42.3 per cent). However, more women than men lived in poverty. The reverse trend was seen in the age range of 25 to 49, in which illiteracy was greater among women, indicating a direct relationship between level of education and access to employment. In response to that situation, a national poverty alleviation programme had been introduced in 2003 with the aim, inter alia, of eliminating social exclusion through education, vocational training and infrastructure development. The Department of Literacy and Adult Education, the Institute for Employment and Professional Training and the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries were engaged in similar efforts, and had made a major contribution to improving the economic situation and inclusion of women, particularly in rural areas, inter alia through microcredits. The National Development Plan for 2002-2005 and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper contained strategies to eradicate poverty, identifying areas of intervention such as employment, health, education, housing and urban and rural poverty while focusing on the specific needs of vulnerable social groups. Actions had been taken to protect particularly vulnerable women, such as those without an income or engaged in low-income activities.

12. Education was undoubtedly one of the most effective tools in promoting the status of women and enabling them to move towards professional, financial and above all moral autonomy. Social demand for education had grown over the years, and there was a strong tendency within families to guarantee the same educational opportunities for girls as for boys. As a result of the Government's "education for all" policy, almost everyone had access to primary education, and gender parity had been achieved with respect to access to both primary and secondary education. The primary school enrolment rate was 95.9 per cent for girls and 94.3 per cent for boys; the corresponding figures for secondary school enrolment were 58.8 and 53.3 per cent, respectively. Girls accounted for 44 per cent of pupils enrolled at secondary technical schools. The Government was taking action to increase the number

of boys in secondary education, since the dropout rate was higher among boys than among girls at that level. More girls than boys graduated from primary and secondary schools and more boys dropped out of primary school. At the secondary level, more girls than boys repeated a year.

13. Despite the fact that more women than men were primary schoolteachers (65.3 per cent), the majority of teachers at higher levels of education were men. Management posts at primary schools were mainly occupied by men, but were distributed equally among men and women throughout the education system.

14. Because the 2000 census had indicated that illiteracy was most prevalent among women except in the age range of 15-24, adult literacy programmes focused mainly on that social group, which was regarded as the most vulnerable, and had resulted in a sharp decrease in illiteracy among women, particularly those in the age range of 35-49 years.

15. Considerable progress had been made in gender mainstreaming in health services, which took into account the specific needs of women, and full access to health care was one of the longer-term goals to assist women living in poverty. A maternal and child protection and family planning project had been introduced in 1977, superseded in 2001 by a national reproductive health programme with a more comprehensive and gender-balanced approach in line with the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994. The health care system had been strengthened, with more services relating to family planning, maternal and child care, monitoring of sexually transmitted infections and prenatal and post-natal care. Vaccination campaigns had been successful, as demonstrated by the significant reduction in infant and maternal mortality, and a policy to raise awareness of contraception was being implemented with the help of reproductive health centres and NGOs. One of the key concerns of the national health authorities was HIV/AIDS. Statistics on screening for and incidence of cervical, breast and prostate cancer were not yet available.

16. Media played a key role in raising public awareness of women's issues, helping to form public opinion and spreading the message of gender equality and equity, thus helping to change deep-rooted attitudes and behaviour. In that spirit, media

professionals had participated in awareness campaigns and received training in gender issues. The Network of Journalists for the People, as a Government partner, had achieved much in that regard, including a reduction in sexist advertising.

17. The Government firmly condemned and was committed to combating gender-based violence, which primarily took the form of domestic violence against women. The Institute for Gender Equality and Equity was developing a national strategy to provide a rapid response to emergency situations of such violence, particularly in cases in which the victims were economically or otherwise vulnerable, through inter-institutional networks that provided various services to victims free of charge. It also helped to finance reception centres for victims. In recognition of the need to extend those actions to the national level, the Institute was working with the Ministry of Justice to develop a national plan to combat gender-based violence, by changing social attitudes and behaviour.

18. The National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship was responsible for overseeing implementation of the Convention and had played a major role in drawing up the State party report. Its functions included the promotion of gender equality, inclusion of women and other vulnerable groups, respect for human rights and formulation of policies relating to women. It also acted in an advisory capacity, operated an early warning system, and carried out monitoring and research activities in the area of human rights and international humanitarian law. Its 28 members included representatives of civil society and Government bodies, and representatives of institutions whose work directly related to women's issues also participated as observers.

19. The Government of Cape Verde had complied with the recommendations of international and regional conferences and of the relevant United Nations agencies relating to women's rights, and with the relevant international instruments, using them as the basis for its strategic documents and as guidelines for the adoption and implementation of its policies.

20. Cape Verde was convinced that, while much remained to be done, women's rights as set out in the Convention would become a reality in the country. It was committed to achieving true equality between its men and women, and attached great importance to the

contributions of the Committee in pursuing and attaining that goal.

Articles 1 and 2

21. **Mr. Flinterman** noted that the State party's responses to the issues and questions raised by the Committee (CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/6/Add.1) indicated that there had been no court cases in which the Convention had been invoked. He wondered whether that was due to ignorance of the existence of the Convention among members of the judiciary and the legal profession. In that connection, in its introductory remarks the delegation had alluded to information and awareness campaigns, and he would like more information on the nature of those campaigns. One reason why the Convention had not been applied directly in the courts might be that court proceedings were generally very slow and costly. He would like to know whether citizens of Cape Verde had access to any legal remedies other than the courts. He also wished to know what the role of the National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship was in that regard. For example, did it hear complaints about violations of women's human rights, and, if so, could the Commission then take over a case and bring an action in court?

22. The report mentioned a legal aid scheme available to women. He would like information on how many women had made use of that resource and how many women had applied for legal aid but been refused. Finally, he strongly encouraged the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol in order to strengthen protection for the rights of Cape Verdean women.

23. **Ms. Shin** welcomed the report submitted by Cape Verde and hoped that the Committee could look forward to receiving future periodic reports more punctually. Referring to the State party's response to question 2 posed by the Committee in the list of issues and questions (CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/6/Add.1), she enquired whether the concept of discrimination as defined in the Constitution of Cape Verde encompassed the notion of indirect discrimination, in line with article 1 of the Convention. She wondered whether it was understood among members of the judiciary and policymakers that ensuring gender equality meant eliminating both indirect and direct discrimination against women.

24. Like the preceding speaker, she would like to know whether the National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship received complaints about discrimination directly from women and, if so, how many such complaints had been submitted thus far. She would also like to know how many of the Commission's 28 members were women. She, too, hoped that the State party would soon ratify the Optional Protocol, and she further urged it to accept, without delay, the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

25. **Ms. Šimonović** observed that the State party's response to question 26 in the list of issues and questions (CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/6/Add.1) said that awareness about the Convention was being raised "little by little". She encouraged the Government to step up its efforts to educate judges, law enforcement officials, women's NGOs, and the public at large about the Convention and the possible remedies against violations of women's rights at the national level. In the light of the response to question 27, she would like to hear the delegation's views on the prospects for ratification of the Optional Protocol.

26. **Ms. Morvai** enquired whether the delegation could provide any information on jurisprudence relating to gender equality in Cape Verde. She understood that no information was available on cases in which the Convention had been invoked before the courts, but she wondered whether any cases of sex discrimination had been adjudicated under the country's laws in the labour sphere, for example, or in any other area. She would appreciate information on how many such cases had been brought in recent years and on the nature and outcome of those cases.

27. She also sought more information about the national machinery for the advancement of women. Specifically, she would like to know what place the Institute on the Status of Women occupied within the Government structure and what its budget, staff and working methods were. She would like to know, as well, whether the Institute had decision-making authority or was merely an advisory body and how, concretely, it cooperated with NGOs. In addition, she was curious as to whether Cape Verde had received any assistance from international organizations or bilateral development agencies specifically for gender equality initiatives.

28. **Ms. Rodrigues** (Cape Verde) said that the name of the National Institute on the Status of Women, which was the national machinery for gender issues, had recently been changed to Cape Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity. That change reflected a shift from a women-in-development approach to a gender approach in relation to issues of gender equality. The Institute currently had a staff of nine and a budget of close to US\$ 37 million, most of which was provided by international organizations, especially the United Nations agencies operating in Cape Verde. In recognition of the Institute's sound management practices, those agencies had recently increased their funding for its projects by 30 per cent.

29. The Institute had worked with NGOs since its inception and was currently doing so to an increasing extent because the number of NGOs working on women's issues in Cape Verde was growing. The Institute was concerned mainly with policy matters at the national level. It therefore relied on NGOs to disseminate policy and carry out Institute-financed projects at the grass-roots level. Institute staff held frequent meetings with NGO representatives to monitor project implementation and identify the strategies to be applied in order to ensure a consistent approach to work with grass-roots communities.

30. **Ms. Lima** (Cape Verde) assured the Committee that her Government had no philosophical or policy-related objection to the Optional Protocol. If Cape Verde had not yet ratified the Protocol, it was merely for bureaucratic reasons. Similarly, the Government's tardiness in reporting to the Committee did not reflect a lack of political will with regard to fulfilment of its obligations under the Convention; it reflected weaknesses in institutional structure and capacity. It should be recalled that the Republic of Cape Verde was only 31 years old. After gaining independence in 1975, Cape Verdeans had had to create a whole State apparatus and build all the institutions of Government from the ground up. The country still had a long way to go in that respect, and, consequently, it lacked the capacity of other countries that had a well-developed machinery for ensuring the timely fulfilment of their reporting obligations under the various international human rights conventions. Nevertheless, the Government had recently created a national commission whose task it was to coordinate the production of such reports, and it fully intended to comply with its international obligations.

31. Her Government's earlier failure to submit a report did not in any way reflect a lack of commitment to the Convention. Indeed, Cape Verde had started applying the provisions of the Convention even before ratifying it, and since its independence had eliminated numerous forms of discrimination against women. While the Convention might not have been invoked in the courts, the majority of its articles were embodied in national legislation, so it was being applied. The fact that judges were not applying the Convention directly in their rulings did indeed reflect a lack of knowledge and capacity. To rectify that situation, the Government was working to educate judges and lawyers about the provisions of the Convention and national legislation relating to discrimination against women. It was currently providing training for prosecutors on the treatment of domestic violence cases, for example. In addition, efforts were under way, particularly by NGOs, to disseminate information about the Convention to the general public.

32. It was true that court proceedings could be very lengthy. The Government was engaged in a process of judicial reform aimed at improving the responsiveness of the justice system, as a result of which Cape Verdeans could resort to alternative dispute resolution methods such as arbitration, mediation and law centres. Under the legal aid scheme, legal assistance, paid for by the Government and provided by qualified professional lawyers, was available free of charge for all disadvantaged populations, including women. Unfortunately, she was unable to provide the statistics on numbers and types of cases that the Committee had requested. That was because of deficiencies in the national statistics system, which, like the rest of the country's institutions, was still being consolidated.

33. The National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship was headed by a woman and at least half of its members were women. In addition to Government agencies, women's NGOs and other civil society organizations, unions, employers' associations and political parties were represented on the Commission.

34. Concerning the definition of discrimination in the national Constitution, as her Government had indicated in its responses to the Committee's list of issues and questions (CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/6/Add.1), the Constitution itself stipulated that none of the constitutional provisions relating to basic rights and freedoms were to be interpreted in a restrictive manner. She could therefore assure the Committee that the courts would

interpret the principle of non-discrimination to mean both direct and indirect discrimination.

35. The Cape Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity was indirectly administered by the State, but had full autonomy with regard to its budget and operations. It came under the authority of the Prime Minister, who had delegated responsibility for the Institute's supervision to her. That ensured that gender equality issues were raised and discussed within the Council of Ministers. While the Institute did have a small staff, it worked very effectively with NGOs, which were better equipped to carry out initiatives at the local level. That approach was consistent with the Government's view that it could not and should not be involved in all activities at all levels and with the State reform initiative currently under way, which sought to reduce the size of the Government while enhancing its effectiveness. Moreover, the Institute was not the only component of the national machinery. There were also gender focal points in the various ministries and at the local level.

36. The Government needed to devote more attention to monitoring compliance with its gender-related policy decisions. For example, the Council of Ministers had approved affirmative action measures aimed at increasing women's access to public-sector jobs, but monitoring was needed to ensure that those measures were actually being applied. A greater effort was also needed to ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective in all Government policies, not just those pertaining directly to gender equality.

Article 3

37. **Ms. Dairiam** said that, while she understood the reasons for the State party's tardiness in submitting its initial report, she was concerned that the delay in reporting implied that there had also been a delay in implementing the provisions of the Convention. The delegation had assured the Committee that legal reforms had been introduced and numerous forms of discrimination against women had been eliminated in the years since the country had gained its independence. The report seemed to indicate, however, that although women might have been given equality under the law, they were not necessarily experiencing equality in practice in many aspects of their daily lives, which was the ultimate goal of the Convention. Nevertheless, she was pleased to see that some progress towards gender equality was being made.

38. The report indicated that the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women, 1996-2000, had not been as successful as hoped in terms of gender mainstreaming. She would like to know what the main obstacles were in that regard. She would also like to know who within the Government owned gender mainstreaming. Was it the Cape Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity, or was responsibility shared across all ministries? If the latter were the case, what institutional arrangements existed for that purpose?

39. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** also sought clarification of the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women, 1996-2000, and its priorities. How had the gender mainstreaming strategy worked and what evaluation had been carried out? Referring to the new action plan's title, the National Gender Equality and Equity Plan, she recalled that the Convention was concerned with the objective goal of gender equality, whereas equity was a subjective concept. What were the new Plan's priorities and targets, and how would progress towards equality be measured?

40. **Ms. Zou Xiaqiao** asked for an explanation of the status and authority of the Cape Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity. Could it influence Government policy and did the Government intend to strengthen its status and resources?

41. **Ms. Shin** also wished to know more about the human and financial resources of the Institute. Were there plans to increase its staff? Insofar as three quarters of its budget came from international donor agencies, was its income sustainable? Had the funds needed for the current year been forthcoming? She asked whether the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity worked with the National Statistical Institute to ensure that official data were collected and presented from a gender perspective.

42. **Ms. Saiga** asked whether women's NGOs, which seemed to act as the operative branch of the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity, received any State funding or other assistance.

43. **Ms. Rodrigues** (Cape Verde) said that the effectiveness of the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women had been limited by the inexperience and lack of funding of the Institute on the Status of Women, the predecessor of the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity, created in 1994. The National Gender Equality and Equity Plan, however,

had its own budget, a workable planning framework and an indicator matrix for measuring progress. In the Government's opinion, a dual approach had to be taken to promoting equal rights, since gender equity, accomplished through practical progress towards equal opportunities, was a prerequisite of gender equality. Moreover, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had recommended that the Government take such an approach. The success achieved in reaching gender parity in education compared with the failure to remove gender stereotyping from politics in Cape Verde, for example, demonstrated the need to address sociocultural aspects, in addition to economic opportunities or specific measures to tackle violence. In view of the many needs to be met, the Institute's funding was never sufficient, but it was seeking new sources in addition to UNFPA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Three new members of staff had recently been recruited by the Institute, to work on communications, violence against women and HIV/AIDS, and it was hoped that a full complement would be achieved.

44. **Mr. Pires** (Cape Verde) said that all national and international partners in Cape Verde were fully involved in the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process, funded by the World Bank and other United Nations agencies. All budget planning, including the 2006 State budget, took the gender perspective into account. The National Statistical Institute was responsible for collecting all official data for ministerial planning and for the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity. However, the country's small population often made it difficult to extrapolate reliable statistics from data on, for example, maternal mortality. The findings of two demography studies begun in 1998, but only recently finalized, would be a source of statistics on the socio-economic situation, specifically relating to health, education and violence against women. Among other things, they showed that the plight of women in rural areas had improved considerably, thanks to increased investment.

45. **Ms. Lima** (Cape Verde) said that, although Cape Verde had been late with its initial periodic report, it had been fully implementing the Convention. Remarkable progress towards gender equality had been made, as stated in a 2004 United Nations document on progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The gross domestic product had greatly increased in recent years and, in 2004, the

Economic and Social Council had recommended that Cape Verde should graduate from the list of least developed countries. Social and economic development in Cape Verde would, the Government believed, guarantee progress in human rights in general, and in women's rights in particular. The impact of economic growth on the sexes varied, however: fewer women than men were unemployed, yet women remained poorer than men. Many men had emigrated but their remittances benefited female-led households.

46. Although no quotas had been introduced, the Government had systematically been applying positive discrimination. No longer necessary in the field of secondary education, since girls now performed better than boys, the policy was currently being applied in civil service recruitment, in literacy campaigns and in the award of microcredits for job creation in rural areas. The National Gender Equality and Equity Plan therefore addressed not only issues such as violence against women but also equal economic opportunities for both sexes. As for the status of the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity, although it enjoyed a certain degree of budgetary autonomy, it was part of the State apparatus and was directly overseen by the Prime Minister's Office. While efforts were being made to increase its human resources, the Institute would also operate by networking. The staff acted as a central core, while funding and some other operations were left to NGOs and other bodies.

47. The Government strategy on gender mainstreaming had been overseen by the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity, supported by the ministerial focal points and a network of ministers and women members of parliament, who gave training seminars on gender mainstreaming in budget planning and other fields. It had not been totally satisfactory but more work would be done in the future.

Articles 5 and 6

48. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** asked what action was being taken to ensure that educators consciously applied gender equality values when implementing education programmes. Were there any instances in Cape Verdean society of discrimination on the basis of skin colour? She requested more information on measures taken to prevent violence against women.

49. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** asked what action was being taken to remove gender stereotyping from school

textbooks. Were there any programmes targeting men and boys to alter their perceptions of the status and role of women in society? With regard to domestic violence, the periodic report (CEDAW/C/CPV/1-6) suggested that machismo was more prevalent among disadvantaged groups. Had there been a detailed national study of the socio-economic factors of domestic violence and, if so, what were its findings?

50. **Ms. Zou Xiaqiao** asked whether the legal aid regime for the victims of domestic violence was easily accessible, even by rural women, and whether it was totally free of charge. With regard to the special reception centre for victims of domestic violence at the Agostinho Neto hospital in Praia, how many people had sought assistance there, was the service free of charge, and how was the centre financed? She asked whether there was an official definition of domestic violence. Was there a specific law on domestic violence or were there plans to enact one?

51. **Ms. Simms**, noting that penalties for rape were more severe if the rape resulted in pregnancy or transmission of disease, asked whether such provisions merely encouraged rapists to make sure they used a condom. With regard to indecent assault, the report mentioned a number of categories of perpetrator who faced more severe penalties for such assault. However, fathers were not mentioned specifically. Given that many prostitutes were victims of incest, she wished to know whether incest was classified as a criminal offence in Cape Verde. She also expressed concern that some prostitutes were as young as 13. A much more thorough analysis was needed of the issue of prostitution in general. Noting the intention of the Government to promote tourism, she pointed out that the development of tourism nearly always brought a rise in prostitution. She was pleased to note that a husband could be prosecuted for exploitation of his wife and requested clarification of the penalties imposed for such an offence.

52. **Ms. Morvai** said she found it shocking that some prostitutes were as young as 13 or 14. In addition, the notion of “forced” prostitution implied that, in some cases, prostitution was a choice freely entered into. She questioned the validity of such a distinction, particularly in the case of children, who could never be regarded as having freely chosen to enter prostitution. Moreover, it was known that child prostitutes tended to become adult prostitutes. She encouraged the State party to consult international literature on strategies for

combating the problem of prostitution. Noting that the information given in the report about criminal legislation against trafficking referred only to trafficking in minors, she asked whether women were also covered by that legislation. Lastly, she asked whether the State party had a comprehensive strategy for dealing with the problems of prostitution and trafficking.

53. **Ms. Rodrigues** (Cape Verde), referring to a question on article 5, said that a programme for training teachers in gender issues had been in place since 2002. The topic was also incorporated into Social and Personal Education classes. In addition, the general topic of human rights, including gender equality, would soon be incorporated into the curriculum at all levels of the education system.

54. There was no discrimination against people on the basis of skin colour. Racial tolerance was in the nature of the Cape Verdean people, partly as a result of the discrimination suffered under colonialism, and the level of social integration was high, irrespective of skin colour. A high percentage of people were of mixed race.

55. Research had recently been launched on the problem of violence against women. Detailed findings on the socio-economic factors behind such violence were not yet available, although it was known that not only poor women were victims. Programmes were being implemented to combat the problem. Efforts had initially focused on responding to the immediate needs of victims. However, more attention was now being paid to the causes of violence against women so as to address the problem at root with preventive measures. A national plan on gender-based violence had been drawn up, which would focus on support for victims, treatment and rehabilitation of perpetrators, and prevention of violence through efforts to change attitudes and behaviour. Some funding for implementation of the national plan had already been secured from the United Nations and more was expected from the World Bank. However, further funding would need to be sought.

56. A pilot project was under way to eliminate stereotypes in primary and secondary school textbooks. The new books published would be introduced in the coming year.

57. With regard to grass-roots work done by NGOs, there were few programmes aimed at raising awareness

of gender issues among men and boys specifically. The general approach was to aim for equal participation of men and women in such awareness-raising efforts. However, one NGO had launched a programme targeting men at military facilities.

58. **Ms. Lima** (Cape Verde) said that, under a procedure recently introduced to help combat domestic violence, the courts could order a perpetrator to leave the shared home.

59. Combating stereotypes remained a major challenge. Cape Verde would receive assistance from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in that regard. Despite the equal numbers of boys and girls in primary schools, and the fact that there were more girls than boys in secondary schools and at universities, stereotyped attitudes persisted, even among women themselves. Ways of combating stereotypes beyond the education system therefore needed to be sought. She had been pleased to note the active participation of girls in the country's recently launched children's parliament.

60. The legal aid system was free of charge. In addition, a programme financed by the World Bank aimed to ensure that people with insufficient resources in both urban and rural areas, especially women, had access to justice. A law of 2005 also guaranteed the right to legal representation, paid for by the State if the person needing representation could not afford to pay, and was gradually being implemented across the country.

61. She acknowledged that more comprehensive information, including indicators, was needed with regard to prostitution. Studies had been conducted since the submission of the report and were expected to produce data that could be used as the basis for action to tackle the problem. More details would be given in the State party's next report. The main causes of prostitution were poverty, the male-oriented society and tourism. With regard to indecent assault, the father of the victim was indeed included in the category of perpetrators that incurred more severe penalties.

62. The reception centre at the Agostinho Neto hospital was staffed by female police officers and was open 24 hours a day. Victims of domestic violence could go there to report offences to the police and to be referred for counselling and legal aid. In its first six months of operation, the centre had dealt with 250 victims, including one man. The initiative was

supported by a network of NGOs. Work was also under way to establish shelters for domestic violence victims. However, to avoid institutionalization where possible, efforts were also made to seek solutions within the family or the community.

Articles 7 and 8

63. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** asked why the high level of representation of women in the judiciary and the diplomatic service was not matched by the number of women in elected positions. She wondered whether there was more resistance from men with regard to elected posts and also whether there was an acceptance of the status quo among women. The report stated that the Electoral Code provided that lists of candidates must show a "balanced representation of both sexes", yet it also stated that electoral subsidies were awarded to parties 25 per cent of whose successful candidates were women. Such a figure could not be regarded as "balanced" representation. The target should be higher, and the measures outlined in the State party's responses were insufficient to improve the situation. The responses also stated that, at the international level, representatives of Cape Verde were appointed independently of their sex. She would like to know what the actual representation of women at that level was.

64. **Ms. Gaspard** said that women's low level of representation in political and public life and the fact that a large proportion of heads of household were women might indicate that there were obstacles to women reconciling professional, home and political and public life, such as the working hours involved in political life and the reluctance of the male-dominated political parties to accept women. Temporary special measures, including quotas, might be needed to increase the representation of women. Interim targets might help overcome the resistance of men to quotas but should be no more than a stepping stone to the eventual achievement of parity. Moreover, the law should impose quotas not only for the number of women candidates but also for the number of women actually elected.

65. Referring to the children's parliament, she pointed out that a number of European countries had local children's councils where the representation of boys and girls was equal. Girls who took part in such councils usually went on to be highly active in political and public life.

66. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, echoed the concerns expressed by Ms. Gaspard and recommended that political parties should be required to present equal numbers of men and women candidates at elections in order to obtain the State subsidies that allowed them to operate.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.