



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
**Fiftieth session**

**Summary record of the 1009th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 12 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Ameline (Vice-Chairperson)

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*In the absence of Ms. Pimentel, Ms. Ameline, Vice-Chairperson, 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 initial and second to fourth periodic reports of Chad (CEDAW/C/TCD/1-4; CEDAW/C/TCD/Q/1-4 and Add.1-3; HRI/CORE/1/Add.88)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Chad took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chairperson** said that, on behalf of the members of the Committee, she wished to express disappointment at the absence of a full delegation from Chad at the present meeting. While the diplomatic representative of Chad who would introduce the State party's report was fully authorized to represent his country, the Committee regretted that it would not benefit from the input of specialists from the State party — particularly women specialists — in discussing the implementation of the Convention in Chad. The situation was all the more regrettable since the present meeting represented the Committee's first opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the State party.
3. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad), introducing the combined initial and second to fourth periodic reports of Chad (CEDAW/C/TCD/1-4), said he regretted that a last-minute change in plans, owing mainly to a conflict with the timing of local elections, had prevented the other members of his delegation from participating in the dialogue with the Committee. The Minister of Social Action, National Solidarity and the Family had asked him to present her compliments to the Committee, along with her apologies. He furthermore wished to convey the gratitude of the Government of Chad for the Committee's patient efforts in helping it to meet its obligations under the Convention.
4. In 1979, when the United Nations General Assembly had adopted the Convention, Chad had been in the midst of a civil war that entailed grave violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by both State and non-State actors, the complete absence of a State presence in particular regions of the country and the collapse of the legal system. Unfortunately, the main victims of that war had been women, children and displaced persons.
5. It was out of a desire to establish the rule of law, end its marginalization from the international community and recognize the rights of its female population that Chad had ratified the Convention. Yet recent armed conflicts at the borders it shared with the Sudan and the Central African Republic had led to massive population displacements from the eastern to the southern parts of the country, taxing already limited resources and deteriorating the living conditions of residents in the regions concerned.
6. In its political programme of 17 August 2011, the Government identified the promotion of women and gender as one of its main priorities and underscored three aspects on which efforts would focus: economic, legal and institutional, and sociocultural. The economic aspect would be addressed through a substantial increase in microcredit for financing women's activities, and through support for women entrepreneurs and organizations dedicated to improving women's economic status. The legal and institutional aspect would be addressed by reaching consensus on a draft personal and family code and strengthening administrative measures to reduce gender-based violence and female genital mutilation. The sociocultural aspect would be addressed through programmes to promote literacy and the enrolment of girls in schools. A number of strategies aimed at supporting the policy for the enrolment and retention of girls in schools had been developed. They included: the production by the National Curricula Centres of teaching materials in French

and Arabic; the distribution of school kits for children from poor families; the refurbishing of technical and vocational schools.

7. Through the Ministry of Social Action, National Solidarity and the Family, the Government had organized a high-level national forum on the occasion of National Chadian Women's Week and International Women's Day 2011, aimed at formulating a five-year plan based on the priorities of women in Chad. With support from the United Nations specialized agencies, the Government had initiated a plan for implementing the recommendations of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. As part of the plan, a national forum had been held in September 2010 to provide information on and raise awareness of the resolution. The forum had also provided an opportunity to take stock of the situation and to evaluate actions in line with the resolution. An action plan was in the process of being finalized.

8. As part of a programme to support the electoral process in Chad and to implement the agreement reached in August 2007 on strengthening democracy, the Government had undertaken a review of the Electoral Code. A policy to promote women candidates through the provision of campaign subsidies had been carried out, and an information and civic education programme had been introduced throughout the country. The programme had stimulated strong voter participation by women and young people in the elections. The newly elected National Assembly was composed of 24 women out of a total of 188 elected officials.

#### *Articles 1 and 2*

9. **Ms. Šimonović** asked for an explanation regarding the State party's long delay in complying with its reporting obligations under article 18 of the Convention. She enquired whether the provisions of the Convention took precedence over those of domestic law and whether it had been widely disseminated to the general public. She wished to know whether there were plans to elaborate general legislation on the prohibition of all forms of discrimination — including on the grounds of sex — that would be accompanied by penalties for the violation of its provisions. She requested information on the nature of the Government's cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promoted women's rights and protected women victims of discrimination or violence.

10. **Ms. Popescu** asked whether the absence of a full delegation from Chad signalled a lack of willingness by the Government to grant sufficient attention to the Convention and to women's rights in Chad. States parties were expected to demonstrate not only formal compliance with the Convention, but also the efforts they had made to give effect to their international obligations.

11. She was particularly concerned at the impunity that prevailed in Chad in the context of internal and border conflicts, particularly since women were among those most likely to fall victim to it. She requested information on what measures the Government had taken to end impunity and to strengthen the legal protection of women.

12. While she welcomed the recognition of the equality of women and men before the law in the Constitution, she was concerned that women appeared to have no effective recourse to justice. That situation was due not only to illiteracy, poverty and insecurity, but also to the lack of legal assistance mechanisms and to de jure discrimination. She asked what measures the Government envisaged taking to increase women's access to justice and to amend discriminatory laws so as to bring them into conformity with the Convention. In particular, she wished to know the status of the bill on the prohibition of discriminatory practices, which had apparently been shelved.

13. She asked whether the National Office of the Ombudsman was an independent institution that complied with the Paris Principles, and what procedure women had to

follow in order to submit a complaint to that Office. She requested clarification of the assistance provided to women by the National Human Rights Commission. She enquired whether free legal aid was available to women in vulnerable groups.

14. **Ms. Schulz** said that she would appreciate information on the expected timetable for the adoption of the draft personal and family code and whether the political will needed to give impetus to that important reform was forthcoming. She asked when the Government planned to introduce penalties, which were indispensable, to punish violations of Act No. 006/PR/2002 of 15 April 2002 on the promotion of reproductive health.

15. She was deeply concerned at the lack of courts in rural areas and the resulting lack of access to them by the majority of the rural population. She was also concerned that, when women did have access to the courts, they tended to lose their cases since, even in flagrant cases of discrimination, the courts tended to give precedence to customary over civil law, much less to respect the primacy of international law over domestic law. She asked how the Government intended to guarantee women's access to justice at all levels, both in urban and rural areas, and to ensure that judicial decisions were not based on gender stereotypes but were consistent with international conventions concluded by Chad, including the Convention.

16. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her capacity as expert, asked for details concerning women's security, particularly in the eastern part of Chad. She wondered whether the departure of the United Nations peacekeeping forces from that area had been timely, given the grave incidents that were reported to have occurred there. She wished to know whether the new governmental resources derived from oil revenues would be applied to social development, in particular to strengthening the role of women. She asked whether the President intended to grant greater support to civil society organizations that worked to improve the situation of women in Chad.

17. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that the presence before the Committee of a delegation from Chad, albeit of reduced numbers, was a positive development in itself, and would not have been possible two years previously. Throughout its history, Chad had known only internal division and war – a situation that had been exploited by certain foreign countries and by the self-interest and greed of its former leaders. The peace that it had enjoyed in the past two years was due to the fragile peace accord that it had concluded with the Sudan. The war in Darfur had spilled over into Chad, bringing not only an influx of refugees but also internal displacements and environmental degradation. Moreover, as a result of the conflict in Libya, a large number of Chadians had been repatriated from Libya, but family reunification efforts and the search for missing persons thought to be held in Libyan prisons was still under way.

18. Despite the difficulties it faced, the Government had opted not to postpone meeting with the Committee any longer because it wished to inform the Committee of its situation and seek the Committee's guidance. A commission attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was currently in the process of coordinating the various treaties signed by Chad in order to incorporate their provisions into its domestic law; the provisions of such instruments took precedence over those of domestic law. If that process had not yet been completed, it was not due to a lack of political will, but rather to the disastrous effects of war on the public administration and the subsequent disorganization that had prevailed prior to the establishment of the Permanent Mission of Chad in Geneva and the establishment of its Ministry of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

19. The Government had taken steps to raise awareness among women and to encourage the participation of human rights organizations in promoting the bill on the prohibition of discriminatory practices. The fact that it had not yet been enacted was not as a result of

insufficient political will, but rather institutional weakness at the level of the public administration.

20. Chad was among the four countries in Africa with the lowest literacy rates, which posed major obstacles to the Government's efforts to improve women's rights. Nonetheless, it had engaged in activities with various human rights and women's organizations in an effort to grant them greater political influence. The new oil revenues were inadequate to cover the enormous needs of the population, as everything was a priority in Chad, including such basic services as the provision of drinking water.

21. The culture of impunity in Chad affected not only women and children but the civilian population as a whole. The President of Chad was currently in the midst of reforming the army, which previously had been riddled with corruption and self-interest. Those guilty of misconduct had been discharged. As a result of the President's efforts, Chad was being reborn as a State.

22. Efforts were under way in the eastern part of the country to resolve security problems in refugee camps. The deployment of Chadian police from the Integrated Security Detachment had been successful in restoring security among the refugee population and the areas surrounding the camps. In addition, the Chadian national police had recruited 250 women officers, which would facilitate relations between women and the police, particularly in the eastern zones, where there was a large Muslim population.

23. Turning to the issue of lack of legal support, he said that there were over 1,000 NGOs for women's affairs, many of which focused on the provision of information and legal assistance for women. Legal clinics and centres for legal aid existed in the main cities, but not throughout the country, owing to a lack of resources. There were an insufficient number of judges and courts in Chad. Women's access to the few courts that did exist was hindered by illiteracy. In addition, prevailing sociocultural prejudice made it difficult for a woman to lodge a complaint against her husband, since that could lead to accusations of sorcery and to intertribal conflict. Civil society played an important role in women's affairs, and freedom of the press was respected in the State party.

24. **Ms. Popescu** asked how the Office of Ombudsman and the National Human Rights Commission could be used by women to lodge a complaint, and whether they were independent institutions. She wished to know how the Convention was disseminated, given that it had not been translated into local languages, and whether the State party intended to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

25. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** asked what the current position of customary and religious law was under the 1996 Constitution. Did customary law prevail while the process of legislative review was under way? She would appreciate clarification of the information provided in paragraph 15 of the responses to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/TCD/Q/4/Add.1), according to which the Convention took precedence over domestic legislation.

26. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that when the Office of Ombudsman had first been established its mandate had not been clearly defined, but had since been redefined. The Office handled complaints and facilitated complainants' access to justice. The problem was, however, that people tended not to know that the Office existed, or how it operated. The Office was in the process of being restructured, as the interface between the Government, the population and the administration. The Ministry of Human Rights and Freedoms also received complaints of human rights violations, including from women, through its representatives at local level. Since the National Human Rights Commission came under the authority of the Prime Minister, it was not independent within the meaning of the Paris Principles, but work was being done to change that. The Commission also

handled complaints, and worked in conjunction with the Ministry of Human Rights and Freedoms.

27. Customary law did not take precedence over the Constitution. However, people sometimes preferred to settle disputes in an informal manner, particularly when it came to family or relationship issues, partly because of prevailing sociocultural prejudice, partly because the modern justice system in Chad was very slow, and partly owing to pressure from customary chiefs. The Government was doing its utmost to disseminate the message that customary law could not take precedence over the modern justice system.

28. **Ms. Schulz** asked whether in training judges an effort was made to ensure equitable representation of the different ethnic groups in the State party, in order to facilitate public acceptance of the powers subsequently exercised by the appointed judges. She wished to know when the draft personal and family code was likely to be adopted. She also wished to know whether the Government intended to provide for penalties under the bill on reproductive health, and when it planned to review the 1996 bill on the prohibition of discriminatory practices.

29. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that there was no discrimination against individuals, including on the basis of sex, in education. Past experience of allocating senior administrative posts on the basis of geographical distribution had given rise to serious problems. Steps were currently being taken in the area of positive discrimination, but that did not extend to ensuring ethnic balance in the training of judges.

30. There had been some delay in the adoption of the personal and family code, owing to resistance in the Muslim community to some of its provisions. The draft code was currently being examined by Government with a view to its adoption by parliament. Efforts were being made to overcome discriminatory practices, including by awarding grants to women to facilitate their participation in elections and encouraging political parties to accept the principle of quotas for women candidates.

#### *Articles 3 and 4*

31. **Ms. Neubauer** asked what funding was allocated to the directorate for the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming of the Ministry of Social Action, Solidarity and the Family. She welcomed the establishment of the directorate for the promotion of girls' education within the Ministry of Education, and the creation of gender focal points in the various ministries. She asked whether there was any national mechanism for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of gender policies and programmes. She wished to know whether similar bodies for the advancement of women had been established at regional and local levels, and what cooperation there was between the central Government and regional and local authorities in coordinating policies on women's advancement.

32. Referring to paragraph 301 of the State party's report, she expressed concern at the absence of an effective mechanism to monitor implementation of the Convention, and asked whether the Government envisaged creating such a mechanism.

33. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that all ministries were involved in gender mainstreaming, via their gender focal points. The Ministry for Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women was responsible for monitoring the implementation of Act No. 19/PR/95 on the adoption of the Policy Declaration on the Integration of Women in Development. Local structures for the advancement of women existed, with seminars and workshops organized in conjunction with delegates from the Ministry for Social Action, Solidarity and the Family and various NGOs and associations, including in the area of microcredit for women.

34. **Ms. Schulz** said that the information contained in the State party's report on temporary special measures was unsatisfactory, and demonstrated only a partial understanding of the purpose of article 4 of the Convention. One example of a temporary special measure would be to introduce a quota of 30 per cent of women to sit on decision-making bodies. Did the Government envisage introducing such a measure?

35. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that there was resistance on the part of political parties to the introduction of quotas for women candidates. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women would need to submit a proposal to that effect, which would be put to the vote.

#### *Article 5*

36. **Ms. Gabr** said that it was important to transmit all of the Committee's comments and recommendations to the Government, particularly since Chad found itself at a crucial point in its history: the construction of the new Chad in which women could play their rightful role and reach their full potential. However, no amount of progress in giving effect to women's rights could be made until society allowed women to fulfil their role by changing attitudes based on traditional female stereotypes and negative perceptions of women. It was not a question of rejecting traditional female roles, such as housewife or mother, but of recognizing that women had a valuable contribution to make to their family, society and country. The Government should take steps to formulate a plan of action aimed at achieving such a change in attitude.

37. It was essential to assign clear responsibility to a designated Government institution for the promotion of women's rights and the implementation of the Convention. The practice of female genital mutilation was one of the worst forms of violence against women — as was early and forced marriage — and violated women's rights under the Convention. In order to halt those practices, it was important to address the issue of female stereotypes through educational programmes, as well as through reflection on the role played by the media, traditional chiefs and religious leaders. Civil society also played an important role in such efforts, and the Government should grant them its support and protection.

38. **Ms. Acar** said that she wished to express her heartfelt sympathy for the many difficulties Chad faced with regard to conflict, civil war, poverty and population displacements. Nevertheless, it had been 16 years since Chad had ratified the Convention, and yet the prevalence of stereotypes and discriminatory cultural norms — particularly with regard to women's access to justice and political positions — had scarcely improved. Moreover, there were reports that such stereotypes and norms, which implied the inferiority of women, perpetuated a culture of impunity in Chad. That in turn had created obstacles to the enforcement of existing laws to protect women, such as Act No. 006/PR/2002 of 15 April 2002 on the promotion of reproductive health, which did not prescribe penalties and was not enforced.

39. Rape appeared to be rampant in many parts of the country, but the offence was not properly prosecuted nor were its perpetrators punished. While recourse might be had to traditional and customary justice mechanisms, decisions rendered by those mechanisms often led to further violations of women's human rights, such as when they reached settlements involving the provision of compensation to the victim's family or marriage with the rapist. Those practices were unacceptable under the Convention, as well as inconsistent with women's human rights. It was thus essential to develop a plan of action in order to raise awareness of the discriminatory nature of those cultural norms, in keeping with article 5 of the Convention.

40. She had received information to the effect that some 45 per cent of women in Chad had undergone female genital mutilation. Of that number, 70 per cent were Muslim and 30

per cent were Christian; however, neither Islam nor Christianity endorsed that abominable practice. She asked what measures the Government had taken in order to raise awareness among traditional chiefs and religious leaders of female genital mutilation. While it was useful to work with civil society in combating that practice, the Government should assume ultimate responsibility for it, and should not relegate it to NGOs.

41. **Ms. Awori** said that, in paragraph 40 of the responses to the list of issues, the State party painted a very discouraging picture when it reported that certain practices treated by international human rights instruments as acts of violence were still practised in Chad, despite their prohibition by the Act No. 006/PR/2002 of 15 April 2002 on the promotion of reproductive health. Those practices included female genital mutilation, early marriage, domestic violence and sexual abuse. In that connection, she would be grateful to receive data and statistics on the impact of measures taken to dispel negative stereotypes and to change sociocultural behaviour patterns that reinforced a perceived inferiority of women. How were those measures carried out and how were they changing the lives of women? Were there plans to have one comprehensive law that prohibited violence against women?

42. She had received information to the effect that rape and other forms of sexual violence continued to take place, not only in eastern Chad, but in other parts of the territory, including the capital N'Djamena. Apparently many cases went unreported, owing to fear of reprisals, and even when women mustered enough courage to file a complaint, the authorities failed to take action. As a result, the perpetrators enjoyed almost complete impunity. The lack of political will, the use of traditional dispute mechanisms, such as negotiated solutions, and the weakness of the judicial system all contributed to the perpetuation of violence against women and girls. She would be grateful for information on any steps being taken to give priority to the investigation and prosecution of all perpetrators of rape and other acts of sexual violence, as well as to provide effective reparation to all victims. Were there any moves to draft comprehensive legislation on sexual offences?

43. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said he agreed that the Government should take greater responsibility for efforts to eliminate traditional female stereotypes and negative cultural norms that led to violations of women's rights, and should refrain from relegating those efforts to NGOs. He also agreed that it was necessary for the Government to formulate specific action plans in order to accomplish its objectives in that area. He wondered whether the Committee might consider holding a special meeting with the Chadian women members of the delegation who had been unable to attend the present meeting, as they could provide more specific data about the realities faced by women in Chad and even bring women victims to speak to the Committee about their experiences.

44. The fact that Chad had made little progress despite having ratified the Convention 16 years previously could be attributed to the corruption, abuse of power and self-interest that had characterized the actions of former public officials of Chad. His Government could only deplore such attitudes and regret the resulting delays in implementing certain articles of the Convention. Regrettably, corruption was present even among the current Administration. One example was that efforts to improve the performance and number of judges by significantly raising their salaries had not resulted in either attracting more judges to the profession or in fostering greater probity among them. In order to find solutions, the Government needed to exchange experiences with other partners.

45. He wished to point out that women's issues were also of concern to men; in fact, he believed that the Committee should be composed of equal numbers of men and women, so that men could also express themselves about the injustices to which women were subjected. Although greater efforts still needed to be made, progress in recognizing women's rights was slowly being made. Women were beginning to speak out about injustices they suffered and report violations more readily. In addition, certain abhorrent



practices, such as bride theft, were starting to become obsolete. He would transmit detailed statistics to the Committee in due course.

#### *Article 6*

46. **Ms. Gabr** said that trafficking in human beings was among the most serious crimes facing society, particularly where security, violence against women and poverty were issues in countries in transition. Although Chad had signed the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the regional agreement on trafficking in persons, especially women and children known as the Abuja Agreement, it had still not undertaken a review of its Criminal Code or defined human trafficking as a punishable offence. The Government should work to curtail tribal interests that prevented the adoption of such a legal definition, as it was necessary to the protection of victims. She hoped that the State party would soon amend its Criminal Code to include the offence of human trafficking.

47. She asked for additional information concerning the cooperation agreement between Chad and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on combating child trafficking, including when it would enter into force and which body would be in charge of implementing it. She hoped that it would focus not only on children, but also on men and women, who were also at risk of being trafficked. When formulating the agreement, the issue of shelters for victims should be addressed. Lastly, the Government should seek cooperation from such international organizations as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration, as well as UNICEF.

48. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, echoed the view expressed by Ms. Gabr about the importance of seeking international cooperation in the important area of human trafficking. She asked whether the incident involving the kidnapping of children for ransom in Chad had been an isolated event, or whether it was a further illustration of the worrying human rights situation in Chad.

49. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that there were few incidents of human trafficking of women for the purpose of prostitution; however the Government was currently taking measures to eradicate the phenomenon of child cowherds, where children were entrusted by their parents to intermediaries to tend the cattle of herdsmen. Another phenomenon that the Government was battling near its border with Cameroon was the kidnapping of children for ransom and the killing of those children if the ransom was not paid. A number of Chadian military officers had been found guilty of such crimes and had been imprisoned, and a joint Cameroon/Chad brigade had been deployed in order to intercept criminals. Moreover, plans were under way to establish a multinational body for coordinating security in central Africa, with headquarters in Gabon. Such efforts were all the more important since drug traffickers often used women and children to smuggle drugs into and through the territory of Chad.

50. In keeping with the suggestions of Committee members, he would recommend to his Government that consideration should be given to developing plans of action, increasing institutional accountability, establishing mechanisms for monitoring and follow-up and broadening international cooperation.

51. The incident involving the French charity L'Arche de Zoé had been an isolated event and was not indicative of a general deterioration of the human rights situation in Chad. Its borders were very porous, which probably explained why certain Chadian children, who were not orphans, had been confused with the Darfurian orphans.

52. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega** asked what steps would be taken to ensure that women journalists were not arrested or threatened with violence, enabling them to enjoy the right to

freedom of expression in their work. She also wished to know what the Government planned to do to prevent women in refugee camps from being raped by armed groups and militia, and how the dignity and rights of women prisoners were respected.

53. **Ms. Jahan** said that violence against women and young girls, including rape, was rampant in refugee camps, and that the impunity of perpetrators and lack of medical assistance were major problems. In view of reports that some members of the Integrated Security Detachment force sent to the camps to protect women and children were actually participating in the violence, she asked whether there were plans to appoint more women officers. Many victims of the forced evictions in N'Djamena were women and children, who needed to be protected against the risk of trafficking.

54. **Ms. Gabr** said that it was necessary to define the offence of trafficking in persons in the Criminal Code, since that practice did occur in the State party, including in cases where poor families gave up their children in the belief that they would be raised by wealthy families who would give them a better education.

55. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that he was not aware of any cases where journalists had been arrested, but would welcome further information from the sources of those allegations. The Government did its utmost to ensure the security of women in refugee camps, which were monitored on a daily basis by the Integrated Security Detachment force. For a long time, little assistance had been received from outside organizations, and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad had not been useful. More recently, humanitarian organizations had contributed to ensuring security in the camps.

56. Reports of rape were exaggerated and were the result of stereotypical ideas being applied to conflict situations. Eastern Chad, where the alleged rapes had supposedly taken place, was a predominantly Muslim region, and rape was very unlikely in that culture. Almost all internally displaced persons had returned to their homes. The forced evictions in N'Djamena, which had resulted in the construction of a major hospital for women and children, had been lawful and those evicted had been compensated. Prison reform was one of the Government's priorities, and new prisons were being built in the State party. Unlike in the past, prisons underwent regular inspections and emphasis was placed on the rehabilitation of prisoners rather than mere punishment.

#### *Articles 7 and 8*

57. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** expressed her concern that women, who made up half the electorate, were poorly represented in public and political life, and that appropriate measures were not being taken to remedy that. It was important to increase the number of women in politics, since that facilitated reform of legislation for the advancement of women. Consideration should be given to Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security, which urged Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.

58. She noted that there was no specific decree for implementing the Convention, and that it had been poorly publicized by the Government. The Government could, however, take the decision to disseminate the Convention, and to ratify the Optional Protocol thereto. She wished to know how the State party guaranteed that women's associations were able to work freely and autonomously, and whether they received support from the Government.

59. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani**, echoing the comments made by Ms. Bareiro-Bobadillo, said that it was important to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels. African countries had lagged behind in human rights legislation as a result of their

colonized past, but were catching up. The Committee looked forward to possible cooperation with the African Union in work to eliminate discrimination against women.

60. **Mr. Bamanga Abbas** (Chad) said that, although work was being done to disseminate the Convention, in conjunction with women's NGOs and associations, progress was very slow. The associations received subsidies from the European Union under its programme on gender justice. The Government had initiated a plan for the implementation of the recommendations of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, and all ministries had been instructed to mainstream a gender perspective in their departments. The vast majority of beneficiaries of microcredit were women.

*Article 10*

61. **Ms. Bailey** expressed her concern that, while the Constitution provided for the right of all persons to basic education, not all girls in the State party enjoyed that right, and virtually half the female population was illiterate. While she welcomed the efforts to ensure girls' attendance at primary school, including through reduced school fees for them, the very low rates of school attendance for girls, compared to boys, at secondary level, remained a problem. In her view, contributing factors included cultural practices and norms, economic and social problems and the impact of armed conflict. She wished to know to what extent girls were safe at school and free from sexual and physical harassment by boys and teachers. Bearing in mind the concerns that had been expressed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child about the recruitment of children, including girls, into armed conflict, she asked what measures existed to protect girls as well as boys in that regard. She also wished to know whether the Ministry of National Education worked with other agencies to combat that phenomenon, and, if so, what provision was made for the reintegration of children, including girls, in school.

62. Another factor that affected girls' enrolment was the customary practice of early, forced marriage, which demonstrated the low value placed by society on education for girls. In that connection, she asked what efforts were made by the Ministry of Education and other agencies to bring about a change in attitudes. With regard to teenage pregnancies, she wished to know what the State party's policy was on the education of girls during pregnancy and early motherhood, and whether pregnant girls could go back to school following the birth of their child.

63. She expressed concern that only just over a third of enrolments at technical and vocational institutions were by girls, and mostly for commercial courses; that had serious implications for the types of jobs girls could get. It was also very important for the State party to address the issue of illiteracy.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*