



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

Distr.: General  
14 November 2011

English only

---

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

**Summary record of the 1013th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 14 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Pimentel

**Contents**

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

*Combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Côte d'Ivoire*

---

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Editing Unit, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

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

*Combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Côte d'Ivoire (CEDAW/C/CIV/1-3, CEDAW/C/CIV/Q/1-3 and Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire), describing the context in which the State party's initial report and written replies to the list of issues had been submitted, said that the decade of conflict in Côte d'Ivoire had come to an end, and that free and democratic elections had been held in October 2010. Regrettably, there had been serious post-election violence and unrest, but stability had been restored and the Government had recently established a National Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
3. Assistance was required in order to improve the situation of women in Côte d'Ivoire. Nevertheless, some progress had been made in the implementation of the Convention. The principle of gender equality was established in the Constitution and in a number of national legal instruments and the Convention could be directly applied, taking precedence over national legislation.
4. The Ministry for Family, Women and Children was the main organ responsible for the implementation and monitoring of Government policy on the protection of women and children, in conjunction with other ministries via their gender-mainstreaming units. She described the National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which covered the period 2008–2012, and the National Policy Paper on Equal Opportunity, Equity and Gender.
5. Temporary special measures taken to enhance women's representation in decision-making bodies had included the Solemn Declaration on Equality of Opportunity, Equity and Gender, which was expected to become law before the forthcoming parliamentary elections and eventually to result in the achievement of gender parity. Efforts to combat gender stereotypes had included the revision of school textbooks and public information campaigns via radio and television. Work to combat exploitation and violence against women had included Act No. 98-757 penalizing female genital mutilation and the establishment of a National Committee to Combat Violence against Women and Children. Social centres had been established throughout the country and a special unit had also been set up to provide psychological support to anonymous victims of violence, including help in lodging complaints. Those measures had achieved satisfactory results since 2005. The current approach to dealing with victims of violence was a holistic one, covering psychological support, medical care, socio-economic reintegration and legal assistance. The Government had made combating violence against women one of its top priorities, and was determined to bring perpetrators to justice.
6. She described the 1999 education/training support project which included a girls' education component and aimed to support basic education for girls and women in disadvantaged areas. A formal institutional framework had been established to improve literacy, which had helped to narrow the gender gap in the area of functional literacy. A number of programmes had been implemented to promote women's health and access to medical services, including in the areas of reproductive health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS, and promising results had been achieved.
7. Work to support rural women in the important role they played in Côte d'Ivoire was coordinated by the National Agency for Rural Development Aid and the Ministry of

Agriculture. To commemorate the International Day of Rural Women, a one-week event would be held in Côte d'Ivoire.

8. Despite the progress made, however, many obstacles to full implementation of the Convention remained, the main one being political instability and the disastrous effects of the recent post-electoral violence. Women demonstrators demanding justice had even been killed. The situation of women had become even more precarious, in that access to health care and education were restricted, there had been a rise in prostitution and the number of displaced persons had increased. Those problems were compounded by the lack of financial resources available to deal specifically with women's issues. As in other developing countries, the funds assigned by Côte d'Ivoire to those issues were contained within budgets for national development programmes. The increasing feminization of poverty had made women vulnerable to serious ill-treatment and hindered their access to goods and basic social services. Illiteracy and prevailing sociocultural prejudice, combined with customary and religious practices, were further obstacles that hindered work to improve the situation of women.

9. The Government would be introducing new policies for the advancement of women, which was an important element in national reconciliation and the consolidation of peace, and would conduct media campaigns to disseminate the Convention. It would also address the problem of trafficking and exploitation of children working in cocoa plantations. The Government had recently ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Reform of criminal and civil legislation to increase the protection of women would be accelerated, taking into consideration any recommendations made by the Committee, and cooperation between the State and civil society would be strengthened.

10. Reducing inequalities between men and women in the economic, legal, political and social spheres in Côte d'Ivoire would take time, and require perseverance, but the Government was committed to that goal, and to the complete self-realization of women.

#### *Articles 1 and 2*

11. **Ms. Šimonović** asked whether, in view of the lack of specific prohibition of discrimination against women, article 6 of the Constitution was invoked to deal with cases of discrimination based on sex. Campaigns to raise awareness about the Convention should also include information on the Committee's general recommendations. She asked what system Côte d'Ivoire planned to use to bring its domestic law into conformity with international instruments that it ratified. The various discriminatory laws still in force containing provisions that were not in conformity with the Convention or, for that matter, with the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, should be amended, and a plan of action establishing a clear timetable for measures to address that issue should be formulated.

12. Given the important interconnection between the provisions of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the Convention, she asked whether the National Action Plan for the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) provided for coordinated implementation of the two instruments.

13. **Ms. Schulz**, noting the weakness of the legal system in certain parts of the country and the limited resources of the National Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, asked how the Government planned to ensure that women who had been victims of violence, not only in the post-electoral crisis but also at any time since 2002, had recourse to justice. She wished to know what support they received in lodging a complaint against a perpetrator of rape or other form of sexual abuse, how they were protected from potential rejection by their families and communities and what measures were taken to ensure that

women from all ethnic groups, including supporters of the previous President, had access to justice. She requested information about the involvement of women's organizations in those processes, given the institutional weakness found in certain regions, and how the Government envisaged cooperating with them.

14. **Ms. Patten** said that she was concerned at the inability or unwillingness of the judiciary to address the issue of rape and sexual violence against women and at the serious logistical and human resource challenges it faced as a result of the conflict, both of which exacerbated women's access to justice. She recalled that it was a basic principle of international law that States were required to prevent violations of international law, investigate violations effectively and promptly, take action against those allegedly responsible and provide effective remedies to victims, including reparation. She asked whether a system was in place to collect and analyse data in order to guide the implementation of legislative and policy measures needed to comply with that principle.

15. Given that Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) provided an important political framework for advancing advocacy on women, peace and security, she asked whether the Government planned to adopt a national plan of action concerning its implementation. She would be grateful for information on specific measures it was taking to put an end to the targeting of women and girls by perpetrators of post-electoral violence and to the impunity of the perpetrators of such violence.

16. She asked how the Government was dealing with the collapsed electoral machinery, and she enquired whether Côte d'Ivoire intended to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and to bring its domestic legislation fully into line with its provisions.

17. The Government should ensure that the National Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission addressed women's experience of the conflict, including violations of their rights and structural gender inequalities that resulted in discrimination. The Commission's efforts on behalf of women should not be limited to helping them gain access to political positions or ending violations of civil and political rights; they should also include ensuring their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. She wished to know to what extent the mandate of the Commission would embrace the interdependence of human rights by addressing all violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that had occurred during the conflict, including pervasive gender inequality.

18. She wished to know how the Government was addressing the security risks posed by the continuing attacks of militia groups on civilians in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire and the exposure of refugees and internally displaced persons to sexual and other forms of violence. She asked how the Government planned to deal with the economic vulnerability of women, the absence of the rule of law and the flagrant impunity of perpetrators.

19. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, since a large percentage of the population lived in rural areas, where illiteracy was prevalent, the Ministry for Family, Women and Children planned to take a grass-roots approach to disseminating the Convention and other related texts produced by the Committee, using radio and other means of audio transmission. Such an approach had already been used successfully by the Ministry during pre-election campaigns to inform women of their civil rights. In the current context, it would require the translation of the Convention and its related texts into the main languages of Côte d'Ivoire.

20. The plan of action for the implementation of the Convention had four main components: the protection of women and girls against gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation; the mainstreaming of gender in development programmes and policies; the participation of men and women in the reconstruction process and their national reintegration; and strengthening women's participation in the political decision-making process.

21. **Ms. Kaba** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that several legislative and policy instruments had been developed with the aim of giving effect to the provisions of the Convention, including the Act of 23 December 1998, which penalized female genital mutilation, and the National Action Plan for Women (2003–2007). Furthermore, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) had served as the basis for the formulation of two draft ordinances: one on increasing women's participation in public administration and the other amending certain provisions of the Electoral Code.

22. A plan of action to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) had been introduced, and its results would be evaluated in November 2011 in order to identify ways to improve its implementation. The plan would enable the Ministry for Family, Women and Children to gather recent data on the situation of women, especially with regard to the acts of violence they had experienced, including during the post-electoral crisis.

23. Following its participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women; Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Côte d'Ivoire had begun taking steps in all sectors of activity and in all programmes, plans and projects to bring gender issues into the mainstream of society. Those efforts were reflected, inter alia, in its aid programme for the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons, which provided psychosocial assistance and social reintegration services, as well as the implementation of the Convention and of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

24. **Ms. Sangaré** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the Ministry for Family, Women and Children cooperated closely with national civil society organizations in helping women in Côte d'Ivoire to exercise their rights. With support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the action taken in implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) aimed to increase women's involvement in political life. The experiences of other countries, such as Rwanda, had demonstrated that, in countries where women were well represented in the legislature, there was peace and stability. On that reasoning, efforts were under way to achieve a majority of women deputies in the National Assembly.

25. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that a pilot counselling project, involving a group of 10 men and 39 women victims of rape and other forms of physical and moral abuse, had met with psychologists on the premises of the Ministry for Family, Women and Children. Although the project was small in scale, the results it had obtained were significant. They showed that women had a profound need to talk about their experiences and to be heard. After telling their story, 37 of the 39 women had decided to lodge a complaint. The Ministry regarded that outcome as a victory, because without a complaint there could be no reparation. The pilot project had also revealed the need to offer victims a form of reparation that was tailored to their needs, whether psychosocial, medical or material.

26. The Government considered that, although the healing of psychological wounds and the full rehabilitation of families and the nation could not be realized until Ivorians showed greater tolerance towards one another, the active phase of the work of the National Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission should not be extended beyond two years.

27. One of the first decisions of the Ministry of Justice of the new Administration had been to rehabilitate Abidjan's main prison, which had been destroyed during post-election clashes, and to round up escaped prisoners, some of whom had committed acts of violence against women following their escape. The Ministry of Justice had also taken action to ensure that male and female prisoners were housed separately and that the rights of women prisoners were taken into account.

28. The Ministry for Family, Women and Children relied on regular cooperation with civil society. One example was the mission it had carried out in three cities in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, where women had been subjected to a large number of acts of violence. The aim of the mission had been to evaluate the situation of families whose

members had been separated from each other. Some 90 per cent of the residents of the shelters that had been established were women and children, who were waiting to return to their villages, many of which had been destroyed.

29. A planned visit by the President to the shelters had had to be postponed because militia groups, which had been used by the previous Government to commit atrocities in Côte d'Ivoire, had come out of hiding and had engaged in attacks on refugee centres and shelters, committing further acts of rape and violence against women and children. That situation illustrated the magnitude of the challenge facing the Government in its attempts to protect the women in the shelters and to enable them to return to their villages once their homes had been rebuilt.

30. She recalled that former President Laurent Gbagbo had promulgated Act No. 2003-309 on 8 August 2003, which granted amnesty to exiled soldiers and military personnel detained on charges of undermining State security in events occurring between 2000 and 2002. In contrast, current President Alassane Ouattara believed that transparency and justice were important elements in establishing the rule of law. To that end, he had called on the International Criminal Court to investigate allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity that had taken place during the civil war following the November 2010 elections.

31. **Ms. Bakayoko** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the current Government had made ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court a priority. In December 2010 the President of the Republic had accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and in February 2011 had invited the Court to investigate matters of justice in Côte d'Ivoire. Once parliament was operational, the Rome Statute was expected to be ratified.

32. **Ms. Šimonović** asked whether the State party intended to use the Convention in addition to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), particularly article 4, paragraph 1, and article 7 thereof, for the purpose of increasing women's political participation. She wished to know whether the legislation on amnesty for crimes committed during the first civil war precluded amnesty for war crimes and crimes against humanity. She would also appreciate information on the number of ongoing cases involving rape and sexual violence against women that were before the courts, including the number of persons prosecuted.

33. **Ms. Schulz** asked whether, in proceedings against alleged perpetrators of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, supporters of the two former presidential candidates were targeted in an even-handed manner.

34. **Ms. Patten** said that she had not yet received an answer to her question about whether the National Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission would address women's civil, political and socio-economic rights, and existing structural gender inequalities. She had also asked what the Government was doing to protect refugees and internally displaced women from sexual and other forms of violence.

35. **Ms. Kaba** (Côte d'Ivoire), referring the Committee to the information contained in paragraph 24 of the written replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/CIV/Q/1-3/Add.1), said that the Government took the Convention into consideration in its work just as it took into consideration Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The Convention and its Optional Protocol were also used as a reference tool when it came to increasing women's political participation, as could be seen from paragraph 97 of the written replies.

36. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that she did not have details of the specific content of the legislation on amnesty but would provide further information subsequently. From January 2011 to the end of July 2011 there had been approximately 1,000 cases of gender-based violence, just over one third of which had been rapes. Further figures were contained

in a document prepared by the Ministry for Family, Women and Children, which she had submitted to the Chairperson. Acts of violence, including those committed by members of the armed forces and those cooperating with the former President, many of whom had since left the country, were judged on a case-by-case basis. Five members of the National Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission were women, who sharpened the Commission's focus on acts of abuse and violence against women.

### *Article 3*

37. **Ms. Neubauer** said that it was a matter of concern that the Directorate of Gender Equality and Promotion attached to the Ministry for Family, Women and Children was allocated scarce financial resources, given that it was the central coordinating body for the advancement of women. She asked if there were any plans to allocate more funds for activities aimed at accelerating implementation of the Convention, and what level of staffing the Directorate had. She wished to know whether the strategic plan for implementation of the National Policy Paper on Equal Opportunity, Equity and Gender had been finalized, and what its priorities were.

38. **Ms. Ameline** asked for details of how responsibility for women's issues was shared between the Ministry for Family, Women and Children and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. She would welcome further information on the main thrust of the justice system reform under way, including on how the law would be applied in practice and court capacity strengthened.

39. It was important for the State party to establish a system for the compilation of specific statistics on violence against women. She wished to know whether any inter-ministerial committees existed for purposes of gender mainstreaming, and whether the Ministry for Family, Women and Children had the authority to demand that colleagues establish rigorous plans in that area. She would appreciate information on the current situation of women in areas where humanitarian concerns were the most acute.

40. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that while it was true that the Ministry for Family, Women and Children was poorly funded, development partners had provided valuable support for many of its activities, for example the National Plan of Action for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). The Directorate of Gender Equality and Promotion was well staffed with experts on women's issues. She added that the strategic plan for implementation of the National Policy Paper on Equal Opportunity, Equity and Gender had been finalized.

41. **Ms. Kaba** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the four main areas of intervention under the National Gender Policy were described in paragraph 168 of Côte d'Ivoire's periodic report (CEDAW/C/CIV/1-3). The budget to implement the policy had been adopted but not yet brought into effect. The gender-mainstreaming units were operational in all 14 ministries, but their work was limited by budgetary constraints.

42. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the aim of the ongoing reform of the justice sector was to bring justice closer to citizens, including women. To that end, sliding-scale legal fees were being introduced; information on legislation and legal procedures was being broadly disseminated; perpetrators of violence were being punished; ad hoc offices had been set up by the Government close to the central court in Abidjan in order to receive complaints from victims of the post-electoral crisis; and the role of the National Committee to Combat Violence against Women and Children had been strengthened. There was close cooperation between the Ministry for Family, Women and Children and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and a joint committee of enquiry had been established to investigate cases of gender-based violence.

43. **Ms. Bakayoko** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that there were some 200,000 Ivorian refugees in neighbouring countries, most of them in Liberia, and some 700,000 internally displaced persons. Approximately 2,500 refugees had returned voluntarily to Côte d'Ivoire, and almost half of all internally displaced persons had returned from neighbouring countries. In order to prevent the recurrence of serious acts of violence against women in shelters for the protection of internally displaced persons, security in the shelters was being stepped up.

44. **Ms. Sangaré** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that women's access to justice had been facilitated by the establishment of a support unit attached to all courts, which provided literacy assistance and financial aid for obtaining legal documents.

45. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** asked what proportion of work for the advancement of women was carried out by the State and by NGOs, respectively. Similarly, what funds were allocated by the State to the national machinery for gender equality, as distinct from the funding received from international cooperation partners? That information would help identify areas in which further capacity-building was needed.

46. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the relevant ministries, including the Ministry for Family, Women and Children, received support from a variety of United Nations and other development partners. Problems were frequently experienced in the gathering of reliable statistics, but in that area also valuable support was received from partners such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

#### *Article 4*

47. **Ms. Neubauer**, noting that there was no legal basis in Côte d'Ivoire for the introduction of temporary special measures, asked if the State party was considering establishing such a basis — or even a policy — to that end.

48. **Mr. Gleglaud** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the Government could formalize its commitment to achieving full compliance with the provisions of the Convention, either at the administrative or statutory level.

49. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that private sector discrimination against women often took the form of unequal pay for men and women with the same qualifications. However, the situation was improving, and there was sufficient political will to bring about a positive change in that regard.

#### *Article 5*

50. **Ms. Acar** said that it was important to examine deeply entrenched discriminatory cultural traditions and practices that were at the root of violence against women and were invoked to justify atrocities committed in times of crisis. Those included: dowry payments, forced and early marriage, levirate and sororate marriage, female genital mutilation and the position of the husband as head of the household. Many of those practices were not criminalized and no penalties were prescribed for them under domestic law. Moreover, the acts of domestic violence and marital rape, as well as the practices of levirate and sororate marriage, were not covered in domestic law. She requested details as to when, in the context of its review of the Criminal Code, the Government expected to conclude consideration of each of those issues and how it would deal with them. She asked whether the Committee could assume that the new or amended legislation would be fully in conformity with international standards on those issues, including on domestic violence, marital rape and the position of husbands as head of household.

51. The seriousness and pervasiveness of the problems arising from such traditions and practices called for a large-scale, systematic and multilevel national awareness-raising campaign on how they violated the provisions of the Convention. She asked whether the



Government intended to organize such a campaign; if so, she suggested that it should be run at both the national and local levels, in cooperation with the most influential opinion shapers and religious leaders of the community.

52. **Ms. Awori** asked whether the National Strategy against Gender-Based Violence had been approved, and if so, how it was being implemented. She also requested information on other initiatives aimed at addressing gender-based violence and what results they had achieved.

53. She wished to know whether consideration had been given to formulating a definition of rape, since the lack of such a definition in the Criminal Code made it difficult for victims to obtain effective access to justice and adequate and prompt reparation. She asked whether the Government planned to formulate a comprehensive sexual offences act that would specifically define each offence, as well as provide for effective remedies and protection for victims.

54. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that traditional chiefs and religious leaders had been invited to participate in processes aimed at eliminating female stereotypes. However, in developing countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, certain traditions and cultural practices should be retained, even as the country undertook efforts aimed at modernization. Traditional marriage customs, for example, were dear to the hearts of Ivorians, and not everything should be modelled on Western traditions.

55. Obviously, no modern State could condone such practices as forced marriage or domestic violence. Early and forced marriage were prohibited by the Criminal Code; in addition, the minimum age of marriage was set at the age of majority, which was 18 for women and 21 for men. Female genital mutilation was prohibited by the Act of 23 December 1998.

56. **Ms. Kaba** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, although the Ministry for Family, Women and Children intended to review the National Strategy against Gender-Based Violence in the light of the post-electoral crisis, it had not waited for approval of the strategy before taking action against such violence. The *Centre Pavvios d'Attécoubé* and the *Centre d'Excellence des Femmes de Man* were facilities that provided holistic care to women victims of gender-based violence; the Ministry intended to replicate those centres in other parts of Côte d'Ivoire.

57. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that a unit on combating gender-based violence was attached to the Ministry. Its establishment demonstrated the importance attached by the Government to that aspect of the protection of women's rights.

58. **Ms. Sangaré** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that when rape was perpetrated by a spouse or a person with close ties to the woman, it was punishable under the Criminal Code as part of the broader offence of domestic violence.

59. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that rape was often used as a weapon of war during armed conflicts, and was punished as such under the domestic law.

#### *Article 6*

60. **Ms. Jahan** said that Côte d'Ivoire was reportedly a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking; internal trafficking was also thought to be rampant in Côte d'Ivoire. Women were apparently trafficked primarily for the purposes of forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation. She requested information on the magnitude of trafficking in women in Côte d'Ivoire, on existing anti-trafficking legislation and on measures taken by the Government to prevent and combat that scourge, including the investigation, prosecution and conviction of offenders. She also requested data and statistics on victim

assistance and witness protection measures, as well as on the role of NGOs in combating trafficking in Côte d'Ivoire.

61. According to reports reaching the Committee, law enforcement officials made little effort to combat trafficking, and charges of official complicity in the exploitation of women victims of trafficking or prostitution were not properly investigated, owing primarily to an ineffective legal framework and a lack of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation consistent with international standards. Although the State was in the process of reviewing the Criminal Code, trafficking was not included in that review.

62. She asked whether the State intended to become a party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Protocol) and if so, within what time frame. She wished to know how the Government planned to address the issues of poverty and unemployment, which had been identified as causes of trafficking and forced prostitution in Côte d'Ivoire, and whether it envisaged the adoption of legislation that specifically criminalized prostitution. She asked why the Government had not yet ratified the Regional Agreement against Trafficking in Persons, particularly Trafficking in Women and Children (Abuja Agreement) and enquired whether it intended to become a party to any other bilateral or multilateral agreements that provided for the prosecution of organizers of transboundary trafficking.

63. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that Côte d'Ivoire was struggling to come to grips with the major crisis that it had recently experienced. Crises were often accompanied by poverty and a subsequent increase in prostitution. The Ministry for Family, Women and Children had collaborated with the Ministry of the Interior to produce statistics on prostitution, but it did not have data on trafficking in women. It was incorrect to say that law enforcement officials had made little effort to combat trafficking, given that the new Administration took the rule of law and justice very seriously.

64. The Government was considering becoming a party to the Palermo Protocol, but had not been able to finalize the ratification of that or other instruments in time for its interactive dialogue with the Committee. Unemployment was a major problem for a country emerging from a 10-year crisis and combating it was a priority for her Government.

65. In conjunction with the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire, the Ministry for Family, Women and Children had taken steps to address child trafficking, especially transboundary trafficking, as well as to eliminate child labour in plantations. The Government was also working in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to find lasting solutions to those interrelated problems. Côte d'Ivoire had signed a cooperation agreement with Mali establishing procedures for the repatriation and integration of child victims of trafficking. A meeting of experts on transboundary trafficking was to be held in Abidjan in November 2011, at which the First Ladies of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali would preside; they, in turn, had pledged to encourage the First Ladies of the other countries in the subregion to help end that scourge. Having taken office only recently, the new Administration of Côte d'Ivoire had not yet had time to ratify the Abuja Agreement.

66. **Ms. Acar** said that culture and tradition were dear to everyone's heart; however, there were discriminatory aspects of cultures that must be eradicated. Those included dowry payments, forced and early marriage, levirate and sororate marriages, the position of the husband as the head of household and female genital mutilation. She requested information on the status of the reform of the Criminal Code as it related to those offences, which were considered under international law to be discriminatory and therefore in violation of women's human rights.

67. **Ms. Gabr** said that it would be useful, in the context of the Criminal Code reform, to increase the penalties for the offence of female genital mutilation, which had remained a prevalent practice since 1998.

68. The Government should consider commissioning a social research firm to conduct a study on human trafficking in Côte d'Ivoire with the aim of identifying what forms of trafficking were practised in its territory.

69. **Ms. Jahan** said that she agreed with the need for a study on human trafficking, and further suggested that the scope of efforts being carried out in conjunction with the First Lady on child trafficking should be enlarged to include trafficking in women.

70. She had been deeply concerned by reports of allegations of sexual abuses by United Nations peacekeeping forces in Côte d'Ivoire, all the more so since protectors should not become perpetrators. She hoped that Côte d'Ivoire would cooperate with the United Nations to ensure that the perpetrators were brought to justice and not merely dismissed from their posts, since that would be too light a punishment for what amounted to war crimes.

71. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega** asked whether the Government informed rape victims of their right to psychological and medical support, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1960 (2010). Rape was an act of sexual aggression on the part of men and was used as a weapon of war. She asked whether the State party would consider demanding that a public apology should be extended to women for the violations committed against them during the conflict.

72. **Ms. Coffie** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the payment of dowry was not considered to be the sale of a woman; rather, it was intended to show others the importance that a man attributed to his future bride. Ivoirians did not consider it to be a denigration of women or an act of violence towards them. The review of the Criminal Code would address discriminatory practices and would be undertaken as soon as possible, subject to the constraints affecting the country's reconstruction efforts. The lack of provisions prescribing penalties for certain acts was due to the fact that, when a law was enacted, the enabling decree was not issued immediately. Although the Government had enacted laws to prohibit female genital mutilation, it was still practised in rural areas in particular. The Government would continue raising awareness of the fact that female genital mutilation was an act of violence punishable under criminal law.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*