



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women  
Fifty-first session**

**Summary record of the 1023rd meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 15 February 2012, at 3 p.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Pimentel

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(*continued*)

*Combined initial and second to fifth periodic reports of Grenada (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

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

*Combined initial and second to fifth periodic reports of Grenada (continued)*  
(CEDAW/C/GRD/1-5, CEDAW/C/GRD/Q/1-5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson the delegate of Grenada took a place at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada), providing further responses to questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting, said that the consultation process on the constitutional review had been somewhat limited in scope. Public interest in it had been overshadowed by other issues that seemed more critical. Nonetheless, efforts were being made to ensure that the consultation process involved all population groups. Definitions of equality and discrimination would be addressed as part of the review and a phrase along the lines of “regardless of sex, beliefs or opinion” would be considered for inclusion in the new Constitution. Likewise consideration would be given to how to take account of the international treaty obligations in the new instrument, in keeping with its domestic legislation.
3. There were currently no plans to adopt special temporary measures to bring about de facto equality. That was, however, the overall strategy of the national gender equality and action plan.
4. Although the domestic violence helpline was not currently operational pending staffing and management decisions, it would be opened for calls in the future. Under the proposed constitutional amendments, the current three-month statute of limitations for sexual offences would be withdrawn. There was a human trafficking project that was supported by the Organization of American States (OAS) which was nearing the implementation stage and would assist in monitoring and preventing trafficking in persons at the international level.
5. No specific legislation was currently envisaged to address the representation of women in Parliament and in public and political life; moreover, it was clear that the Division of Gender and Family Affairs received limited and inadequate resources.
6. The application forms for citizenship of Grenada completed by Commonwealth citizens reflected outdated practices and the question of their discriminatory nature would be addressed. As far as protection orders were concerned, court officials, police officers and social workers could fill in the relevant forms, but only magistrates could grant protection orders. They were granted after hearing both applicants in court and were subsequently enforced by the police. Breaching a protection order could result in immediate arrest.
7. Sex education was an integral part of the health and family life education programme that was taught in all primary and secondary schools and ongoing training was designed to ensure that all teachers had the capacity to teach the full programme.
8. While the basic principle underlying remuneration in the workplace was of equal pay for equal work, a disparity between men’s and women’s wages could be observed in situations where men and women worked in the same industry but did not perform the same work. One example was the construction industry, where women received a lower salary than men, since they tended to be employed in support roles, rather than in the most physically challenging jobs. Policy-based action was being taken to combat the gender division of labour by encouraging women to move into new areas. Action included private initiatives, such as at one girls’ school, which had introduced technical drawing, formerly an industry dominated by men, into their curriculum. The economic situation had had an

adverse effect on the implementation of policy measures but did not necessarily reflect political will.

9. The assessment of students for scholarships was carried out by an objective, transparent committee in such a way as to exclude the possibility of inappropriate sexual conduct or sexual abuse. Currently he had no information on the number of women covered by the national insurance scheme. Such information would be transmitted to the Committee in due course.

*Articles 10 to 14 (continued)*

10. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega** said the Committee had received information indicating that women living in isolated communities were often the victims of violence, but that the police failed to take action on their complaints. She asked what measures the State party would take to train the police to respond appropriately to such incidents and whether there were any specific measures targeted at rural areas. She expressed concern about the information contained in paragraph 190 of the combined report that young girls were sometimes unable to participate in recreational activities outside their home due to the fear of possible sexual violence; the Committee would appreciate more information in that connection.

11. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the fear of rape on the streets, which existed only in limited situations, was indeed a cause for concern, but would be addressed through legal and educational measures and information campaigns. Once implemented, the proposed national strategic action plan to end gender-based violence would also address the problem. Appropriate recommendations by Committee members would also be welcomed.

12. One key element of that national strategic action plan was training stakeholders, and specific instruments would be put in place to train police officers and first responders in that respect. Ongoing training would ensure that the police were more proactive in both prosecuting and preventing violence against women and the first training session was scheduled to take place shortly. The action plan also outlined recommendations for activities to inform the public about human rights and protecting human rights, including in isolated communities. Employing the appropriate language and medium of communication were crucial to the success of such activities, and the radio and television networks were the most effective means of disseminating information. As NGOs and other groups in civil society became more active and empowered their role in disseminating information would also come to the fore.

*Articles 15 and 16*

13. **Ms. Schulz** said that, as the Marriage Act of 1903 and the Married Woman's Property Act of 1896 had not been amended, men and women were living under United Kingdom laws dating as far back as the nineteenth century, when women's rights were very limited. She asked when a decision might be made to revise the two Acts.

14. Among the discriminatory public policies in Grenada was the requirement that the marriage certificate should contain the names and surnames of the spouses' fathers but not those of their mothers. Another discriminatory policy was that there was an order of preference with regard to parental consent for marriage of persons between the ages of 16 and 21 that gave precedence to fathers' and legal guardians' consent over that of mothers. Given that a new law had recently lowered the age of majority from 21 to 18 but that the minimum age of marriage was still 16, she asked whether the Government planned to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 for both sexes.

15. Under the Married Women's Property Act, couples could choose whether to own property jointly or to each own an equal share of their property. Under the first system, the

husband or wife could not, by means of a will, deprive the surviving spouse of their joint property; however, under the second, spouses could dispose of their share freely in their will. She enquired whether any data was available on the number of widows who might have been deprived of their deceased husband's share of property.

16. She wished to know whether the Government planned to improve the situation of common law or de facto spouses since, as indicated in paragraph 224 of the report, they were generally not recognized as next of kin for the purposes of maintenance, inheritance and property rights. The fact that there was a high incidence of children born to unmarried mothers in Grenada lent urgency to the need to tackle that issue. In addition, it was important to ensure that when de facto spouses acquired property jointly, the property title contained the name of both spouses, not only that of the man.

17. Regarding the proposed child maintenance and spousal maintenance legislation, she noted that, given the poverty rate for female-headed households in Grenada, maintenance payments were crucially important. Reports that improvements made to the corresponding claim process had rendered them time-consuming, difficult to enforce and discriminatory to unmarried mothers raised questions about women's access to justice. Another problem was that the proposed maintenance payments were low and insufficient to shield mothers and children from poverty. She asked whether the bills would prescribe public assistance in cases where the father's income was insufficient to supply the required maintenance.

18. She wished to know when regulations governing the registration of births or the application for a passport for a minor under the age of 16 would be revised so as to ensure the equal status of the mother and father in terms of providing written consent. Lastly, she enquired whether Grenada required technical assistance in order to bring its legislation into conformity with its Constitution and with the Convention.

19. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the questions raised by Ms. Schulz were very pertinent and struck at the very core of the inequality that existed in Grenada. The need for parental consent to marriage for persons between the ages of 16 and 21 clearly contradicted the Constitution itself, since the prescribed age for registration as a voter was 18. He would ensure that the matter was brought to the attention of the competent authorities.

20. He was not sure whether data was collected systematically on the number of wives who had been deprived of their deceased husband's share of their joint estate, but would request that information from the relevant institution. The fact that the question had arisen in the dialogue with the Committee might serve as the necessary impetus for collecting such information in future. He agreed that women's inheritance rights as embodied in the domestic law needed to be reviewed and amended in order to bring them into conformity with the Convention.

21. Problems relating to child and spousal maintenance and improvements in the claim process reflected inherent weaknesses in the judicial system as a whole. Those weaknesses had to do with inefficient policies and a lack of adequate judicial personnel to deal with such cases, which led to delays in their processing. Thus, the problems were attributable to the general challenges faced by individuals when dealing with the Grenadian legal system rather than to gender-related issues per se.

22. He agreed that the amount of child maintenance payments should be reviewed. Perhaps that might be undertaken within the broader context of efforts to ensure equal pay and to move more families out of poverty. He would check with the relevant authorities and report back to the Committee on whether public assistance was available in cases where persons liable for maintenance payments were unable to make them.

23. The Division of Gender and Family Affairs within the Ministry of Social Development was doing everything possible given its existing resources to move forward

on the issues raised by Committee members. That said, there was no question that additional support in the form of technical assistance would be welcomed by his Government.

24. **Ms. Rasekh** said that she was concerned at the absence of a Grenadian delegation from the capital. She had seen it happen before that, despite the best efforts of a State party's sole representative, agreements and understandings arrived at during the dialogue with the Committee on the need for amendments to domestic laws, programmes and policies were not adequately followed up by authorities in the capital.

25. **Ms. Schulz** asked whether the Commonwealth of Nations had model legislation that could be used by its member States. If so, the Government might find such legislation useful in its efforts to reform family law.

26. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that many of the points that had elicited his concurrence with Committee members were mentioned in the draft national strategic plan to end gender-based violence or related to draft legislation currently under consideration in Grenada. The Committee could rest assured that he would communicate to his Government all of the common understandings that had resulted from his dialogue with them in the same spirit in which they had been expressed at the present meeting.

27. He wished to report that amendments to sexual offence provisions in the Criminal Code that were currently being considered included the introduction of a new definition of rape and the criminalization of marital rape. As to the expected date of the entry into force of proposed legislation on child maintenance, he would request the Ministry of Social Development to inform the Committee on that issue in due course.

28. The Government had been actively involved in using model legislation from the Caribbean and other regions of the world. In fact, whenever possible, it drew on the experience of other countries to help further its development. In addition, Grenada actively implemented regional programmes, such as a programme to combat human trafficking that was sponsored by OAS.

29. In conclusion, he recalled that the implementation of the Convention in Grenada was a work in progress. Despite the lack of a delegation from the capital and lengthy delays in its reporting obligations, Grenada was determined in its efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and would continue to make progress in that direction.

30. **The Chairperson** thanked the representative of Grenada for his constructive dialogue with the Committee, which had provided further insights into the situation of women in Grenada. The Committee commended the State party on its efforts and encouraged it to take all necessary measures to address the Committee's concerns for the purposes of a more comprehensive implementation of the provisions of the Convention throughout the territory of the State party for the benefit of all women and girls in the country.

*The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.*