



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

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

Twenty-eighth session

Summary record of the 592nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 15 January 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Açar

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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 third and fourth periodic report of Kenya (CEDAW/C/KEN/3-4)

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

2. **Ms. Ongewe** (Kenya), introducing the third and fourth periodic report of Kenya (CEDAW/C/KEN/3-4), said that her Government collaborated with non-governmental and community-based organizations in implementing the provisions of the Convention. Reports submitted to the Committee were therefore produced in collaboration with stakeholders. Her Government was also currently considering ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. As a result of the recent elections, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) Party had formed a new Government, which would be guided by the principles of democracy, good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights.

3. Kenya recognized that gender inequalities persisted and was committed to ensuring that gender equality was promoted as a necessary precondition for national development and the realization of the full potential of each and every Kenyan. It undertook ensure the removal of social, cultural and legal obstacles faced by women, including through affirmative action, and would encourage participation of non-governmental and community-based organizations. Accordingly, the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women, or the Women's Bureau had been elevated to a full Department of the new Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services.

4. The challenge facing Kenya was to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth. A Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) had been prepared in 2001 with a view to implementing the National Poverty Eradication Plan in a series of three-year instalments. A gender theme group had been formed, and the Plan provided an opportunity for the national women's machinery, women's groups and civil society as a whole to influence the development agenda and strengthen partnerships.

5. A new draft Constitution had been published on 27 September 2002 and was awaiting consideration by the National Constitutional Conference before being introduced in Parliament. The Constitution of Kenya Review Act required that a third of the delegates to the Constitutional Conference should be women. The Government had undertaken to ensure that the new Constitution, which represented a milestone for the women of Kenya because it contained provisions to empower women and eliminate discrimination, was in force by June 2003.

6. In the new Constitution the definition of discrimination had been expanded to include race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic and social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. In recognition of past injustices in the treatment of women, it required the Government to take legislative or other action to benefit disadvantaged groups, including affirmative action. It also prohibited any law, culture, custom or tradition which undermined the dignity, welfare, interest or status of women and would therefore enable women to have rights equal to those of men to inherit, have access to and control property. It conferred citizenship on any person born of Kenyan mother or father or married to a Kenyan citizen for a period of not less than three years. That citizenship would not be lost through remarriage or dissolution of the marriage.

7. Under the draft Constitution every person had the right to access to health care, including reproductive health care. Her Government accorded high priority to the provision of quality health services, with special emphasis on primary health care. It intended to reform the health sector, including decentralization, increased investment in preventive health, partnership with the private sector and civil society, creation of a comprehensive health insurance scheme and improvement of health sector facilities and service delivery.

8. While HIV/AIDS remained a major threat to social and economic development, the infection rate had fallen from 14 per cent to 10.2 per cent in 2002 and the Government would continue to fight the spread of that scourge. Its priorities were adoption of the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Bill, development of a comprehensive research and control programme based on partnerships with stakeholders, building the capacity of intermediate and local level organizations

and partners and making antiretroviral drugs affordable.

9. The Standing Committee on Human Rights had been transformed into the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, whose function was to investigate, on its own initiative or upon complaint, any human rights violation. As the chief agent of the Government, it ensured that the Government complied with its international human rights obligations and had the power to order compensation or other lawful remedy or redress for infringement of any human right. In order to address the problem of domestic violence against women, the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Bill 2002 proposed the establishment of a fund to provide financial assistance, shelters and counselling and legal services for victims of domestic violence.

10. There had been a gradual increase in the number of women participating in politics and decision-making. Her Government's manifesto called for a policy of equal opportunity for women and men and it was committed to improving women's representation in the judiciary, diplomatic service and administration, including at the highest levels. The number of women members of Parliament had risen from four in 1997 to nine currently, out of a total of 210 elected members of Parliament. Three had been appointed to the cabinet as ministers while three others had the rank of assistant minister. Of the 12 nominated members of Parliament, eight were highly qualified professional women as compared to only four in the previous Parliament. The total of 17 women parliamentarians, while still insufficient, was the highest number in the history of Kenya. The increasing visibility of women in key positions was indicative of the trend towards the elimination of gender stereotyping and increased awareness of women's issues.

11. A policy of free, compulsory primary education had been instituted leading to an unprecedented increase in enrolment, including of girls, in primary schools. To ensure smooth implementation of the policy, a national task force had been established; its membership represented various stakeholders in the education field. Furthermore, in order to raise the literacy level of women who dropped out of the formal education system, the Government intended to adopt the Adult and Continuing Education Bill 2001, which would allow adult learners to progress from basic literacy to university level education.

12. The extent of sexual harassment in the workplace was not known since such cases were rarely reported, although the Government was aware of some incidents in the public service. In order to address such issues, the Public Offices Code of Ethics Bill would outlaw sexual harassment in the public service; and the Teacher's Code of Ethics prohibited teachers from harassing their students sexually. Incidents of sexual harassment in a few public universities had been dealt with firmly, and some offenders had been dismissed.

13. Rural women were also more aware of their rights and were playing an increasing role in decision-making. Her Government and development partners would continue to support women's groups and their income-generating activities through agricultural training courses at district training centres, loans to farmers by cooperatives and grants to women's groups from the Department of Social Services and the National Poverty Eradication Programme. Various microfinance institutions were also assisting registered groups in both rural and urban areas.

14. Although women and men had equal access to the courts, lack of awareness of their rights and lack of funds to pay for legal representation continued to be obstacles. The Government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and development partners, had therefore undertaken to establish a national legal aid scheme. In the area of marriage and family law, African Christian, Hindu, Muslim and African customary marriages were currently recognized; the draft Constitution would continue to recognize all types of marriage but guaranteed equal rights for men and women, including following dissolution of the marriage.

General observations

15. **The Chairperson** welcomed the new Government's commitment to ending discrimination and promoting human rights, in particular the rights of women, and its recognition of existing problems. The draft Constitution appeared to address many gender discrimination issues and she urged the Government to follow up on its intention to address the problems posed by traditional and customary laws and practices, which were so often detrimental to women. It was hoped the next report would indicate that proactive measures had been taken in that regard. Finally, she said that the size of the delegation and the close involvement of non-governmental organizations in

preparing the report testified to Kenya's commitment to women's rights.

16. **Ms. Shin** said that, although the written report had been disappointing, the oral presentation had left her much more optimistic. She welcomed the elevation of the Women's Bureau to the Department level and hoped that it would soon become a separate ministry. The draft Constitution and many bills pending approval were positive signs but she stressed the need to ensure gender equality, not simply gender equity, by means of a true rights-based approach to women's issues in all areas. That would require greater awareness of women's rights and changing the mindset of both women and men.

17. Close links must be maintained with non-governmental organizations and civil society, which played a crucial role in ensuring awareness and implementation of the Convention. With regard to violence against women, which was pervasive, she stressed the need for urgent action and, although welcoming the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Bill, also called, for example, for training of law enforcement officials in order to better deal with violations of women's rights.

18. **Ms. Kapalata** said that many years had passed since Kenya's last report. There was an impressive list of bills and initiatives, but all seemed to be pending or incomplete, with very little apparently having been achieved in concrete terms. It was, therefore, urgent that the new Government should act decisively and meet its commitment to enact the new Constitution, which was very forward-looking, as well as other measures to ensure full implementation of the Convention.

19. **Ms. Šimonović** said that she would welcome more information about how the planned Constitutional reform might change the relationship between international and domestic law. She also wondered whether the Kenyan Government had approved the combined third and fourth report and, with respect to the new Children's Act, asked for clarification of the role played by the provincial administration as well as of the sanctions applicable under the Act.

20. **Ms. González Martínez** said she had been discouraged by the combined third and fourth report, because it had not shown progress in applying the Convention or in eradicating discrimination against women. Kenya had ratified the Convention 19 years

ago, and the Committee had hoped to see evidence of more progress. She welcomed the new draft Constitution, however, and expressed the hope that it would be approved, but wondered whether it would change the way common and customary laws were applied, or the way international instruments were incorporated into domestic law — especially those concerned with human rights. She also wondered whether the Government had considered measures to change social stereotypes about women, as the report contained no information in that regard. Most women were not aware of their rights or of the international instruments designed to protect those rights. That encouraged psychological and physical violence and increased women's vulnerability, as evidenced by the statistics provided on HIV/AIDS prevalence among women.

21. **Ms. Gnacadja** said that she welcomed the fact that the Women's Bureau had been elevated to a Department, but lamented the lack of de facto change, and stressed the Committee's desire to see genuine progress. She wondered about the number of people working in the Bureau, and emphasized the need for cooperation between the various agencies involved in women's issues. Achieving constitutional reform was a key goal, as it would ensure that any contradictions in the law would automatically become unconstitutional. It was important that different areas of criminal and civil law should not be scattered across several sections of national legislation, as that gave judges leeway to decide which section should apply and could have the effect of reinforcing discrimination. With regard to prostitution, the report had confirmed the existence of discrimination, and action should be taken to address the sanctions applicable in that area.

22. **Ms. Ongewe** (Kenya), responding to Committee members' questions in general, stressed that the Kenyan Government was committed to taking a participatory approach to women's issues, which would involve all sectors of society.

23. **Ms. Nkoroï** (Kenya), addressing the issue of the relationship between international and domestic laws, said that the system for incorporating international laws had not been effective in the past, as it had entailed the creation of new legislation. Under the draft Constitution, however, Conventions ratified by Kenya would become admissible and applicable in the courts. With regard to the 2002 Children's Act, she noted that any individual violating the rights of children was

punishable by 12 months in prison, a fine of 50,000 Kenya shillings, or both.

24. **Ms. Koome** (Kenya) noted that the report contained information about the pending Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Bill. Kenya's new Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs had demonstrated commitment to the advancement of women's rights and had indicated that he would give priority to bills whose passage through Parliament had been interrupted by the recent election process, such as the Domestic Violence Bill, which would very likely come into effect as early as June 2003. The issues involved went beyond the law, however, and it was vitally important to change the attitude of police officers and workers involved in safeguarding the rights of children. In that context, a new manual providing guidelines to police officers had been developed by Kenya's Organization for Women Lawyers, in collaboration with the police, and was already operational. Moreover, all police stations were now required to operate a gender desk manned by trained officers. The creation of the new Family Court Division, which was already in operation in Nairobi, would ensure that domestic violence issues received more urgent attention than in the past.

25. **Ms. Ambwere** (Kenya) noted that the new Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services was headed by a man. That, she believed, indicated Kenya's commitment to the issue, as it showed that Kenya was willing to involve men in gender matters. The move to upgrade the Women's Bureau from a division within the Department of Social Services to a separate Department would help mainstream the gender issue in all sectors of society. The national machinery comprised representatives from all ministries as well as non-governmental organizations, who were expected to offer their expertise as and when required. The existing institutional machinery, the Government, the gender desks, the Ministries and non-governmental organizations would all work in a collaborative manner. That, together with the proposed National Council for Gender Development and the draft Constitution, would help mainstream the gender issue.

26. **Ms. Koome** (Kenya), addressing the question of the equality bill, said that the rights-based approach would be underpinned by the new Constitution with a view to ensuring gender equality. If customary laws conflicted with the rights enshrined in the new

Constitution, they would be declared null and void. The individual's human rights must be respected, and, if those rights were infringed, the individual concerned would be able to seek redress in the courts.

27. **Ms. Mutinda** (Kenya), referring to the issue of provincial administration, described how the issue of forced marriages affected education in Kenya. The District Commissioners for Education were responsible for coordinating the mission to rescue children who were in distress owing to forced marriage, and the provincial administration was charged with taking such children to a rescue centre, run by a non-governmental organization, and based in a public school. The child was then "adopted" by the school until she was able to rejoin her parents. That practice demonstrated the strong links that existed between the provincial administration and the education sector. The Government was committed to restructuring the education sector. Much had already been done to reform school curricula, and a strategic plan would be formulated in an effort to address gender stereotypes in the sector. The Kenyan Institute of Education vetted school textbooks, which were produced by commercial publishers, in order to root out such stereotypes. It was hoped that that process would be strengthened once the Government had changed the educational structure to respond to people's needs.

28. **Ms. Ongewe** (Kenya) said that the Government had approved the combined third and fourth report, which had been prepared in a collaborative manner by the Government and civil society. The new Government was now in place, and Kenya was committed to achieving real progress. The Kenyan delegation included experts on law, gender and constitutional issues, and could not be better placed to ensure collaboration between Government and civil society. The Government was working together with non-governmental organizations, which was evidence of its commitment to ending discrimination against women.

29. **Ms. Ferrer Gómez** said that she welcomed the progress achieved by Kenya thus far, with respect to the draft Constitution and the various legislative advances made. The priority accorded to the gender issue was very positive, and the measures being taken to restructure the education sector and amend textbooks to eliminate stereotypes were very important. However, there was a need to change people's mentalities, and that would take a great deal of

intensive work. The Kenyan Government should implement an awareness-raising programme regarding the new laws, and a comprehensive overall plan should be implemented in that regard. Poverty eradication should be made a priority, and every effort should therefore be made to ensure sustainable economic growth. In conclusion, the Committee would welcome more information on how the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper would meet women's needs.

30. **Ms. Gaspard** noted that the Kenyan delegation had demonstrated the political will to tackle discrimination against women, but that the combined third and fourth report offered some cause for concern. There appeared to be many programmes and projects, but no evidence of real progress, even after 20 years. The coexistence of written and customary laws was disturbing, as the latter could be very harmful to women. Noting with satisfaction that the Government had approved the report, she nonetheless stressed that it should also be submitted to Parliament for consideration, and hoped that that would be the case with Kenya's next report. The developments with regard to the national machinery were welcome, but it was also essential that the various agencies involved should be provided with the necessary resources. More information as to how the new National Council would interact with the existing national machinery would be welcome. With respect to prostitution, it was distressing to learn that prostitutes received sanctions, since they were victims who needed assistance. Swift action was needed in that area.

31. **Mr. Melander**, addressing the issue of the relationship between domestic law and international law, noted that many Kenyan laws were discriminatory, and wondered whether treaty law would in fact take precedence over domestic law. It appeared that the inclusion of international human rights legislation would require a process of education. In that context, he asked whether there were plans to educate the judiciary about the Convention and whether university courses addressed the issue.

32. **Ms. Gabr** said that recent developments in Kenya had demonstrated the importance of women in its political life and were a source of pride and optimism for the entire African region. In her view, the issue of gender stereotypes must be tackled in a comprehensive manner, through public awareness campaigns on the implementation of the new laws. Women's central role as equal partners in development

must be reaffirmed, and passage of the new anti-discrimination laws must go hand in hand with efforts to implement them. It would be interesting to hear more about the relationship between the national machinery for women and the national machinery for human rights in general.

33. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** asked about the feasibility of implementing the laws intended to eliminate discrimination in the customary and personal law of the various religious communities, and whether any consultations with those communities regarding those new laws had taken place. It was unlikely that they would give up strongly held religious beliefs about the role of women simply because the Government ordered it. A useful first step towards acceptance of change by the men of those communities might be a comprehensive review of customary law in order to determine what elements might be preserved.

34. With regard to affirmative action, she would like to have the exact formulation of section 34, paragraph 3, of the draft Constitution, as it seemed to address only one dimension of special temporary measures. Rather than stressing the disadvantages of women, it would be more helpful to talk about neutralization of the privileges which men had enjoyed. Finally, she would like to know if the Gender and Development policy papers contained any special temporary measures, and the reasons why the National Commission on Gender and Development had not been given constitutional status in the draft Constitution.

35. **Ms. Tavares da Silva**, referring to the future National Commission on Gender and Development, said that she would like to know which Minister would be in charge of it and who would appoint its members. Besides the legal equality provided in the Constitution, she wondered if any other measures had been taken to counter discrimination resulting from traditional practices and whether there was any media involvement in that area. More information was needed on measures taken to address the problems associated with prostitution. In her view, it remained a significant social problem because the penalties for both procurers and clients were very light, compared to the sanctions against the prostitutes themselves. It also seemed more appropriate to categorize rape as an offence against human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms rather than an offence against morality.

36. **Ms. Achmad** said that, in the next report, it would be helpful to receive an organizational chart of the national machinery for women, which would clarify relationships, coordination and reporting responsibilities. On the subject of affirmative action, setting a lower university entry score for women students would seem a dangerous precedent; it would be preferable to give preference to female candidates when men and women had equal scores.

37. **Ms. Popescu Sandru** asked whether the new Government intended to retain the National Gender and Development Policy as approved and what body was responsible for its implementation. She would also like to hear about the procedures for investigating complaints of discrimination.

38. **Ms. Morvai** said that it would be important to develop a strategy to ensure continued support for women's rights, given the many other serious problems, from poverty to HIV/AIDS to corruption, confronting the new Government. Women must be visibly involved in addressing those problems, which was the definition of gender mainstreaming. Deadlines should be set for achieving the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, and United Nations technical assistance might be useful in that task.

39. *Ms. Ferrer Gómez (Vice-Chairperson) took the Chair.*

40. **Ms. Patten** said that she would like to hear more about the constitutional review process itself, including its current status, any amendments made by the new Government and its involvement, if any, in the drafting, the majority required to enact the new Constitution and the likelihood of meeting the June 2003 deadline. With regard to the participation of women in the review process, she asked how many of the 27 Commissioners were women.

41. The Committee would like to know the time frame for consideration of pending legislation in the area of equal rights and the budget allocation for the Ministry. It would also be useful to hear more about the commitment of the Government to use temporary special measures. She enquired about the time frame for establishing the National Commission on Gender and Development, and whether the Government intended to take a rights-based approach to the pending legislation on property rights and succession.

42. **Ms. Kuenyehia** asked how the delegates to the Constitutional Conference were nominated or elected, and whether there were any strategies to train the women members of the Conference. Given the patriarchal society and women's relatively low participation in the legislature, she wondered if any lobbying efforts were planned to ensure that anti-discrimination legislation was passed. Since women's dependence as a result of poverty made them more vulnerable to violence and infringement of their rights, she asked if the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was being reviewed to ensure special strategies for women.

43. **Ms. Khan** said that she would appreciate some analysis of the reasons why women in earlier development plans had not been successful, and if those factors had been taken into account in recent efforts. In deciding on budget allocations, it was important for women's issues to be considered national issues. The five-year national development plan must take a gender mainstreaming approach. It would be helpful as well to compare the role and functions of the Ministry with the role of the National Council for Gender and Development. Finally, she asked if the new Constitution would result in a new Civil Code that would replace personal and customary law. More information was also needed on violence against women.

44. **Ms. Mutinda** (Kenya), replying to a question concerning affirmative action in the area of education, said that in order to gain a place at one of Kenya's public universities, all applicants must attain a minimum qualification of C+. The lowering of cut-off marks for women related to eligibility for a very small number of Government-sponsored places: that type of affirmative action provided an added incentive for girls to continue their education. Although many women were enrolled in private universities, most of them were following courses in social science or humanities, and she was therefore pleased to report that, in order to encourage women to pursue scientific studies, in May 2002 the Government had recently issued a licence to the first women's university specializing in science and technology.

45. **Ms. Olende** (Kenya) said that Maendeleo ya Wanawake was a country-wide, grass-roots organization working towards the elimination of harmful traditional practices. It promoted the view that girls could undergo a rite of passage without actually being subjected to female genital mutilation. Although

the organization's achievements might seem insignificant in real terms — in some districts, female genital mutilation had been reduced by only 1 per cent — the fact that both men and women were now talking openly about the practice and had become more aware of the effects that it could have on women's mental and physical health represented a huge leap forward. Female genital mutilation was not practised by all tribes in Kenya, but it was a deeply rooted cultural tradition and represented a significant source of income to those women who performed it. For those reasons, despite the introduction of legislation such as the Children's Act, which would protect many girls, the cultural change necessary to bring about the eradication of the practice would not happen overnight.

46. **Ms. Ongewe** (Kenya) pointed out that even the most vocal supporters of female genital mutilation were having to think twice about its implications for women's health in view of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, although the Government had overtly condemned the practice and had introduced legislation to prohibit it, implementing that legislation would be a challenge.

47. **Ms. Ambwere** (Kenya), in response to a request for clarification about the national machinery for the advancement of women, said that gender was regarded as a cross-cutting issue in Kenya and, as such, any unit dealing with any aspect of gender mainstreaming, such as the newly created Department of Gender and the specialized gender desks within key Ministries, formed part of the institutional framework. In addition, women's non-governmental organizations and relevant grass-roots programmes coordinated by the Department of Social Services were also regarded as an integral part of the national machinery.

48. In that connection, she stressed that the new Government was committed to enacting the bill establishing the National Commission on Gender and Development, and said that the Commissioners would be appointed by the Minister for Gender. She drew attention to paragraph 7 of the responses to the list of issues (CEDAW/PSWG/2003/1/CRP.2/Add.2), which described the relationship between that Commission and the Government. The Committee had expressed concern that the National Commission on Gender and Development did not figure among the five special Commissions established under the new draft Constitution, but she reassured members that a Commissioner responsible for gender would sit on the

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice.

49. Referring to the national policy on gender and development, she acknowledged that the drafting process had been lengthy, but added that the sessional paper relating to that policy had been approved by the Kenyan Cabinet and was pending consideration by the new Parliament. The institutional framework referred to in that policy document was the National Commission on Gender and Development. As far as gender budgeting was concerned, Kenya was still in the early stages of introducing the concept, but a committee had been formed within the Treasury to ensure that the budgeting process was gender responsive.

50. **Ms. Ongewe** (Kenya) stressed that the new Government was committed to conferring legal status on the national policy on gender and development by securing Parliament's approval. Any subsequent improvements to the policy would be incorporated by way of amendments.

51. **Ms. Nkoroi** (Kenya), responding to a number of questions about legal issues, said that the Kenyan Constitution recognized that international law was a source of national law and that it took precedence over domestic law. However, Kenya's national legislation was derived in part from the body of uncodified customary law, which had tended to discriminate against women, particularly with regard to marriage and inheritance. The Task Force set up in 1993 by the Attorney General to review all laws relating to women had conducted a survey of Kenyan women and other relevant stakeholders to ascertain the areas in which they felt discriminated against, and had made a series of recommendations for legislative intervention to rectify matters. Consequently, a number of bills relating to gender equality were awaiting consideration by Parliament, which would also be required to enact new legislation to enforce the provisions of the new draft Constitution expressly prohibiting the use of cultural and traditional practices to discriminate against women within the institution of marriage.

52. With regard to citizenship, the new draft Constitution stipulated, *inter alia*, that it would automatically be conferred on children born to a Kenyan parent of either sex and that women who had acquired citizenship through marriage would not lose it if their marriages were dissolved. In answer to a

question relating to the definition of rape, she assured the Committee that she would be recommending a review of the relevant provision of the Penal Code. A criminal-law amendment bill establishing stricter penalties, including life imprisonment, for rapists had already been drafted by the previous Government, and she hoped that it would be enacted in the near future.

53. Turning to the Kenyan Commission on Human Rights, she said that it had been established through an act of Parliament, and was therefore an autonomous, rather than an intergovernmental, body. It had a broad mandate, which included investigating complaints, ensuring compliance with international human rights instruments and advising Parliament on legislative matters. Lastly, she informed the Committee that the new Government had re-established the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, which would, *inter alia*, oversee the parliamentary review of all Kenya's legislation to ensure that it complied with the provisions of the new draft Constitution.

54. **Ms. Koome** (Kenya) stressed that the process of constitutional review had been people-driven and inclusive. A Constitutional Review Commission had been established pursuant to an act of Parliament and, in line with the principle of affirmative action, seven of its Commissioners were female. Before drafting the new Constitution, the Commission had held country-wide consultations and public hearings and had conducted surveys of popular opinion. Unfortunately, the recent general elections had interrupted the review process, but the new Government had made a firm commitment to complete it and it was hoped that the new Constitution would be finalized by June 2003.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.