



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
Thirty-fifth session

**Summary record of the 731st meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 24 May 2006, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Manalo

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Convention (*continued*)

*Combined initial and second periodic report of Malaysia*

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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 initial and second periodic report of Malaysia (CEDAW/C/MYS/1-2; CEDAW/C/MYS/Q/2 and Add.1)*

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

2. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia), introducing her country's combined initial and second periodic report (CEDAW/C/MYS/1-2), gave a PowerPoint slide presentation to illustrate achievements in the advancement of women in Malaysia up to 2005 in a number of priority areas identified in the Convention. The literacy rate of men and women alike had risen since 2004, largely because of the increased availability of educational opportunities. In employment, there was still a significant imbalance between men and women, particularly in the group of legislators and senior officials and managers; women outnumbered men only in the group of clerical workers. In education, the Millennium Development Goal of gender equality at primary and secondary levels by the year 2005 had been achieved; at tertiary level, enrolments of female students exceeded those of male students; women were, however, still lagging behind men at PhD level. Female students would be encouraged to enter the fields of science and engineering, where they were currently underrepresented. In the area of health, women continued to benefit from improvements in services, in particular through the Safe Motherhood Initiative, which had succeeded in significantly reducing the maternal mortality rate. Greater emphasis had been placed on HIV/AIDS prevention, notably through awareness-raising. While, despite the efforts made, there had been an increase in the percentage of HIV-infected women, there had been a 4 per cent decrease in mother-to-child transmission. Health education and awareness programmes had done much to improve the general level of health among women.

3. She stressed that the proportion of women in the labour force had increased steadily since 1995 and their educational attainments had risen. Most women joined the labour market at a later age than previously,

owing to longer periods of schooling; however, they tended to leave it earlier than men. A survey conducted in 2002 had shown that over 75 per cent of unpaid care work was done by women. Thanks to the Government's income-generating programmes and other poverty eradication schemes, the incidence of poverty among female-headed households had declined. The representation of women in political life had increased significantly, both in the Lower House and in the Senate, between 1990 and 2005, as had the percentage of women Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries. In order to make further progress in that area, the Government had adopted a policy of achieving at least 30 per cent participation of women in decision-making; the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development was working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on an action plan to that end which would draw on the experience of other countries. Women already occupied a number of prestigious posts in the country, including that of Vice-Chancellor of a university.

4. There was generally no discrimination in law between men and women. Since Malaysia's accession to the Convention, any legislative provisions that conflicted with it had been amended. Thus, article 8.2 of the Constitution had been amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, in addition to religion, race, descent and place of birth. Following that amendment, efforts had been made to bring all the country's laws into line with the Convention. The Pensions Act had been amended to protect widows and their children; the Land (Group Settlement Areas) Act had been revised to give women joint ownership with men of land settlements. The Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code had been amended to provide for stiffer penalties for sexual offences. The 1994 Domestic Violence Act was currently under review; proposals included an expanded definition of domestic violence, as well as the provision of maximum protection and compensation for victims. Legislative measures were also being taken to protect women more effectively against sexual harassment in the workplace; the Government had issued a set of related guidelines for the public sector. Islamic family law fell within the jurisdiction of the state. It was, however, also a concern of the Federal Government, which had accordingly framed a model law in order to safeguard women's rights and interests. There had been some misunderstanding, however, as some women thought

that they would have to forfeit property under the model law. The Government had therefore agreed to insert a new paragraph to redefine the concept of joint property. National machinery for women had been strengthened: the resources allocated to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development had been increased, as had the budgets of all the other relevant units.

5. Efforts would continue to be made to review Malaysia's reservations in regard to articles 5 (a), 7 (b), 9 (2), 16 (1) (a), (c), (f) and (g), and 16 (2) with a view to gradually lifting them, taking into account constitutional provisions and the national interest.

*Articles 1 and 2*

6. **Ms. Khan** said that the measures taken to amend Islamic family laws seemed to have left women less protected than previously. Men were reported to be able to practise polygamy more easily and to claim the assets of their wives, in violation of the Convention. As for the amendment to article 8 (2) of the Constitution, it did not prohibit discrimination against women by non-State actors. She emphasized that the State party was obliged by article 2 (e) of the Convention to eliminate such discrimination by any person, organization or enterprise. She asked why a narrow interpretation of the sharia had been used as a basis for amendments to laws, particularly in view of the encouraging trend in several Muslim countries to adapt Islamic family laws to the current realities of women's lives. It would be interesting to know what further action the Government might be planning to bring Malaysian legislation more closely into line with the Convention.

7. **Ms. Patten** requested more concrete information about the withdrawal of the State party's reservations, particularly regarding any consultations being conducted on the subject and the likely time frame. On the question of sharia law, fuller details would be particularly appreciated concerning the reservations to article 16. She referred to the case of Beatrice At Fernandez and asked what action the Government was intending to take on the refusal to invalidate a contract discriminating against women. Clearly, the standards of the Convention had not been applied either by the Federal Court or by the Court of Appeal. Since international norms were not automatically incorporated into domestic law, she wondered how the Government would ensure harmonization between the

two, particularly through the inclusion of a sufficiently broad definition of discrimination against women.

8. **Mr. Flinterman**, referring to the same case, said that, in a system like that of Malaysia, it was incumbent upon the courts to take judicial notice of the international obligations of the State concerned. It would be interesting to know what was being done to sensitize the judiciary to those obligations. In the case in question, classification based on sex was suspect, unless there were compelling reasons for it. He wished to know whether the Government considered the interpretation of the principle of equality given by the courts to be compatible with the notion of equality enshrined in the Convention. Equality, according to the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, needed to be ensured both *de facto* and *de jure*, while discrimination was understood as both direct and indirect discrimination, whether practised in the private or public spheres. He stressed the State party's obligation to incorporate the provisions of the Convention in its national legislation and suggested that a general law on gender equality might usefully be envisaged for the purpose.

9. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) recalled that Islamic family law fell within the purview of the state, but that the Federal Government was also involved with that branch of law. In that vein, a model law had been formulated for the purpose of harmonizing the 14 state laws to safeguard the rights and interests of women, *inter alia* with respect to polygamy and the division of jointly acquired property. During the process of elaborating the model law, a number of consultations had been held with all relevant parties, including NGOs, and a number of amendments had subsequently been made to clarify the controversial provisions of the Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act 1984.

10. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia remained committed to ensuring that domestic law gave full effect to its obligations under international treaties. The Government had introduced gender-based elements into new legislation and had embarked upon a process of reviewing existing laws so as to ensure that potentially discriminatory provisions would be amended. Similarly, with reference to the Beatrice At Fernandez case, she said the Government was concerned over the implications of that case for its treaty obligations. In certain quarters it was felt that there might be some justification in the criticism that

the interpretation of the court had been too narrow, and the Government was taking that case into account in its current review, in compliance with its obligations under the Convention.

11. Likewise, it was felt that there was a need for ensuring greater coherence among the laws, and for explaining the guiding principles of the Convention to public opinion, since it had come to the attention of the Government that the public might not fully understand some of the concepts relating to discrimination and gender equality. Malaysia could not promise that it would be able to immediately incorporate a definition of the term “gender” into its constitutional provisions, since such changes entailed a long process, but it could assure the Committee that it was willing to do so, and was looking into the matter.

12. As for sensitizing the judiciary, she agreed that domestic laws should be very clear in order for courts to be able to interpret the laws in compliance with Malaysia’s obligations under the Convention. A formal process of sensitizing the judiciary on the pertinent issues had not begun, but the Government had every intention of pursuing that course.

13. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) said that an inter-ministerial committee had been established to review Malaysia’s reservations to the Convention, particularly with respect to article 5 (a) and article 7 (b). The review was a thorough process, which entailed extensive consultations with various government agencies and departments.

14. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** welcomed the fact that Malaysia was reviewing its stance on reservations, but said that she remained puzzled by its position on article 5 (a). She asked the delegation to clarify the nature of the reservation raised with respect to that article and whether the reservation extended to a general interpretation of the article, which would, in effect, constitute a contradiction of Malaysia’s constitutional amendment in that regard.

15. She agreed with the comments made by Mr. Flinterman on classification and encouraged the Government to review its policy on gender-based classification, which seemed to run counter to the principle of equality.

16. Noting that the Government assumed responsibility for ensuring consistency in harmonizing Islamic sharia law, she asked whether there was a

permanent mechanism to achieve consistency in laws, policies and programmes formulated by the Government that were relevant to the substantive equality of women and, if so, how they functioned and what other issues might be tackled in future.

17. **Ms. Pimentel** requested further details on the Government’s proposal to ensure the practical application of the Domestic Violence Act 1994 and the provision of tangible remedies for victims. She also asked whether sexual harassment was included in the amendments to that Act, and whether other forms of violence against women, such as marital rape, and sexual harassment in the informal sector, were also being considered.

18. **Ms. Gaspard** asked why Malaysia’s report had not been submitted earlier. She also pointed out that Malaysia had not replied fully to the query on whether the report had been submitted to Parliament. She reminded the delegation that the effective implementation of the Convention necessitated the enactment of legislation and the adoption of other measures through parliamentary intervention. Echoing Ms. Schöpp-Schilling’s concern over the outstanding reservations after Malaysia had withdrawn its reservation to article 2, she noted that Malaysia had informed the United Nations Secretary-General that further withdrawals were pending, but there had been no recent mention of progress made.

19. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia had made a declaration to the effect that its reservation to article 5 (a) of the Convention related only to the provision that was subject to sharia law on the division of inherited property. She further informed the Committee that the Government was currently reviewing the withdrawal of its reservations to article 5 (a) and article 7 (b), but had not yet begun to consider the remaining reservations.

20. The proposed amendments to the Domestic Violence Act 1994 aimed at extending its scope, and introducing new provisions to better protect the victims of domestic violence. She added that sexual harassment was not expected to be included under those amendments; rather, legislation on sexual harassment was being drafted by the Ministry of Human Resources to be incorporated under amendments to existing laws, such as the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265), and the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (Act 514), among others.

21. With regard to the delay in reporting, she explained that the process of preparing the report had indeed been lengthy, having gone through 14 drafts. Intensified efforts to complete the process had been spearheaded by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, and the report had subsequently been submitted to the Cabinet for approval. She stressed that the report had not been put before Parliament.

22. A number of high-level government mechanisms, such as a Cabinet committee and various thematic consultative panels, had been established to ensure the implementation of gender equality.

23. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia), reverting to the issue of classification, explained that Malaysia interpreted the provisions of the Convention as imposing an absolute prohibition on discrimination, and that clarification had been made through earlier judicial pronouncements to that effect.

24. **Mr. Ahmad Razif Mohd Sidek** (Malaysia) said that the topic of marital rape had been addressed in the process of considering amendments to the Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes, and the Domestic Violence Act 1994, and had been the subject of much public and NGO discussion for over a year. A report had subsequently been submitted for parliamentary consideration.

25. **Ms. Šimonović** said that the withdrawal of reservations to certain articles of the Convention was commendable. However, given that there were a number of outstanding reservations, she wished to know how Malaysia conveyed to the public the idea that the Convention was a legally binding human rights instrument.

26. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) informed the Committee that the report had been widely distributed to government departments and agencies, and that the Government was currently publishing a textbook on the principles of the Convention for distribution in schools.

27. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia), referring to the remarks made by Ms. Šimonović, said there was a need to improve public information efforts and to assure gender equality in domestic legal provisions. The establishment of gender focal points was a step in that direction, and the Government would continue to monitor developments to ensure consistency and compliance, in order to improve legislation for the

implementation of the Convention and to deal with existing reservations.

28. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, asked for clarification of the status of discussions on the definition of marital rape.

29. **Mr. Ahmad Razif Mohd Sidek** (Malaysia) explained that, based on an initiative by NGOs during public sittings throughout Malaysia, Parliament was considering the formulation of a definition of marital rape to be included in existing legislation. A select committee had proposed that the use of force by men to have sexual relations with their wives should be a punishable offence.

30. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, said that NGOs should exert pressure to ensure that speedy action was taken to criminalize marital rape. Furthermore, she urged Malaysia to take legislative steps to define discrimination clearly and to enact a law on gender equality, over and above the commendable reforms already under way.

### *Article 3*

31. **Mr. Flinterman**, echoing the sentiments of the previous speaker, asked whether the Government intended to incorporate the Convention in a law on gender equality. He was also interested in knowing how quotas were distributed among the various ethnic groups.

32. Turning to the issue of refugees, he asked whether Malaysia had considered the enactment of legislation on refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly with respect to the protection of women and girls in that context. There were reports that many refugees and asylum-seekers had been detained under poor and overcrowded conditions for violation of immigration laws. He therefore asked for further information on that situation, and enquired whether there were plans to release or grant legal status to the applicants.

33. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) said that her delegation unfortunately did not have data concerning ethnic distribution, as requested by Mr. Flinterman, but would endeavour to provide such information in the next report. She was pleased to inform the Committee that there was a special government department dealing with indigenous and aboriginal matters, and that significant progress had been made in the provision of

basic amenities and in the field of education. Between 2001 and 2005, the enrolment of indigenous students at the primary and secondary levels had doubled.

34. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia was not party to any international agreements concerning refugees and asylum-seekers and that its domestic legislation did not yet recognize refugee or asylum-seeker status. Nevertheless, the Government had taken a number of administrative measures to ensure the protection of individuals seeking refuge in Malaysia on humanitarian grounds and would continue to do so.

#### *Article 4*

35. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** stressed the importance of developing a specific law to combat discrimination and ensure that men and women enjoyed equal opportunities. That law should also make provision for the introduction of temporary special measures within the meaning of article 4 of the Convention and, in that connection, she drew the State party's attention to general recommendation No. 25. She also enquired whether the Federal Constitution made provision for the introduction of such measures.

36. Referring to the State party's reservation to article 16 of the Convention, she asked whether the Government had established a time frame for the lifting of that reservation. She also wished to know whether Malaysia had established a permanent structure at the Federal level to ensure the consistent application of legislation, policies and programmes concerning women's rights.

37. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) said that, while the Government had not implemented any temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between men and women, it had set up a number of special programmes designed to promote women's advancement. However, that issue would be revisited in light of the Committee's comments, and she would be grateful for any suggestions as to potentially beneficial temporary special measures.

38. As yet, no time frame had been established for the lifting of Malaysia's reservations to article 16 of the Convention, because the Government was still negotiating with the relevant stakeholders.

39. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia) said that individual states were responsible for legislating in

most areas covered by personal law. Although model laws on human rights had been drafted by a group of state rulers, they had yet to be approved by the Federal authorities. More needed to be done on that front.

#### *Article 5*

40. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** recognized the State party's efforts to eliminate gender-based stereotypes, particularly in the education sector, but noted that such stereotypes continued to hinder the advancement of women in Malaysia. Although cultural change was a long and difficult process, the Government must take urgent steps to eliminate sexist attitudes in all areas. While Malaysian women had access to family planning services, they did not avail themselves fully of those services, as evidenced by the relatively low rate of contraceptive use among women. She wondered whether cultural patterns and attitudes were to blame for that situation and enquired whether a married woman needed her husband's consent to use contraceptives.

41. **Ms. Simms** said that the difficulties of a two-tier administrative system were reflected in the State party's reservation to article 5 (a) of the Convention. All cultures had been created by men and would continue to be controlled by them unless women took it upon themselves to deconstruct the myth of male dominance.

42. With regard to sex education, she was curious to know whether the curriculum went beyond the purely biological aspects of the topic and dealt with the fundamental social and psychological elements of human sexuality, including the subjugation of women.

43. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** commended the Malaysian Government on its efforts to integrate women into society and to eliminate disparities between the sexes. However, experience had shown that merely improving the economic, social and political status of women did not result in the elimination of stereotypes or prejudices, and the ideological shift necessary to bring about lasting attitudinal changes took much longer than the corresponding legislative process. The State party should indicate whether it had adopted a comprehensive strategy designed to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women.

44. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) said that she shared the concerns expressed by Ms. Tavares da Silva.

In addition to the measures described in the report, the Government had taken a number of steps to eliminate gender-based stereotypes, including the introduction of guidelines for the preparation of school textbooks and the establishment of the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia. Furthermore, a course for newly married or engaged couples entitled "SMARTSTART" had been developed with a view to raising their awareness of the need to share domestic duties and responsibilities equally.

45. In response to the question put by Ms. Simms, she said that the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, had drawn up national guidelines on sex education with a view to ensuring that young people developed a healthy attitude to all aspects of human sexuality, including relationships, marriage and family life and reproductive health.

46. As the main national mechanism for the advancement of women, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development was involved in awareness-raising activities at all levels. Gender focal points had been established in 29 ministries and departments, and a number of training courses on gender mainstreaming had been organized. A seminar on gender equality for political leaders and public officials would be held in the near future, and the Government was actively encouraging NGOs to develop educational programmes on women's rights.

#### *Article 6*

47. **Ms. Simms** said that human trafficking was one of the most pressing problems facing the modern world. The majority of victims were women, whose devalued role within society made them particularly vulnerable to sexual and commercial exploitation. Noting that Malaysia had no domestic legislation on human trafficking, she enquired whether the Government had any plans to enact a law to address that issue.

48. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia) said that, in view of the inadequacy of Malaysia's current legislation on human trafficking, the Government was examining the issue with a view to acceding to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It was particularly

important to establish victim protection programmes and to ensure that a clear distinction was drawn between genuine victims and persons who were being trafficked voluntarily.

49. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) said that the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development had taken various steps to address human trafficking and had initiated dialogue on that issue with a number of other ministries. As a result, the Ministry of Internal Security had pledged to establish female-friendly accommodation within existing detention centres. In addition, law enforcement and immigration officials would receive training in the area of victim identification, with a view to ensuring that they were able to distinguish between genuine victims and persons who were being trafficked voluntarily. An inter-agency committee on trafficking in persons was also being set up.

#### *Articles 7 and 8*

50. **Ms. Zou** commended the State party on its adoption of a policy to ensure at least 30 per cent participation of women in decision-making. In that connection, she would be grateful for additional information on the action plan developed in conjunction with UNDP. What were its strategic goals and objectives?

51. Although Malaysia was a multi-ethnic society, the report did not contain any information about indigenous women's participation in the political and public life of the nation. She wished to know what steps the Government was taking to ensure that women from ethnic minorities could participate in political life and, in particular, whether a quota system had been introduced.

52. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani**, recalling that Malaysia had had a difficult history owing to successive colonizations, stressed the significance of article 7 of the Convention. The State party's political will to achieve gender parity in the area of decision-making was obvious, since 32.3 per cent of the members of the Federal Parliament and 32 per cent of the members of the Senate were women. Accordingly, she wondered whether the Government was considering lifting its reservation to article 7 (b) of the Convention. Additional efforts should be made at the local level to ensure that all women, regardless of their religious

affiliation, could participate effectively in the country's political life.

53. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that, as far as increasing women's political participation was concerned, progress had been uneven in Malaysia. Indeed, between 2000 and 2005 there had been a slight decrease in the number of women elected to the House of Representatives. She wondered whether the persistence of gender-based stereotypes was to blame for that situation and enquired about the measures taken to address it. Furthermore, she would like to know whether those responsible for making political appointments had been made aware of the need to increase the proportion of female appointees. Lastly, the State party should indicate how many women from ethnic minorities were involved in local government.

54. **Ms. Gaspard** requested clarification regarding Malaysia's reservation to article 7 (b) of the Convention. What types of positions in administration and politics were subject to that reservation?

55. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) confirmed that the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development was working with UNDP on an action plan to achieve 30 per cent representation of women in the public and private sectors by 2010. Stakeholders from the public and private sectors and civil society were involved. Data disaggregated by ethnic group were not immediately available, but would be provided at a later stage.

56. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia) said that the reservation to article 7 (b) had to do specifically with posts in the sharia judiciary, which were not only public in nature, but also religious, involving leading prayers. That was a function which women could not fulfil. However, possibly the reservation could nonetheless be lifted.

57. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) added that in order to increase the representation of women in elected bodies, political parties were establishing leadership training programmes for young women.

58. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, asked why it was taking so long to implement the action plan to reach the goal of 30 per cent representation of women in the public and private sectors. Did the slow pace of implementation perhaps indicate a lack of political will?

59. **Ms. Faizah Mohd Tahir** (Malaysia) explained that in fact it was not taking a long time, as the proposal had been submitted to the Cabinet in late 2005.

#### *Article 9*

60. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** said that the reservation to article 9 (2) regarding equality between men and women in conferring nationality upon their children was a case of glaring discrimination. There was no religious obstacle in Islam to acceptance of that measure. Many Islamic countries had lifted reservations to that provision and changed domestic law in order to comply with it.

61. **Ms. Azailiza Mohd Ahad** (Malaysia) agreed with Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani that there was no religious hindrance to acceptance of the clause. Reservations should be reviewed in order to ensure equal treatment.

#### *Article 10*

62. **Ms. Tan** requested updated data on literacy rates among rural women. It would be helpful to have some concrete examples of how school textbooks had been changed to eliminate gender stereotypes, and to know why a fifth-form moral education textbook reinforced the notion that a woman's place was in the home. Were teachers trained in recognizing gender stereotyping and taught about the need to remove such stereotypes from education?

63. **Mr. Hailibin Dolhan** (Malaysia) replied that there were courses in recognizing gender stereotyping offered in teacher training colleges. The instance to which the moral education textbook referred was probably an isolated case.

#### *Article 11*

64. **Ms. Khan** noted that while Malaysian women had a high level of literacy, their participation in the labour force was low. They were predominantly employed in low-level, non-managerial positions. What was the situation of migrant workers? What were their exact numbers in the country, and were they protected from abuse by existing legislation?

65. **Ms. Patten** said that temporary special measures were a way to respond to low female participation in the workforce. The Government might consider adopting such measures for public employment. It



would be useful to know the penalties for violations of labour law and how effective they were. Had licences ever been revoked for such violations? The report mentioned a proposal to formulate specific sexual harassment legislation. Information on progress in that regard would be appreciated.

66. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** said it was unclear how many women in the workforce were availing themselves of special provisions such as flexitime. While employers were encouraged to provide special measures, it was not clear if they actually did so. If women working in the public sector interrupted their careers to care for their children, they lost their pensions. That made her wonder if men also lost their pensions if for any reason they interrupted their careers. It would be helpful to receive more details about maternity provisions. Which women in which employment situations received what benefits? The burden of maternity benefits could not be placed on employers alone. Society as a whole must take responsibility.

67. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, remarked that Malaysia was one of the most prosperous countries in the region, and therefore attracted many migrants. What measures had been adopted to protect migrant workers?

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*