



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

Distr.: General
11 October 2010

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Forty-sixth session

Summary record of the 939th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 22 July 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Pimentel (Vice-Chairperson)

Contents

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

Combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Papua New Guinea

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 Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

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

In the absence of Ms. Gabr, Ms. Pimentel (Vice-Chairperson) took the Chair.

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 Papua New Guinea (CEDAW/C/PNG/3, CEDAW/C/PNG/Q/1 and Add.1)

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

2. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that the combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Papua New Guinea (CEDAW/C/PNG/3) were long overdue, given that the country had ratified the Convention in 1995. Financial and technical constraints as well as unstable political leadership had frustrated previous efforts at reporting, but the presentation of the consolidated report marked the beginning of the current administration's assumption of its commitments to women, including engagement with the Committee. Contributions by civil society, whose shadow reports enhanced official reporting, would also be guiding future Government actions.

3. An understanding of the very diverse cultural and ethnic make-up of Papua New Guinea was necessary to put the society in context. The country was home to 25 per cent of the world's languages, with over 800 languages spoken by different tribal groups. While a more homogenized culture was emerging in the growing urban zones, 80 per cent of the population lived in rural areas and engaged in subsistence agriculture. The informal economy was the source of income for most people, with women providing 65 per cent of those resources.

4. Given its many rich natural resources, including minerals and petroleum, the country had positive prospects in terms of economic growth, although the Government relied heavily on external technical and financial capacity to develop industry. The fulfilment of international agreements on women's and children's rights was critical to ensure that modernization actually improved the lives of the indigenous rural majority and growing urban poor.

5. Women had once wielded great influence within the indigenous matrilineal societies, but the patriarchal practices imposed by colonization and modern

development had upset social dynamics to the detriment of women and girls. In addition, many tribal customs had been misunderstood by foreigners and had come to be abused by Papua New Guinea's own people, with now-engrained practices presenting an ongoing challenge.

6. Traditional customs were important to all people in the country, including those living in urban areas. The "wantok" system, a network of reciprocal relationships and obligations among clan members, was the principal social safety net. With the advent of modernization and increased financial burdens, the system had become unsustainable, leading to violence within clans. In response, the Government was developing a social policy protection framework.

7. Another example of the modern distortion of traditional customs was the notion of "big man" leadership, which had previously been localized to a few groups, and permeated current power structures. It limited leadership roles to men and idealized physical strength and wealth, creating barriers to women's participation in decision-making. Understanding the complex interchanges between modernity and the multiple cultures of Papua New Guinea required more in-depth research, particularly in the context of their negative effects on women.

8. The Government was currently analysing the best approach to implementing the Convention, including the possibility of amending the Constitution to enable the enactment of an organic law on discrimination against women. The Cabinet had endorsed the organic law and would soon be considering a national policy on gender equality. In addition, a bill to create reserved seats in Parliament for women was to be voted on by the end of the year.

9. The push for comprehensive law reform was new, although past piecemeal efforts on women's issues had achieved some advancements, including the removal of a marital defence for rape from the criminal code in 2002. While prosecution under the law remained difficult, the reform had successfully challenged cultural attitudes.

10. Comprehensive legal reform was overdue, particularly to comply with the National Constitution. The Constitution was in line with the Convention in that it established equality and participation and enshrined the rights of all citizens, regardless of gender. While the Constitution recognized custom, it also made clear that any custom impinging on the right of an individual could be declared unconstitutional.

There had been judicial references to that provision, which had highlighted the challenge of drafting laws that addressed the abuse of custom rather than criminalizing traditional practices. Currently, the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney-General were implementing a pilot project in the province of Manus to end discriminatory customs. Another challenge was the many draconian laws inherited through the Queensland Criminal Code of Australia, which reflected British law from the 19th century. Inadequate and poorly collected data had hampered the delegation from fulfilling all reporting requirements, although development partners had provided some technical input.

11. The Millennium Development Goals were inextricably linked with the goals of the Convention. The dialogue with the Committee was extremely important to the women of Papua New Guinea, and she hoped that media coverage would also bolster the national Millennium Development Goals campaign. There was currently only a single woman in Parliament, and the country would continue to struggle to fulfil the Convention unless women's political representation improved.

12. It was important to note the challenge of implementing instruments that were based on an individual concept of human rights in cultures that were rooted in a system of collective rights. Respecting human rights was not a matter of changing societal values, but rather of harmonizing the best of many worlds. The notion of collective rights represented a major force for progress in Papua New Guinea.

Articles 1 and 2

13. **Ms. Šimonović** requested more details on the Government's cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including funding activities. She asked if the Parliament would be involved in implementation of the Convention and whether it would receive the Committee's observations following the constructive dialogue. She wondered if the reform process would include a review of the Constitution, as it was important to clarify the position of international treaties within domestic law, and to establish explicitly the principle of substantive equality between men and women in the Constitution. In view of the linguistic diversity in the country, she asked whether the Convention had been translated into other languages. She also wished to know if the Government had plans to ratify the Optional Protocol and the Convention

against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

14. **Mr. Flinterman** said that although customary law was technically not to be applied if it was inconsistent with the Constitution, it seemed to take precedence in the village courts, which were often the first recourse for women experiencing human rights violations. He asked whether village courts were cognizant of the Constitution and the country's international obligations, whether women were in fact able to appeal the decisions of village courts to the ordinary court system and whether there was a legal aid system to help them do so. He also wished to know if the proposed organic law on gender equality would incorporate the Convention, in particular its definition of discrimination against women. More details on the time frame to establish the National Human Rights Commission would be welcome. He also wondered whether the Ombudsman Commission's Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Unit had been receiving complaints on violations of women's rights and whether the Unit used the Convention as a guideline for its deliberations.

15. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** asked whether there were measures to promote the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the village court system. Referring to the experience of her native Ghana, which had found success in negotiating common, statutory and customary law systems, she encouraged the Government to raise the political will to eliminate customary laws that dehumanized women.

16. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that NGOs received funding from development partners, although some received minimal grants from the Government. The new policy framework of the Ministry for Community Development relied on partnerships with civil society, including churches. The funding constraints in that area were made evident by the fact that the annual grant allocated to the National Council for Women, the head of the network of women's civil society organizations, was only slightly greater than the administrative support grant provided to the Ministry. Development partners generally preferred to work with civil society, in consultation with Government. Churches and NGOs provided about half of the health and educational services in the country, which were funded through Government sources.

17. The delegation would draft Parliamentary and media statements to publicize the dialogue with the

Committee. She emphasized the importance of the occasion as an advocacy and public awareness-raising tool, given the low political priority accorded to women's issues. While the women's movement and NGOs had been working to improve political will, the absence of women in Parliament made it difficult to place their issues on the public agenda.

18. Translation of the Convention into indigenous languages was on the agenda, but had not been completed. There was only capacity for translation into the national languages of Tok Pisin (pidgin) and Motu, but provincial governments and women's organizations could be encouraged to translate it into additional languages.

19. The Government was moving to ratify the Optional Protocol as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was particularly important in view of the many disabled women in the country.

20. In response to the problem that village courts were the only system available to women and that customary law was often inconsistent, the law and justice sectors had been educating village court secretariats and magistrates. In addition, a new law required at least one woman in every court; those women were also provided with training. While it was theoretically possible for women to appeal to higher courts, geographical limitations made it impossible for the majority. Some NGOs had been conducting training for paralegals at the local level, but those efforts were not comprehensive.

21. The proposed organic law on equality was meant to incorporate the Convention. The first phase of the plan for women's equality was focused on attaining greater female representation at the national level. The second phase would aim to reach other levels of governance, which would require much legislative reform and technical assistance.

22. Work on the National Human Rights Commission had advanced to the Cabinet, which was discussing its intended mandate; the debate would then proceed to Parliament. While the Ombudsman Commission did have a human rights desk, it received a minimal number of referrals, as the Commission was mainly focused on monitoring leadership issues. The lack of a mechanism specifically to address cases of gender discrimination was one of the reasons the Human Rights Commission was needed.

23. It was fair to say that customary law indeed ruled, as the population was rural and isolated from other influences. There were many positive aspects to customary law, however. It was important to focus on addressing abuses rather than opposing the system altogether, as custom was the glue that held communities together. The question of customary law underscored the challenge of moving between tradition and modernity, as societies caught in between did not necessarily wish to take on Western systems entirely.

24. Much of the groundwork had been laid for legal reform, including a push by female magistrates to enact procedures to facilitate women's access to the court system. However, awareness was still lacking among law enforcement. There was a major gap in terms of legal aid available to women, although some services were provided by NGO partners. Workshops were being conducted among magistrates to promote concepts of equality in village courts, although the programme did not encompass the whole country.

25. **Mr. Minjihau** (Papua New Guinea) said that the village courts must reject customary law that was inconsistent with organic law or with the Constitution. The Constitution granted every citizen the right to appeal village court decisions, up to the Supreme Court. The Public Solicitor's Office was mandated by the Constitution to provide aid to citizens without the means of accessing legal services, although it had not always been given the resources to fulfil that mandate. The Office operated independently of the Office of the Attorney-General, and its budget had been increased, which would expand legal aid services.

26. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that the Office of the Public Prosecutor had recently issued a guide to accessing legal services in simple English. In addition, the Solicitor-General's Office had conducted a review of legislative compliance with the Convention and had issued a report in 2009, which would be guiding the incorporation of the Convention into the proposed organic law on gender equality.

27. **Mr. Noglai** (Papua New Guinea) said that work was ongoing to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, including addressing the findings of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture based on his recent visit to the country.

28. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been given priority and would be ratified by September 2010. The civil society disability

movement had been provided with capacity-building to contribute to the subsequent reporting process.

29. **Mr. Noglai** (Papua New Guinea) said that the Government had already ratified other human rights covenants that covered many of the issues addressed by the Convention on Torture, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, reform of domestic legislation on those issues was still pending.

30. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that because of limited human resources, the Government had relied on development partners to provide legal and technical assistance for work on international human rights agreements.

31. **Mr. Arua** (Papua New Guinea) said that the National Training Council provided scholarships to NGOs to support women's education and training, with an emphasis on helping vulnerable groups, such as disabled women and youth.

Article 3

32. **Ms. Hayashi**, turning to the national machinery on gender equality, asked what was the priority of the newly established Office for the Development of Women and whether it would be taking over management of existing Government plans on reproductive health, sexual violence and other women's issues. She would also appreciate details on how the Office intended to raise awareness of the problem of sexual violence. Referring to the CEDAW Core Committee that had been established under the National Women's Policy, she asked about its composition and whether its budget would fall under the Office for the Development of Women. Noting that the NGO shadow report had stated that the budget for women's affairs was minimal, she stressed that the Office for Women must be adequately funded if it were to prioritize gender equality effectively across other Government agencies. She wished to know the time frame for the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission and what its linkages would be with the Office for the Development of Women.

33. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that all national policy was developed in coordination with civil society. The Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council was a major mechanism to facilitate a consultative process. It was funded by the Government, but operated autonomously and provided input on issues such as domestic violence. Although the findings of the Council were not legally binding,

Government bodies always took note of its recommendations.

34. In line with the Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, both civil society and the Government had been reviewing their machineries for women. The revised legislation of the National Council of Women had gone through the Cabinet and was expected to be presented at Parliament by early 2011. The review at the Government level had resulted in the establishment of the Office for the Development of Women. However, the Office had not been accorded the high-level placement within the Prime Minister's office that had originally been envisioned. The Office was currently under her authority as the Minister for Community Development, but she hoped that it would eventually become a high-powered, stand-alone entity that oversaw all women's issues and provided budget analysis at both the provincial and national level. The Office had also been originally intended to provide an overview of all policies and their impact on women, although it was not yet operating at that capacity. The CEDAW Core Committee was the mechanism that brought together various agencies to prepare the country's report.

35. **Ms. Tatsi** (Papua New Guinea) said that the CEDAW Core Committee was made up of representatives from the Prime Minister's office and from the departments on national planning and monitoring, community development, justice, and foreign affairs and trade. There was also a larger Reference Group that supported the Committee's reporting work and included representatives from other Government departments and agencies.

36. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that it was difficult to give a precise time frame on the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission due to political instability in the country. Preparations for the Commission were at an advanced stage and the expectation was that it would be established in early 2011. She agreed that an adequate budget was needed for a national gender machinery; the Committee's specific comments would be helpful when she brought the issue before Parliament. The Human Rights Commission was not officially linked to the Office for the Development of Women, but she agreed that it would need to be.

Article 4

37. **Ms. Ameline** said that the role of women in decision-making and governance was essential, and

temporary special measures as described in general recommendation No. 19 could be useful in accelerating de facto equality. Long-term strategies had been developed, but a strong and immediate signal for women's equality and participation must be sent. Such measures must be integrated in all sectors in order to raise the visibility and official recognition of the place of women in society. Where possible, women should be appointed to Government posts rather than waiting for passage of quota laws. She suggested that the role of women in the reconciliation and reconstruction process in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville could be highlighted.

38. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that civil society had been actively pushing temporary special measures for 35 years through the Constitution, but Parliament, whose membership consisted of one woman and 108 men, had defeated all such attempts. Civil society and NGOs had therefore taken up the effort. A bill on temporary special measures would be resubmitted to the Parliament at the November session, but an absolute majority was required for passage. The Committee's comments and encouragement in that area would be very helpful in challenging cultural attitudes. Although progress had been made at the local and regional levels regarding women's participation, more must be done at the federal level. The country was still in an age of gender "tokenism", and a change of mindset was needed.

39. **Ms. Kakarouts** (Papua New Guinea) said that women in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville had felt betrayed in the peace process because their active participation in reconciliation committees had been prevented.

Article 5

40. **Ms. Awori** said that the level of domestic violence, acknowledged in the report to affect between 70 and 75 per cent of married women, was staggering. She asked if any work was being done on a sexual offences act and if so, whether a timeframe for its adoption had been established. She would also like to hear about any measures targeted to overcome cultural challenges to the eradication of violence against women, and their impact.

41. **Ms. Šimonović** asked how the Beijing Platform for Action was being implemented and if there were any national campaigns in Papua New Guinea in line

with the Secretary-General's campaign on violence against women. Regarding the Sorcery Act, were there any plans to amend it or to strengthen its enforcement? Murders of persons accused of sorcery were still reported, but the Government did not appear to be taking any action to prevent them. Lastly, it would be helpful to know the number of shelters for victims of domestic violence in the country.

42. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** said that the "unholy alliance" of custom and religion presented a challenge for the women of Papua New Guinea. Customary law focused on collective rights as opposed to individual rights; it was important to respect women's full rights as citizens and not to allow them to be subsumed under the needs of society as a whole. The State had an obligation to identify and modify stereotypes that impacted women's full enjoyment of their rights.

43. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that the high rate of domestic violence was in part due to the breakdown of traditional protective customs and changing dynamics of the relationships between men and women, which had not yet been replaced by a new social system. Some ethnic groups had a higher rate of violence than others, and more targeted research was needed into the causes in each group. A major background report on domestic violence that had included proposed legislation had been introduced in the 1980s but had not moved forward, perhaps because the Office of the Attorney-General had combined it with the review of the Marriage Act, which had also faced obstacles. It had been suggested that the comprehensive domestic violence law should be placed under the responsibility of the Ministry for Community Development, where it stood a better chance of being promoted for consideration by Parliament.

44. In the meantime, female magistrates had put in place orders of protection for women against violent spouses. Lack of capacity to address domestic violence by the police was a serious constraint. Police officers were reluctant to carry out arrests because the charges were often withdrawn due to the economic dependence of wives on the violent spouse. The attitude that domestic violence was a private family matter was also prevalent. Trauma desks for victims of domestic violence were available in police stations, although not nationwide. Domestic violence shelters were not run by the Government but by NGOs with some Government support; their numbers remained insufficient.

45. Although she agreed that collective rights must be balanced with individual rights, teaching on individual human rights must be handled with sensitivity. Otherwise, the people would find themselves caught in the tension between their traditions and customs and a new system of individual rights and laws that was not yet fully developed.

46. **Mr. Klapert** (Papua New Guinea) said that action had been taken on the three Millennium Development Goals having to do with women and children. UNICEF had assisted with the new development information system that should fill in the gaps in data in those areas.

47. **Ms. Kajoi** (Papua New Guinea) said that the country participated in the annual global “White Ribbon Campaign — men working to end men’s violence against women” and the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” campaigns. It actually extended that campaign to 20 days.

48. **Mr. Minjihau** (Papua New Guinea) said that the Office of the Public Prosecutor took steps under the Criminal Code to raise awareness and facilitate prosecution of sexual assault, including in-house training on the amendment to the Sexual Offences Act, providing internal guidelines for lawyers, strengthening precedents for prosecution, awareness-raising campaigns with the Royal Constabulary and educating victims on their rights.

49. **Ms. Tatsi** (Papua New Guinea) said that, because of a low level of prosecutions of sexual offences, the Department of Community Development had implemented projects in two provinces and had conducted other campaigns to raise awareness among victims and frontline community workers of the legal remedies available.

50. **Mr. Noglai** (Papua New Guinea) said that there was no specific legislation outlawing sorcery or protecting against accusations of sorcery. Cases involving such accusations could be tried under existing law.

51. **Ms. Zarriga** (Papua New Guinea) said that the Department of National Planning and District Development had formed a committee to develop a national strategy on family and sexual violence.

52. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea), on the subject of sorcery, said that the killing of suspected witches was a new and worrisome development in

society. It was sometimes tied to the increase in the numbers of deaths from HIV/AIDS because any sudden or unexplained death was often attributed to sorcery. Research had also connected the killing of suspected witches to a rise in religious fundamentalism.

Article 6

53. **Ms. Chutikul** said that although the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocol and International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 covering child prostitution and trafficking were welcome, a domestic legal framework in that area was also needed. She asked what the Department of Community Development was doing to implement the Child Protection Act 2009. She would also like to hear more about the discussions mentioned in the replies to the list of issues on the decriminalization of prostitution, including men having sex with men, and on protection for sex workers. Papua New Guinea was a transit country for trafficking in persons; she therefore requested more information on how it worked with countries of origin and destination of victims of trafficking. Lastly, noting that few statistics were available, she asked if more studies in that area would be possible.

54. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that the Child Protection Act 2009 had been gazetted and implementation roll-out had started. Child pornography and child prostitution were covered under the Criminal Code (Sexual Offences and Crimes against Children) Act 2002, but commercial sex trafficking and child sex tourism had been deliberately excluded because they involved international law and would have slowed down passage of the legislation. There had been anecdotal stories of sex workers being trafficked in from other countries to Papua New Guinea, but reliable statistics were not available.

55. Work was ongoing to develop trafficking legislation which would include child sex tourism. The situation was complicated, however, by the fact that, in addition to trafficking as it was understood internationally, there were customary and traditional practices which might not qualify as trafficking, but which still had to be addressed. They included the exchange of children as part of compensation payments and the donation of children as peace offerings. However, Government agencies were adopting a zero-tolerance policy with regard to sexual abuse of

children, often perpetrated by people in positions of trust such as relatives and teachers.

56. Proposals for the decriminalization of prostitution and offences based on sexual orientation, through a review of the provisions of the Summary Offences Act on prostitution and of the 1974 Criminal Code on unnatural offences such as same-sex relations, had been submitted to cabinet, but the Government had stated clearly that it would not review them. That reaction was understandable given the upcoming elections and the politically sensitive nature of those issues. Nonetheless, it had referred the matter to the Law Reform Commission, and further efforts on decriminalization would be pursued through that avenue or through a judicial review of such legislation, as had been the case in India and Fiji.

57. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** said that although customs and religion shaped attitudes towards women, the State should still engage religious organizations and churches in their interpretation of religious texts, to ensure that women's rights were not violated. If a religious text said that women should be submissive to men, for example, that should not be construed as giving men permission to mistreat women. The State should play an active role in ensuring that culture and religion had a positive impact on women's lives, to allow them to contribute fully to the development of the nation.

58. **Ms. Rasekh** said that women suffered considerable psychological and physical harm owing to the fear of torture and violence they faced on suspicion or accusation of sorcery. She sought more information on the number of sorcery cases that had been prosecuted.

59. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that only a few religious organizations perpetuated the notion of women being inferior to men and that churches were indeed engaged in a constructive partnership with the Government to raise public awareness of the issue. While there were aspects of church practices that marginalized women, the church also opened up new spaces for women to participate in public life. Indeed, many women acquired their first experience in leadership within the church community.

60. The issue of sorcery was deeply ingrained in the society in Papua New Guinea. Many people still believed in the power of ancestral spirits to affect the living and in the power of sorcery, as it often explained

the inexplicable, with death and mysterious illness sometimes blamed on evil curses and suspected sorcerers often blamed and then killed. There were no available statistics on cases that had been prosecuted for sorcery, but if any became available they would be shared with the Committee.

61. **Mr. Minjihau** (Papua New Guinea) said that there was indeed a law on sorcery and sorcery-related killings and that a person had been charged under that law for killing a suspected sorcerer. In that case, the trial judge had applied customary law to impose a lenient sentence on the killer, but on appeal, the Supreme Court had rejected the applicability of customary law and traditional beliefs in such circumstances.

Articles 7 and 8

62. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega** said the notion of "big man" leadership and the system of control it had engendered, which was strongly associated with masculinity, physical strength, power and wealth, with leaders expected to be men, was no longer relevant in a modern society. Many of those cultural norms had had a negative impact on the notion of women and leadership and had contributed to the poor showing of women in appointed or elected positions.

63. She wished to know whether the proposed equality law which would reserve 22 seats in parliament for women needed an absolute majority to be approved and whether the State party would ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Punishment and its Optional Protocol in order to protect women who ran for public office.

64. **Ms. Neubauer** said that although article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention did not impose a clear obligation on countries to adopt temporary special measures, Papua New Guinea had agreed, upon acceding to the Convention in 1995, to take all appropriate measures, without delay, to ensure the full development and advancement of women. Fifteen years later, it could not be said that the efforts of the State party had been either appropriate or without delay.

65. She sought details about any educational programmes, projects or initiatives that targeted men, because they held all the power and without their

understanding of women's rights, women's empowerment would be difficult to achieve.

66. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** said that while Papua New Guinea should be commended for its efforts following years of struggle against colonialism, the social and political participation of women was still unsatisfactory. Despite the positive idea of funding political parties that fielded female candidates, it was probably better to have a system of quotas for women candidates, which would put them in a much better position to win election. More women should be appointed to high-level posts such as ambassadors, ministers and judges, to serve as role models for other women. She hoped that the State party would disseminate and publicize the Committee's recommendations upon returning home.

67. **Dame Carol Kidu** (Papua New Guinea) said that generally, men and women were able to vote independently and in secret, although it was not uncommon for women to vote for the same candidate or party as the rest of their family, as was the case even in developed countries. With regard to the proposed equality law, an absolute majority was required for its approval.

68. Much had been achieved, with the help of the media, in implementing temporary special measures to raise awareness of the need for women to participate fully in political life, employment, education, the judiciary and other areas of public life. However, it was a difficult process, compounded by the "big man" culture. The beneficiaries of that culture had used the system to amass wealth and influence, to the point where the people themselves expected their leaders to be "big men". Papua New Guinea would have increased female participation at the national level if the proposed law reserving 22 reserved seats for women was passed by Parliament. If that failed, one interesting option could be to refer the matter to the Supreme Court for an advisory opinion on the constitutionality of unequal representation of men and women in Parliament.

69. An example of affirmative action to facilitate women's participation in political life was the Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates, whereby if a female candidate won 10 per cent of the vote she was reimbursed for 75 per cent of her expenses. With regard to women being appointed to senior positions, Papua New Guinea had one female

ambassador and two new female judges in the Supreme Court, for a total of 3 out of 22 judges. The Department of Community Development had 20 senior managers, 10 men and 10 women, for a perfect example of gender equality. Many programmes and policies aimed at improving the status of women were targeted at men, several of whom were now in favour of women's empowerment. Lastly, the delegation would hold a press conference upon returning home to report on its visit with the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.