



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

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

Thirty-seventh session

Summary record of the 769th meeting (Chamber A)

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 25 January 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Dairiam (Rapporteur)

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In the absence of Ms. Šimonović, Ms. Dairiam, Rapporteur, 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)*

Third periodic report of Suriname
(CEDAW/C/SUR/3; CEDAW/C/SUR/Q/3 and Add. 1)

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

2. **Mr. Joemmanbaks** (Suriname), introducing the report, said that Suriname had made a serious effort to address the Committee's previous concerns as set forth in A/57/38 (Supp.), part two, chapter IV, with proposals to amend discriminatory legislation formulated on the basis of the Committee's recommendations. Discrimination was defined both in the Surinamese Constitution (art. 8, para. 2) and Penal Code (art. 126 bis). The Constitution further provided for equality of men and women (art. 35, para. 2) with a general prohibition on gender discrimination in national legislation. A committee had been established by the Ministry of Justice and Police to revise the Penal Code, including by strengthening the definition of violence against women and increasing penalties for violence and discrimination. Specific provisions would also be formulated to protect boys, girls and minors and to address marital rape, human trafficking and prostitution.

3. The Ministry of Home Affairs would be extending the term of the Committee on Gender Legislation, which comprised officials from relevant ministries as well as academics and representatives of women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs). That Committee would have a permanent character, with the National Gender Policy Bureau acting as its secretariat. Its mandate would be to test national legislation against international standards and propose necessary amendments. It would work in close cooperation with his country's Committee on Trafficking in Women and Committee on Human Rights, two bodies under the Ministry of Justice and Police. A workshop convened in January 2007 by the Women's Rights Centre had recommended that Suriname should seriously consider acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention. In 2007, the

Centre would be participating, along with gender focal points, in a debate on the issue hosted by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

4. The report had been informed by consultations with civil society, as had the Integrated Gender Action Plan for 2006-2010, launched to coincide with the establishment of a branch of the National Gender Policy Bureau in the district of Nickerie. The priority areas identified under the new Plan included institutional arrangements for improved gender policy development, poverty reduction from a gender-based perspective, macroeconomic planning to increase the participation of women in the labour market, equal participation in decision-making and the development of legal and policy instruments to enhance human rights.

5. Government action in the coming years would also focus on eliminating domestic and sexual violence, increasing women's participation in education and reducing gender stereotyping in the assignment of jobs, as well as strengthening primary health care by addressing sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and suicide. Other priorities for 2006-2010 included improving women's access to information and communication technology, eliminating gender stereotyping in the media and achieving a gender balance in environmental decision-making.

6. The National Gender Policy Bureau was currently upgrading its operations and planned to establish branches in other districts. It had seven staff, including two officials in Nickerie. Various specialized positions would shortly be filled and women would be recruited using affirmative action. The Committee on Gender Legislation had recommended draft legislation on maternity leave, concubinage, pensions, domestic violence, marriage law, labour law, the environment and the media, details of which were contained in the report.

7. The Multi-Annual Development Plan for Suriname 2006-2011 was based on the Millennium Development Goals and geared towards creating a fair society that guaranteed human rights and basic social securities for all. The special importance of human rights education was recognized within the University of Suriname and in secondary schools, as well as by NGOs.

8. The Government had highlighted the importance of tackling domestic violence and drug-related crime. A special judicial committee was currently reviewing legislation in that sphere, to bring it in line with the Convention. The establishment of a Bureau for Women and Children to tackle domestic violence and act as a focal point and support centre for victims was one of the measures being considered. In anticipation of the adoption of draft legislation on sexual harassment, the Ministry of Justice and Police had established a complaints committee to receive individual complaints and issue sanctions. An ombudsman's office was also being set up.

9. In June 2003, the Marital Act of 1973 had entered into force, replacing the Asian Marriage Act. Under the Civil Code, the legal minimum age for marriage in Suriname was 17 years for boys and 15 years for girls. An Act on Trafficking in Persons had entered into force in April 2006, raising the penalty for trafficking in minors under the age of 16 years from 8 to 10 years' imprisonment. In the area of health, a sexual and reproductive policy had been formulated and an implementation plan for maternal care was being envisaged. Efforts were also being made to improve data gathering. A National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS had also been approved for 2004-2008.

10. As further evidence of the Government's commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention, a gender perspective had been integrated into production and development activities. The Education Sector Plan, for its part, was geared towards achieving gender-mainstreaming at all levels. He was pleased to announce, moreover, that more women were being recruited to fill high-level diplomatic and consular positions and that Suriname had five female ambassadors. Some 18 per cent of Cabinet ministers and 25 per cent of the National Assembly were also women, as were all of the clerks and acting clerks of the National Assembly. A special committee on women and children had recently been established in the National Assembly, and more women were being appointed at the lower legislative and executive levels.

11. The new coalition Government elected in 2005 would ensure that the specific needs of women were addressed with more political backbone. Although there were no special quotas to ensure that more women were elected, they were free to join any political party. New legislation regarding the inclusion on ballots of the maiden name of female candidates

would become applicable in the 2010 elections. Suriname was committed to improving the lives of Suriname's women and working towards gender equality.

Articles 1 to 6

12. **Mr. Flinterman** requested clarification of the State party's position on ratification of the Optional Protocol and more detailed information on the domestic incorporation, status and dissemination of the Convention. What, also, were the priority tasks before the National Committee on Gender Legislation? Had any time frames been set for rescinding discriminatory laws and were any affirmative measures being envisaged to promote the advancement of women?

13. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that the Committee required more information on the formation, coordination, status and funding of national machinery for implementing the provisions of the Convention. She had the overall impression that more was being pledged than done and wondered whether the Integrated Gender Action Plan 2000-2005 had achieved any concrete results. Since the reform of the Surinamese Penal Code having begun back in 1993, the delegation should be in a position to indicate a time frame for the adoption of amendments relating, *inter alia*, to domestic violence. Could the fact that no complaints of gender discrimination had been received mean that women did not have access to sufficient legal assistance?

14. **Ms. Shin**, appealing to the State party to ensure that its combined fourth and fifth reports were submitted on time, said that she was very disappointed by the lack of progress achieved over the reporting period. The pace of legal reform was a particular cause for concern, since the discriminatory laws mentioned in the Committee's previous concluding comments (A/57/38 (Supp.), part two, chapter IV, para. 41) had yet to be repealed. Initiatives in that regard appeared mostly to come from non-governmental and international organizations.

15. The delegation should explain what specific factors were hampering the Government's own efforts. The General Statistics Bureau may indeed have burned down, but it was the Government's responsibility to find an alternative means of collecting national data. Lastly, she would appreciate information on the status of women's rights in Surinamese society. She took

issue with the Government's recognition in its Integrated Gender Action Plan 2000-2005 that women's rights were "special human rights". Women's rights were basic human rights, not special rights.

16. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** expressed the hope that the State party's next report would give more information on the results of the policies and plans outlined in the current report, and on which entities were involved in implementation. She would like to know whether there was political will for the ratification of the Optional Protocol. Discussion in that regard should not be left to NGOs; the matter should be taken up by Parliament and Government ministries.

17. Gender equality efforts and human rights seemed to be regarded as two separate concepts. In fact, gender equality efforts formed part of the overall human rights framework for women based on the Convention, and all relevant policies, programmes and institutions should be oriented accordingly. She was also concerned that women per se were viewed as a vulnerable group. Such a notion might undermine the understanding that women who belonged to vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities or the disabled could be victims of multiple discrimination.

18. She welcomed the Integrated Gender Action Plan and the 10 priority areas that had been outlined. However, she requested more information about the implementation of the Action Plan: what concrete steps would be taken and what time frames were envisaged? Would particular Government ministries be given responsibility for each priority area, or would the entire burden fall on the National Gender Policy Bureau?

19. **Ms. Neubauer**, having welcomed the establishment of a network of gender focal points, said that the National Gender Policy Bureau could play a crucial role in the development of gender expertise and in capacity-building for integrating gender equality into policies and programmes at all levels of government. A dual-track approach to gender equality could be taken, involving specific measures in areas critical to the advancement of women on the one hand, and monitoring and evaluation of the process of gender-mainstreaming on the other.

20. To that end, a permanent inter-ministerial structure was required, comprising high-level representatives of relevant policy areas with decision-making powers. She would like to know whether there was a strong political commitment to ensuring that the

network of gender focal points functioned as a permanent structure for systematic coordination and cooperation. If the network was not yet functioning as such, she hoped that it would be in the near future.

21. **Mr. Joemmanbaks** (Suriname) said that Government representatives participated in civil society discussions on the Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol was also due to be discussed by the gender focal points and NGO representatives in the near future. Recommendations would be made to the Government on the basis of those discussions.

22. The Convention had been published in the National Gazette in 1992. It was not directly applicable in national law, and therefore amendments had to be made to existing legislative instruments in order to give effect to it. That process was ongoing. However, the provisions of the Convention could be invoked in court if the judge in question deemed them applicable to the case. The main task of the Committee on Gender Legislation, which was made up of high-level public servants, NGO representatives and experts from the University of Suriname, was to provide the Government with input on the legislative amendments needed. The country's law-making process was lengthy, as each law had to be reviewed and approved at several levels before adoption by Parliament and publication. He agreed that the process should be speeded up.

23. The national machinery for women consisted of the National Gender Policy Bureau, the gender focal points and other stakeholders, and was coordinated by the Minister of Home Affairs. The Bureau was a high-level body under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It had seven staff and also received support from other high-level officials. In addition to the 10 priority areas already mentioned, the Integrated Gender Action Plan set out specific activities to be carried out by particular ministries and NGOs, with time frames. The National Gender Policy Bureau acted as coordinator in that regard but was not involved in the implementation of individual activities.

24. Suriname was committed to implementing the Convention but faced various difficulties in that regard. It lacked legislative experts in data collection and analysis. Another problem was that much data had been lost when the building housing the General Statistics Bureau had burned down in 2003. However, the Bureau was now fully operational again. Some data had been

recovered from backup systems, and gender statistics for 2002 to 2005 in a number of fields were now available.

25. Some 60 per cent of the activities set out in the Integrated Gender Action Plan 2000-2005 had been successfully implemented. The remainder had been incorporated into the new Plan (2006-2010). Responding to a point raised by Ms. Schöpp-Schilling, he said that women's rights were naturally regarded as part of human rights in general. However, the Government tried to support specific groups of women that needed particular attention.

26. **Ms. Mohanlal** (Suriname) said that the Gender Management System was currently being strengthened through the provision of Internet facilities and training programmes. As coordinator of the Integrated Gender Action Plan, the National Gender Policy Bureau was responsible for identifying stakeholders according to policy topics, identifying relevant developments and bottlenecks, providing technical advice and support to implementation partners, and collecting data for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation. More staff were being recruited to help with the Bureau's workload. The Ministry of Home Affairs had a special budget for gender-related activities.

27. **Mr. Joemmanbaks** (Suriname), responding to a question about the relationship between the National Gender Policy Bureau and the Committee on Gender Legislation, said that the Bureau functioned as the Committee's secretariat. Both reported directly to the Minister of Home Affairs. With regard to the schedule for reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, he said that the next report would cover the period from April 2002 to 2010. In the meantime, however, information could be provided to the Committee regarding the period April 2002 to December 2006.

28. **Ms. Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that the Government was making great efforts, in cooperation with civil society, to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. The lack of concrete results and the delays in the submission of reports were partly due to a lack of resources, and her Government would welcome the assistance of the international community in that regard. She assured the Committee that the next report would be more results-oriented.

29. **Ms. Saiga** noted that, according to the report, the elimination of prejudices was not covered by national

legislation. Since the elimination of stereotypes was a requirement of the Convention, the Government was obliged to take action in that regard. The Committee had recommended, in its previous concluding comments, that the State party should make efforts to raise awareness among women, men and the media of the need to combat stereotypes. She asked what steps were being taken to change attitudes, particularly among men, about the roles of each sex, and how the Government planned to harness the potential of the media in breaking down stereotypes.

30. **Ms. Pimentel** echoed Ms. Saiga's concerns about the apparent lack of Government action to combat stereotypes. She requested details about the content of the two draft laws on domestic violence, since the State party had not provided that information in the responses to the list of issues. She also requested more information on the process of discussion of the draft laws. Why had they not yet been submitted to Parliament? Pending their adoption, what other mechanisms existed for reporting and investigating cases of domestic and sexual violence, providing protection to victims and convicting the perpetrators?

31. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** said that the obligation of the State party to eliminate gender stereotypes and prejudice was just as important as its other obligations under the Convention. Cultural traditions should not prevent Governments from engaging in the necessary action, which had an essential part to play in the advancement of women and should not be left solely to civil society and international organizations. She regretted the absence in the report of any mention of the results of the activities reported to combat violence against women and urged that the omission be made good in the next report. She asked what was being done about the two draft laws on domestic violence mentioned in Suriname's responses (CEDAW/C/SUR/Q/3/Add.1, p. 9) and what they contained. Information would also be appreciated about any study undertaken on violence against women in Suriname, with particular reference to the forms it assumed and the number of cases reported.

32. **Ms. Simms** said that it was encouraging that human rights had been defined to include women's rights. The challenge, however, was to translate ideology into action. Insufficient attention had been paid in the report to the question of trafficking in persons, which was a major problem in the CARICOM region and was linked to the issues of prostitution and

the spread of HIV/AIDS. She regretted the absence of statistics in that regard and the apparent lack of any serious measures to address the issue. Strong laws were needed to protect women from sexual exploitation, particularly in view of the presence of multinational companies in the country; the promoters of prostitution and the men who used the service of prostitutes had to be targeted.

33. **Ms. Gabr** stressed in turn the responsibility of the Government to implement the Convention. That included action to develop awareness of its provisions, among the population as well as in the National Assembly. The Government was free to hire consultants to draft its report, which nevertheless remained under its responsibility. She expressed dismay at the statement in the report (CEDAW/C/SUR/3, p. 12) that the elimination of prejudices was not included in the country's legislation. The Committee would be grateful for statistics on trafficking in persons, especially in view of the high incidence of poverty in Suriname. She asked if they could be included in the next periodic report, particularly in respect of indigenous women, and also requested information on the draft laws on violence against women and trafficking in persons.

34. **Mr. Joemmanbaks** (Suriname) said that he recognized it to be the responsibility of the Government to take measures to implement the Convention. The Ministry of Justice and Police had recently adopted new regulations on trafficking in persons, under which three cases had been placed before the courts; in one case there had been a conviction, while the other two cases were still pending.

35. **Ms. Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that the Government had given its support to information and education programmes to combat gender stereotyping, in particular through State television. While the Government recognized its own responsibility for promoting women's rights, it welcomed the support of civil society. The NGO ProHealth, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, had produced a report on violence against women in the country: the data included in it could be made available to the Committee.

36. **Mr. Joemmanbaks** (Suriname) said that the first draft law consisted of amendments to the Penal Code and included a definition of violence against women

almost identical to that contained in the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, adopted in Bélem do Para in 2002. It provided for heavier penalties for offenders, laid down rules for gathering evidence and introduced changes in police investigation procedures. The second draft law had been drawn up by the Women's Rights Centre, which had submitted it directly to the Ministry of Justice and Police. As it had not yet reached the Ministry of Home Affairs, he could not provide any further information about it but hoped to be able to do so in the next report. The process of collecting data on the Maroon population had begun, but he could not as yet report any figures.

37. **Mr. Landveld** (Suriname) said that, although there was no mention of it in the report, the Government had undertaken action to combat gender prejudice. The Ministry of Education in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund had carried out projects in schools on gender equality. With regard to the trafficking of women, particularly among the Maroon population, legislation had not yet been drawn up, but there had been a reduction in such activity, through a reinforced police presence. The interior had become more accessible than previously, in the 1980s and 1990s, when internal wars had prevented the exercise of Government control; moreover, the paramount chiefs had decided that the wildcat miners known as *garimpeiros* must leave the mining area. He regretted that he could not provide data.

38. **Mr. Flinterman** said that, as there appeared to be no obstacles to Suriname's ratification of the Optional Protocol, he hoped that the appropriate measures would soon be adopted. Since the Convention was not directly applicable in the State party's legislation and did not take precedence over domestic laws, it was all the more important for Suriname to repeal all discriminatory laws and to adopt new laws in accordance with its provisions. In addition, members of the judiciary should be acquainted not only with the Convention but also with the Committee's recommendations. He expressed appreciation for the incorporation in the draft law on equal treatment of an approach based on what was referred to in the report as "positive discrimination". He recommended that the Government should replace that term by "temporary special measures" and that it should take all due account of the

Committee's general recommendation 25. He wished to know what the expected time frame for adoption was.

39. **Ms. Pimentel** welcomed the inclusion in the draft law on violence of the definition contained in the Bélem do Para Convention, the importance of which for the whole Latin American and Caribbean region lay in its emphasis on prevention and policies and mechanisms for eradication. She urged that the draft law also reflect the spirit and main points of law embodied in that Convention.

40. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** requested further information about the draft law on equal treatment, particularly in respect of temporary special measures. She expressed concern about the use of outside consultants to draft the State party's reports. The planning of the necessary legislative reforms had to take place within the framework of the Convention, which accordingly needed to be brought to the attention of all Government officials. She wondered how they could become fully acquainted with its provisions or seek to put them into effect if responsibility for monitoring it was entrusted to outside experts.

41. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** welcomed the existence of an independent budget for the National Gender Policy Bureau. She asked whether that budget was guaranteed by law or had to be renegotiated every year. The Committee would appreciate an explanation as to why the Convention had not so far been invoked before the domestic courts by a single woman. She wondered what the Government was doing to encourage women to avail themselves of the guarantees that it offered, in particular by way of a legal aid plan.

42. **Ms. Saiga** commended the Government for its media-oriented action in support of women's rights. She asked whether there was any procedure whereby the National Gender Policy Bureau was informed about or involved in gender-related measures taken outside the Ministry of Home Affairs, such as the elaboration of the draft laws on violence against women.

43. **Ms. Shin** said that the State party's report would be more useful to the Committee if it was prepared by Government officials, even at the cost of less polished writing. She welcomed the Government's collaboration with NGOs but stressed that the initiative for implementation of the Convention must always lie with the national authorities.

44. **Mr. Joemmanbaks** (Suriname) said that judicial officials received training in human rights including components on international instruments such as the Convention and on the issue of violence against women. Women's organizations such as the Women's Rights Centre and the Foundation Stop Violence against Women had helped prepare the curriculum for those programmes. The Women's Rights Centre had also provided training guidelines on gender issues to the Police Corps. The draft law on equal treatment of men and women was unfortunately still being reviewed by the Ministry of Justice, but his Government was aware of the need to adopt that law as soon as possible. He noted that the draft law included a provision for the establishment of a body to investigate cases where men or women alleged their rights had been violated by the administration.

45. He took note of the recommendation that it would be preferable to refer to temporary special measures, the term used in the Convention, rather than positive discrimination, which seemed to be a contradiction in terms. He also said that the draft equality law would reflect the provisions of the Convention of Bélem do Para as would the explanatory notes attached to the law. With regard to the issue of calling on a consultant to draft the State party's next periodic report, he reassured the Committee that a parallel group made up of high-level representatives from various ministries, as well as the gender focal points, would be responsible for discussing proposals for the next report with the consultant. Although the Committee's previous recommendations had not been widely disseminated to the public, they had been distributed to ministries, the gender focal points and stakeholders. The consultant would also have to take them into account during the preparation of the next report. Once completed, the report would be submitted to ministries, the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly for review.

46. The budget of the National Gender Policy Bureau was allocated yearly and determined on the basis of the Bureau's anticipated activities for the year; that budget had been increasing steadily. He had no information on the draft law on domestic violence submitted by the Women's Rights Centre but said that in general the National Bureau was kept informed of developments relating to gender issues, for example by the gender focal points. The Bureau was cooperating with the

Ministry of Justice on the drafting of the Penal Code provisions relating to domestic violence.

47. **Ms. Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that her Government, women parliamentarians and other stakeholders were reviewing the possibility of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and she hoped that there would be progress by the time the next report was submitted. Her Government was also committed to full implementation of the Convention of Bélem do Para and to the elimination of violence against women. She recalled that her delegation was currently a member of the Commission on the Status of Women. It was participating actively in the discussion by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women of the issue of violence against women and girl children and was cooperating with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and civil society organizations to combat HIV/AIDS, which affected more than 3,000 people in Suriname, over 40 per cent of whom were women.

Articles 7 to 9

48. **Ms. Neubauer** said that, although the number of women elected in the 2005 elections had increased, women were still poorly represented in appointed positions; for example, there were no women District Commissioners. The Government must show the political will to take steps to increase the number of women in positions of responsibility. She asked whether the findings of the study by the Women's Parliamentary Forum on the possibility of imposing quotas would be taken into account; quotas could be considered a temporary special measure under article 4(1) of the Convention. More information would also be welcome on the practical effects of measures adopted to improve the representation of indigenous women and women from racial minorities.

49. **Ms. Pimentel** expressed concern at the low levels of representation of women in public and political life and at the decision-making level. She took note of the impediments to their participation described in the report, such as family responsibilities, lack of childcare and lack of action by the Government and political parties. The number of women in high-level positions actually seemed to have declined since the previous report, and she therefore requested information on any steps taken or mechanisms established by the State party to increase the representation of women at decision-making levels and to indicate the gender of

candidates on electoral lists. She also asked why official electoral and voting information was not gender-disaggregated.

50. **Mr. Flinterman** wondered if the State party intended to eliminate the current discriminatory provisions relating to women's nationality rights, including the right to transfer their nationality. He suggested that, even though the Convention in general was not directly applicable in the State party, an exemption should be made at least with regard to article 9, whose intent was clearly to grant both men and women equal rights in the area of nationality.

51. **Mr. Joemmanbaks** (Suriname) said that his Government was of course aware of the need to increase the representation of women at the decision-making level; currently women made up a majority of employees at the lower levels, 45 per cent at middle levels and 30 per cent at higher levels. A number of women would soon be appointed to high-level positions, including at the Director and Deputy Director levels. The District Commissioners posed a special problem because stereotyping was more of a problem in the interior of the country, and often the most competent women preferred to remain in the capital where better schools were available for their children. Nevertheless there were a number of women in positions just below that of District Commissioner and it was likely that some of them would be promoted soon. The Ministry of Regional Development, which was responsible for appointing the District Commissioners, was aware of the problem.

52. **Ms. Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that the new Civil Code would include provisions granting men and women equal rights to transfer their nationality; unfortunately, it would be some time before the new Code was ready for adoption. She added that, in the 2010 elections, women candidates would have the option of having their married or maiden name appear on electoral lists and ballots.

53. **Mr. Landveld** (Suriname) said that the Maroon minority was represented in the current Government: there were three Maroon ministers, one of whom was a woman, as well as one Maroon woman Permanent Secretary and one Under-Permanent Secretary. The Maroon and indigenous minorities had ten seats in Parliament, including one indigenous and three Maroon women. The President had established an inter-ministerial committee to advise him on the issue of

land rights, and the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation was engaged in a project to promote dialogue with stakeholders on the land rights issue. The indigenous and Maroon communities had established a committee, which included women representatives, to coordinate discussions with the Government committee. Turning to the issue of representation of women in the Foreign Service, he said that 9 of 20 recent diplomatic appointees had been women, including 5 heads of mission. Five appointees were from the Maroon community, including one woman, the new ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago.

54. **Ms. Simms** welcomed the increases in the representation of minority women but stressed that the Government, and the party currently in power, had a responsibility to provide an example for the country and the political opposition, for example by implementing a 30 per cent quota for women. Furthermore, in discussions with the Maroon and indigenous communities, where stereotypes were often prevalent, the Government should underscore the need to ensure that women had equal representation with men.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.