



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

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

Twenty-seventh session

Summary record of the 555th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 6 June 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Abaka

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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 fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ukraine (CEDAW/C/UKR/4-5 and CEDAW/C/UKR/4-5/Corr.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Dovzhenko and Ms. Pasichnyk (Ukraine) took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Dovzhenko** (Ukraine), presenting her country's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/UKR/4-5 and CEDAW/C/UKR/4-5/Corr.1), emphasized the usefulness of the Committee's recommendations regarding the third periodic report (CEDAW/C/UKR/3 and CEDAW/C/UKR/3/Add.1) and assured it that Ukraine would act on any recommendations concerning the latest reports. As a young state, Ukraine had some way to go in translating the principle of gender equality into action, but the efforts of the legislative and executive authorities would help to achieve that goal. However, Ukrainian legislation and structures to promote gender equality were not yet fully effective. The causes included the fact that Ukraine was a country in transition, with all the social and economic problems that implied, and the fact that men's attitudes towards women were the product of centuries of habit, a problem common to many countries, irrespective of the level of development of their democratic institutions.

3. Ukraine had acted on the Committee's previous recommendations in a number of ways. As far back as 1996, a Ministry of the Family and Youth had been established to take responsibility for gender equality; its functions had since been taken over by the State Committee for Family and Youth Affairs. Together, they had proposed a number of legislative bills, presidential decrees and government decisions to further their goals. Since women could secure their social, economic, political, family and domestic rights only against a background of respect for human rights in general, all the proposals made had been rooted in the 1996 Constitution, which enshrined the individual's right to health, justice, fulfillment and freedom and affirmed the State's role as guarantor of those rights, without regard to gender. In that connection, the post

of parliamentary ombudsman for human rights had been created in 1997.

4. The goals of gender equality and improving women's role and standing in society had been furthered by a national plan of action covering the years 1997 to 2000, based on the commitments resulting from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Government had approved a further five-year plan in 2001. At the end of 2000, again inspired by United Nations and other international documents, Ukraine had adopted a Code on Marriage and the Family which stipulated equal rights and duties for men and women in family matters and marriage. A 2001 presidential decree sought to give women equal rights and opportunities in public and political life.

5. The State Committee for Family and Youth Affairs supported women's non-governmental organizations, which had increased greatly in number in the last five years and were active locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. There were five women's political parties and unions, and a national women's council had been set up in 1999. The women's movement had been highly instrumental in introducing special courses to combat gender stereotyping into the curricula of higher education institutions, setting up twenty gender-research centres and establishing a school of equal opportunities for students.

6. Although the women's movement had helped to give women a higher political profile, their success at lower levels of political representation (up to 50 per cent in some local authorities) had not been matched in higher political office, as the 2002 general election had proved (10 per cent representation on regional councils, and only 5.1 per cent in Parliament). In the civil service, although women outnumbered men overall, only 6 per cent of senior positions were occupied by women. The underrepresentation of women in central government diminished their influence over major national policy areas such as privatization and resource distribution. A bill on State guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women had been rejected by the previous parliament and had yet to be considered by the new parliament installed on 14 May 2002.

7. Ukraine also made specific provision for women in individual areas of civil, criminal, family and labour law. Ukraine was not inclined to share the reticence the

Committee had expressed when considering the country's third periodic report that extra social-security provisions for mothers could in fact harm their status in a market-economy country: experience had shown that women took their own decisions in that regard, and those who wished to further their careers tended to turn down welfare payments and return to work. The Committee had similarly made observations on the limits placed by labour laws on the range of jobs open to women. She pointed out that the restrictions were few, and mostly motivated by the country's unfortunate inability to enforce high standards of health and safety at work.

8. Ukraine believed that men and women should not only have equal opportunity to enjoy their human rights and contribute to the country's economic, political, social and cultural development, but should also benefit equally from that development. Job-creation programmes were specifically targeted at women and girls, because the economic downturn had caused redundancies in industry which had disproportionately affected female employees. Job-creation efforts had also focused on people in need of welfare assistance who were unable to compete in the labour market: women with young children, single mothers and mothers with handicapped children. A job quota of up to 5 per cent for women in such situations had translated into a figure of 36,000 posts in 2001. As a result, women had accounted for a shrinking proportion of the unemployed in the last several years, falling from 73 per cent at the end of 1995 to 48 per cent in January 2002. A law on obligatory State unemployment insurance had used employer contributions to generate new jobs. There had been 9,000 women claimants in 2001, and the provisions had also helped to increase the number of small businesses run by women. However, women earned an average of 73 per cent of men's pay, because of the concentration of women in low-paid professions and posts, in education, health-care, culture and social services. Under the plan of action for 2001 to 2005, tackling the salary gap would be a priority.

9. The disparity in earnings persisted despite a well-qualified female population, with equal rights in education guaranteed by the Constitution, by the education law and by a series of other regulations. Girls accounted for 49 per cent of the school population. In 2000, women had accounted for 48 per cent of post-graduate students (compared to 45 per cent

in 1995) and for 31 per cent of doctoral students (compared to 26 per cent in 1995). Although women were better qualified than men, they made less use of refresher training and retraining, thus reducing their competitiveness on the job market. Because the main reason was child-rearing obligations, more flexible opportunities to improve qualifications were being investigated.

10. Women's health was an important barometer of human development. Medical treatment and screening programmes were funded by the Government and, in accordance with the Convention, special maternal health measures which did not discriminate against men were in place. Maternal mortality had fallen from over 34 per hundred thousand live births in 1996 to under 25 per hundred thousand in 2000, and abortions had decreased by over one third in the same period (664,000 to 408,000). The birth rate had fallen, and the standard of health — including reproductive health — of both men and women had deteriorated, largely because of the Chernobyl disaster. Cardiac and circulatory disease and malignancies had increased, with the incidence of breast cancer rising from 51 per 100,000 in 1996 to nearly 60 per 100,000 in 2000. To help address the worsening situation, the Government had approved a comprehensive genetic monitoring programme for 1999 to 2003, a national reproductive health programme for 2001 to 2005, and an overall interdepartmental "health-of-the-nation" programme for 2002 to 2011.

11. The Committee had been justified in singling out the incidence of violence against women for criticism in the country's 1996 report. The phenomenon encompassed domestic violence, sexual harassment and exploitation and forced prostitution. The need for countermeasures had been taken seriously. A law prohibiting violence in the family had been adopted in 2001, forming the basis for State committees to formulate measures to provide genuine protection for women and children. Individual regions were setting up networks to provide legal and other assistance for victims of domestic violence which included crisis centres, shelters and centres for medical and social rehabilitation.

12. Although Ukrainian society traditionally respected women and children, it was being affected by the worldwide phenomenon of human trafficking. International criminal organizations were selling young women and girls into sexual and economic slavery.

Countries with economies in transition were particular targets of such operators. The solutions had to be sought internationally, with the involvement of the victims' countries of origin, transit and destination. Ukraine had signed a number of international agreements to combat such trafficking, and in 1998 had been one of the first countries in Europe to alter its criminal code to encompass that phenomenon. Since then, the judicial system had tried 174 criminal cases, and the rate of such offences had risen by over half between 2000 and 2001 alone. The Government had adopted a programme to prevent trafficking in women and children for 1999 to 2001, and later a comprehensive programme to combat human trafficking for 2002 to 2005 with a three-pronged approach: prevention, prosecution of perpetrators, and rehabilitation of victims. The country's forces of law and order had set up special human-trafficking units, and the first victim-rehabilitation centres had begun operating in 2002. There was fruitful cooperation between local and central authorities and women's non-governmental organizations, enabling the latter to influence decision-making. The growing role of the women's movement had also been felt in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

13. On the Committee's recommendation, information was being collected on women from Ukraine's minority communities. Ukraine counted its ability to maintain peaceful relations between all its communities since independence as an achievement. After becoming a member of the Council of Europe, it had signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which in accordance with the Ukrainian Constitution had become part of national law. Experts from international organizations had deemed Ukraine to have one of the world's most democratic foundations for the protection of minorities, who as full citizens were protected by the same non-discrimination provisions as ethnic Ukrainians.

14. Ukraine acknowledged the assistance of international bodies such as the Committee itself, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in helping it to achieve gender equality. The Convention had been ratified in 1980, when Ukraine had still been part of the USSR, and the country viewed compliance with the relevant obligations not just as a duty to the

international community, but as a duty to its own citizens. The country's legislation was free of gender discrimination, and gender equality was seen as a means of profiting from an enormous source of energy for development. Ukraine's goal was to further combat discrimination, which would involve stabilizing the economy and improving the labour market, so that men and women could participate equally in political and economic life, share labour and share child care.

15. Her delegation renewed its appeal for Ukraine's efforts to be viewed in the light of the short period since independence and the damage resulting from the Chernobyl disaster. As a consequence, the joint efforts of the government, society and the international community were vital.

General observations

16. **The Chairperson** said she took note of the intention of Ukraine to ratify the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, and the Optional Protocol, and expressed the Committee's hope that it would do so promptly.

17. **Ms. Açar** commended Ukraine for its legal system, which contained no discriminatory elements against women per se. Although legislation was crucial, it was not sufficient. Attitudinal change required committed tireless, target-oriented efforts in the social, economic, cultural, political and educational spheres. The root causes of discrimination should be identified, with special attention to indirect discrimination, and to poverty, gender stereotypes and traditional attitudes. She had noted the tendency in Ukraine to blame women for discrimination against them, and to overlook the existence of the social, cultural and political forces that affected their choices. Comments on that observation would be welcome.

18. **Ms. Achmad** said that Ukraine had extensive national machinery for the benefit of women. Yet all such bodies and programmes emphasized the role of women, family, and children, essentially perpetuating stereotypical roles. For change to occur, an emphasis on eliminating discrimination and sharing responsibilities between women and men was crucial.

19. **Ms. Gaspard** welcomed the new information and analysis provided by the delegation in its opening remarks, and commended the State party for having taken the Committee's recommendations into consideration. She would like to know how the report

had been assembled and drafted. The Convention covered all areas of social, cultural, economic and political life, and therefore involved all government ministries. The formulation of the report was therefore an occasion to assess the engagement of all the ministries in the work of achieving gender equality. In that regard, she wondered whether the report had been submitted to non-governmental organizations for their comments.

20. In addition, she would like to know whether the Government was considering adopting special measures to increase the representation of women in political life.

21. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** said that she was aware of the difficulties facing Ukraine during a period of political, social and economic transition, and reminded the State party that it was crucial to educate the public, as well as legislators, civil servants, and members of the legal profession about new legislation being enacted. She would like to know whether the Government had allocated funds for the establishment of training courses to familiarize such persons with the concept of substantive gender equality.

22. She understood that, under the new Code on Marriage and the Family, certain legal acts by one spouse required the signature of the other spouse. Clarification would be welcome, since such requirements were often detrimental to women. She regretted that the equal opportunities bill had not been adopted, and wondered whether, in the view of the State party, the new Parliament was likely to adopt it. She would like to know what subjects it covered, and in particular whether it contained any provisions for the adoption of temporary special measures.

23. Lastly, she asked whether the poverty alleviation programme ranked women according to the severity of their impoverishment, and allotted assistance accordingly.

24. **Mr. Melander** said that he understood that in Ukraine international human rights instruments were considered to be part of domestic law, but that law enforcement personnel were unaware of their existence. He would like to know whether the Government provided training courses in such matters to police, judges, prosecutors and other law-enforcement officials.

25. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** said that it was clear from the report that a considerable gap existed between law and practice in such areas as employment, political representation, management and decision-making posts, and the civil service. The report recognized that custom, tradition and gender stereotypes largely ruled the lives of men and women. She wondered whether the Government had considered the enactment of temporary special measures to redress such inequality.

26. According to the report, the proportion of women in managerial posts was about 50 per cent but the proportion among specialists was 80 per cent. Clarifications would be welcome.

27. The report emphasized programmes related to family, women and children, but rarely referred to the role of men. For example, programmes to combat violence against women apparently contained no special measures for dealing with the perpetrators of such violence. The situation and role of women would not change if those of men did not change simultaneously.

28. **Ms. Dovzhenko** (Ukraine) agreed that even good legislation was not always able to eliminate deeply-rooted discrimination against women. The best way of achieving gender equality was to tackle stereotyping of male and female social and political roles. The position of Ukrainian women, as an anchor of stability in the family and the country, was historically high, despite their underrepresentation in high political office. However, legislation did have a role to play in eliminating discrimination, and that was the reasoning underlying the bill on State guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women, which included provisions on quotas for the representation of women in central and local elections and authorities. It was to be hoped that the new parliament would adopt it, though much lobbying would be needed in a chamber in which only 5 per cent of deputies were women. With regard to the Committee's request for examples of action on the denial of women's right to work, the country's Employment Act guaranteed women equal rights and the Code of Labour Laws provided for administrative and criminal penalties against managers who refused to employ women with young children or who dismissed women with children under 14. With regard to the Committee's request for examples of action on violence against women, a law prohibiting violence (especially domestic violence) had been adopted in November 2001. Since then, the State

Committee for Family and Youth Affairs had joined the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in developing arrangements for women to take complaints of violence to the authorities. In addition, the new Criminal Code, adopted in 2001, protected women against sexual and economic slavery and harassment. Ministry of Internal Affairs bodies had examined nearly two hundred such cases in 2001.

29. With regard to the questions about the many mechanisms which the legislative and executive authorities used to translate the terms of the Convention into action, there had in fact been none at all until 1996, when a presidential decree had set up the Ministry of the Family and Youth, since changed into a State Committee equivalent to a ministry, with responsibility for coordinating legislative activity, gender-equality promotion, and improving the situation of men and women alike. The current focus was on simplification and three levels of action: the government and government bodies, the parliament, and non-governmental organizations. With regard to questions on the preparation of the report itself, overall responsibility had been given to the State Committee for Family and Youth Affairs, which had gathered contributions from all the other ministries. The draft report had then been examined by the Government's Coordination Council on Questions relating to Women and by a coordinating council including representatives of most women's non-governmental organizations. Unfortunately, gender equality had been passed from one parliament committee to another in the last 10 years, and the State Committee had pressed for gender equality to be handled by a subcommittee reporting to the Parliament's human rights committee.

30. With regard to questions on the draft Concept on improving the situation of women, which the previous Parliament had failed to adopt, the motivation for that 1992 document remained, namely a deterioration in women's health, and underrepresentation in society and politics. While the Government had not perhaps exerted enough pressure on deputies to adopt the Concept, there had also been a recent change in emphasis: the Concept was no longer considered up to date, because it dealt only with women, not with gender issues as a whole. For that reason, it had given way to the bill on State guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women in 1999. With regard to the roles of men and women in the family, the Code on Marriage and the Family gave mothers and fathers

equal rights, responsibilities and accountability for bringing up children, making decisions in the family, choosing a place of residence, taking up a profession and owning property. The law on vacations also allowed up to three years' maternity or paternity leave.

31. The Committee had been right to point out the enormous contrast between Ukrainian women's high level of education and low level of political representation. More positive trends were emerging, however. In the March 2002 elections, some local assemblies had achieved 40 to 50 per cent representation of women. Legislative measures were being accompanied by major efforts to inform the public and work with non-governmental organizations in order to boost women's self-confidence and ambitions. The 2000 to 2005 programme for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action had provided for an analysis of the situation of women in all industries and professions. The findings had been worrying. In education, 80 per cent of staff were women, yet the men had higher average earnings, indicating that women were underrepresented in better-paid posts. Steps would be taken to encourage women to take up those more senior posts. The Committee's comments that legislation had to be backed by concerted information campaigns were very valid. The first targets needed to be deputies and civil servants. Though further efforts were needed, the State Information Committee had drawn up a comprehensive plan spanning television, radio and the press. In the last two years, the budget of the State Committee for Family and Youth Affairs had contained a special item for supporting the efforts of women's non-governmental organizations and developing appropriate teaching materials. With regard to expanding information on the bill on State guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women, which covered social, economic, humanitarian, cultural, civic and political matters, provision had been made for article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to apply to administrative measures.

32. The poverty reduction strategy aimed at a reduction of 5 per cent per year in the number of people living below the poverty line; it would include increased assistance to unemployed mothers. As for the discrepancy between women's high educational level and their low salaries, many women had been trained as engineers but, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the economic difficulties which followed, jobs in

scientific fields had disappeared and many women had been laid off. Eighty per cent of the unemployed were women, and the Government was making efforts to help them through retraining.

33. Some Ukrainian traditions and customs were outmoded and needed to be revised through education, legislation and information. Women had always occupied an honoured position in the family, and violence against women had not traditionally been a serious problem, nor had it been condoned by society. As a matter of fact, men's health indicators, life expectancy and mortality rates were much worse than those of women, and the Government was concerned at the increasing gender gap between women's and men's general welfare.

Articles 1 to 6

34. **Ms. Raday** said that, if she understood correctly, although the Convention was considered to be part of domestic law, its provisions could not be invoked in court. An explanation would be welcome. She would like to know, specifically, what civil remedies were available to women who had been discriminated against. It would also be helpful to know whether new equal opportunities legislation would provide for legal recourse.

35. She welcomed new legislation dealing with the traffic in women, a problem of alarming proportions in Ukraine. It had apparently, however, proved difficult to implement because of the definition of the crime contained in the law, the relevant police procedures, the applicability of the law only to cross-border crimes, and the licensing of employment and tourist agencies that served as fronts for traffickers. She would be interested to hear the comments of the State party in that regard. In particular, it would be useful to know why only 37 cases of trafficking in women had been prosecuted since 2000, the date when the new legislation had come into effect.

36. The Government of Ukraine should seriously reconsider whether the prosecution of prostitutes was a productive and helpful strategy for dealing with the crime of prostitution. The Convention required States parties to suppress the exploitation of prostitution, a purpose that was better achieved by prosecuting pimps. She understood that some Ukrainian women considered prostitution as their profession; those views should be

assessed in light of the high rate of unemployment and the absence of other viable choices.

37. **Ms. Shin** said that, in view of the concern at the declining population, she would like to know more about the Government's population policy. She also asked whether the restrictions on employment of pregnant women and mothers of young children actually protected the women or worked against them. The legislation on domestic violence and violence against women was commendable, yet she wondered how the justice system coped with the high number of cases as indicated in tables 15 and 16 of the report. It would be interesting to have more details on the implementation of the plan to establish women's shelters: how many were currently available and their locations, who operated them, the number planned for the future and their budget. She would like to know the extent of government involvement in the recent "Sixteen Days Without Violence" initiative sponsored by the Ukrainian Women's Congress.

38. **Ms. Saiga** noted that the national programme of action for women for the period 2001-2005 contained provisions regarding gender discrimination, and wondered whether there were plans to enable women to take discrimination cases to court. She would like to hear more about the reasons behind the veto of the proposal for a new civil court and the next steps envisaged.

39. **Ms. Myakayaka-Manzini** asked whether the Government intended to pass an anti-discrimination act, and what the legal work of the Directorate for Women's Affairs entailed, since gender discrimination cases could not be brought to court. It seemed that gender stereotypes had reappeared in recent years and that women had lost ground in such areas as employment, health and politics. She wondered what was being done to reverse those negative trends.

40. **Ms. Pasichnyk** (Ukraine) said that the right of any citizen to bring a complaint about any government action before the courts was guaranteed under the Constitution and that an ombudsman could also receive human rights complaints. The revised Civil Code had been adopted by Parliament on 29 November 2001 and sent to the President for signature. He had made some proposals and had returned it to the Supreme Council, which was currently continuing its deliberations as the highest priority. Internal trafficking in persons was punishable by law.

41. **Ms. Dovzhenko** (Ukraine) said that the Convention prevailed over the Constitution in the Ukrainian legal system. A new bill on equality toughened the penalties for trafficking and allowed discrimination cases to be brought to court. Some 90 complaints of trafficking had been received in the past year, but only 20 brought to court. Trafficking was very difficult to combat because of the involvement of international criminal organizations.

42. The situation of women and girls forced into prostitution was a matter of great concern. Most of them had agreed to go abroad thinking that they had legitimate job offers. Others had taken legitimate jobs but had begun to use prostitution as a means to earn money to send to families back home. Her exchanges with such women had enabled her to make concrete proposals on the kinds of assistance they needed most. Procurers of prostitutes and organizers of brothels were subject to criminal charges, and the women they employed did have the right to complain to law enforcement agencies. The aim of the State Committee for Family and Youth Affairs was to develop effective legislation and information campaigns and to see the guilty punished.

43. A law had recently been adopted on domestic violence which provided for administrative and criminal penalties for that offence. Charges were brought after inspectors from the Ministry of Internal Affairs had conducted the relevant investigations. In 2001, 200,000 cases had been reported. Educational work was being done to reduce the incidence of domestic violence; indeed, the “Sixteen Days Without Violence” campaign launched by women’s non-governmental organizations, and funded in part by the Government, was part of the efforts to that end. On the issue of demographic policies, she noted that the Government was very concerned about the declining birth rate and the ageing population. Accordingly, a programme had been established to assist and encourage families to have children, within the limit of their means; credits were also made available for families to acquire mortgages for housing. Ukraine had two laws intended to provide support to various categories of families. The 1993 law on State assistance to families with children had been amended in 2001 to make provision for allowances to various categories of families. Under that law, the State would provide assistance to ensure that families from different socio-economic backgrounds enjoyed a

minimum standard of living. The level of assistance in that regard would be established in the annual budget.

44. It was as important to educate women about the new laws as it was to adopt those laws, since education played a significant preventive role. Her Committee would continue its work in the legal field in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and other ministries and would pursue the educational campaign through the mass media, including national television and radio. While it was encouraging to note that the proportion of registered unemployed women had declined to 48 per cent in recent years, the fact that there were still unemployed women with children had prompted her Committee to continue working with a variety of centres established by it to train such women and help them find employment. She would like to see more women represented in the Government. Currently, only three State committees were headed by women — the Committee for Family and Youth Affairs, the Committee on Culture and Sports and the Committee on Entrepreneurship. However, the number of women deputy ministers had increased. In her State Committee, total gender parity had been achieved. She was the leader of a political party 80 per cent of whose members were women. In the latest elections, 9,000 women candidates had been elected as deputies in local organs although they had not reached the 3 per cent level required to enter Parliament. However, the mindset of Ukrainian women had changed. They had remained very active, despite the adverse economic and social situation over the past 10 years and had managed to retrain themselves and rise in society, including in the political and public spheres.

45. **Ms. Raday** wondered whether women could go to court on discrimination issues, since Ukraine’s domestic law did not contain specific provisions on discrimination, including gender-based discrimination. While procuring or running a brothel as well as engaging in prostitution were all criminal offences, the statistics presented in the report indicated that much more emphasis was placed on punishing prostitutes and not the people exploiting them. Moreover, the prosecution of prostitutes would probably deter them from seeking legal or medical assistance.

46. **Ms. Dovzhenko** (Ukraine) said that the adoption of a law against domestic violence expanded the possibilities for women to go to court in the event of a violation of their rights. As to prostitution, the new Criminal Code contained articles on administrative and

criminal sanctions for maintaining premises for prostitution. Under article 303, a sentence of one to three years' imprisonment could be imposed on those found guilty of forcing women, including minors, to engage in prostitution. A fine was imposed on those systematically deriving income from prostitution. A stiffer punishment was imposed on those involved in procuring. If a woman became a prostitute to feed her children, that was a regrettable situation and the State should do its utmost to provide her with an alternative source of income.

Articles 7, 8 and 9

47. **Ms. Açar** asked whether there was any punishment for those who used the services of prostitutes. Apart from trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, it was also important for the Government to pay attention to other cases of trafficking in people, including trafficking for illegal labour, since workers brought into other countries for domestic labour enjoyed no protection and were at the mercy of their employers. Moreover, many people in that situation, who were not prostitutes, had to live under the stigma of prostitution because trafficking and illegal female labour were often associated with prostitution. Noting that Ukraine's highly educated women were not proportionately represented in decision-making positions, she wondered why the Government had not considered special temporary political measures to accelerate the participation of women in all levels of political life.

48. **Ms. Corti**, noting that, without women in decision-making positions, it was particularly difficult to make progress on gender-related issues, wondered why men were opposed to women's participation in that regard and asked the delegation to provide information on the current situation in that respect. Women were socially active through political parties and associations. Indeed, Ukraine was the only European country with such a large number of women's parties and she wondered what role they played in promoting the election of women to positions of power. Women were also very active in the social sector, yet society did not appear to be fully benefiting from their contribution. It was important to analyse the situation thoroughly and consider adopting special temporary measures and a strategy to advance women and mobilize women themselves to take a more active role in society.

49. **Ms. Achmad** wondered what the phrase "except as established by law and in the interests of security" meant. She expressed surprise at the fact that a major problem identified in the report was not an insufficient number of legal standards, but the lack of machinery to ensure equal legal representation of women and men in all elected organs. The delegation should indicate what action had been taken by the Government to change that situation. The Directorate for Women's Affairs should take the lead in that respect. It was also important to initiate networking with women in political parties, trade unions, the media and research institutions, as well as women parliamentarians and professionals.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.