



**Convention on the Elimination
of all Forms of Discrimination
Against Women**

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/SR.108
22 February 1988

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 108th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 18 February 1988, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. BERNARD

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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)

Initial report of Japan (CEDAW/C/5/Add.48)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Sato (Japan) took a place at the Committee table.

2. Ms. SATO (Japan) said that her Government attached great importance to the invaluable role of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in monitoring implementation of the Convention, and hoped that members of the Committee would engage in a constructive and productive dialogue at the current session.

3. While women had enjoyed very few rights under the Japanese Constitution in force before the Second World War, the new Constitution promulgated in 1946 had guaranteed equality of men and women as a fundamental human right. The Civil Code had also been revised and a range of domestic laws, including the Fundamental Law of Education and the Labour Standards Law, had led to sweeping improvements in women's legal status.

4. The high economic growth rates experienced by Japan in the 1960s had brought rapid socio-economic changes which particularly affected the lives of women. Although the traditional idea that a woman's place was in the home remained deeply rooted, Government ministries and agencies had undertaken measures to promote full equality, including equality of opportunity and treatment in employment. Their efforts had been given added impetus by the International Women's Year and the United Nations Decade for Women.

5. In 1975, the Government had established the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women which, in 1977, had formulated a National Plan of Action according priority to the improvement of women's legal status. As the aspirations of women had continued to develop during the United Nations Decade for Women, efforts had been concentrated on a review of the Civil Code and the enactment of additional legislation to improve the status of women. During the second half of the Decade, particular emphasis had been placed on Japan's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Headquarters had worked out an agreement among the ministries and agencies concerned for the revision of current policies, taking account of suggestions from the Advisory Council to the Prime Minister on Women's Affairs, women members of the Diet and various women's groups. As a result, the Convention had finally been ratified in 1985.

6. Three areas had been the subject of priority treatment in paving the way for the Convention's ratification: amendment of the Nationality Law; a plan to ensure access to the same home economics curriculum for both male and female students; and

(Ms. Sato, Japan)

enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, together with the amendment of the Labour Standards Law, the Mariners' Law and other regulations. A nation-wide survey carried out by the Ministry of Labour and corroborated by independent research had indicated that a majority of employers were complying with the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in all aspects of personnel management. Their compliance had resulted in increased job opportunities for women, equal opportunities for education or training when taking up new employment, equal fringe benefits and an identical mandatory retirement age for both men and women. Much, however, remained to be done with respect to job assignments and promotions.

7. The Special Action Programme for the Promotion of Women's Participation in Policy Decision-Making, drawn up by the Headquarters in 1977, had resulted in a slow but steady increase in the proportion of women among members of such bodies as national advisory councils. Meanwhile, equal opportunities for education and training were being promoted, inter alia, by the National Women's Education Centre. Short-term courses had been arranged at public vocational training facilities, and training allowances were provided to single mothers attending publicly administered courses.

8. In 1986, membership of the Headquarters had been increased to include representatives of all the country's ministries and agencies, and its mandate had been expanded to include the integration into national policies of decisions adopted at the Nairobi Conference in 1985, and the implementation of measures relating to women. Its major functions now included the formulation of national medium- and long-term plans of action, on the basis of which ministries, agencies and local government authorities implemented various policies; the preparation of annual progress reports on the implementation of such plans, as well as reports on Government spending related to women; the publication of White Papers on the current status of women and the conduct of research, surveys and studies in that connection; and the dissemination of information about its activities and the convening of national conferences and regional meetings.

9. Changes in the socio-economic environment as the end of the century approached would make the full participation of women increasingly indispensable. While women in Japan had come to enjoy almost complete equality under the law, efforts must be maintained to achieve de facto equality and to enable women to realize their full potential. It was to that end that the Headquarters had, in May 1987, formulated the New National Plan of Action toward the Year 2000, one objective of which was to enhance awareness of the importance of equality and to correct traditional sexual stereotypes. A wide range of activities had been undertaken to that end throughout the country; efforts would also be made to promote greater participation by women in policy-making and to increase the number of women in managerial and senior executive posts. As a result of the massive exodus of men from the rural work-force, women now accounted for 60 per cent of those engaged in farming, yet customs and practices based on stereotypes still persisted. Efforts were therefore also needed to improve the status of rural women and promote their participation in all local community activities.

(Ms. Sato, Japan)

10. Recognizing that much remained to be done in order to ensure full equality of men and women, as guaranteed by the Japanese Constitution and as stipulated in the Convention, Japan's Government was resolved to continue its unflagging efforts to attain that goal.

11. The CHAIRPERSON said that women appeared to have achieved notable progress in Japan and that the country's recent legislation provided evidence of a firm determination to eliminate all discrimination against them.

12. Ms. CORTI said that she had been looking forward to hearing whether Japan's enormous economic and technological progress had been matched by equivalent progress in the status of women. It seemed clear that the United Nations Decade for Women had had a beneficial effect and that the amount of publicity accorded to the Decade by the Japanese Government had been praiseworthy. However, she was surprised that the Equal Employment Opportunity Law had not been enacted until 1986, and also felt that the initial report tended to concentrate on legislative matters without providing sufficient information on the application of such legislation and the role of women in bringing pressure for change to bear on the Government. She wished to know how the changes in the employment market brought about by Japan's extraordinary pace of development affected women's employment and training opportunities. While appreciating the frankness of the statement that much remained to be done, she wished to know when and how the Government of Japan intended to take further action.

13. Ms. ESCOBAR requested further information on developments subsequent to the decision to co-ordinate home economics curricula for male and female students. She also wished to know whether the focus of Women's Week had changed since the United Nations Decade for Women inquired as to the quantity of information provided to the Japanese people on the Convention and the manner in which prefectures and designated cities had co-ordinated measures for women. Any statistics on the settlement of disputes relating to discrimination against women in employment through the courts would be useful. Information had been made available to the Committee by an independent organization in Japan concerning insensitive remarks made by the Japanese Prime Minister in 1986 and by the Minister of Education in 1987. While the provision of such information was laudable, she asked what the reaction to those remarks had been and whether such cases were referred to the courts.

14. Ms. TALLAWY said that, if a major country such as Japan had been able to make such sweeping legislative changes in the short time available to it before ratifying the Convention, much of the credit must go to the United Nations and the Committee. Despite its great measure of success, Japan must recognize its responsibility to undergo more careful scrutiny. In the light of the country's economic progress, the statistics on women's progress in such areas as higher education and appointment to senior managerial posts appeared disappointing. Although the representative of Japan had admitted that much remained to be done, she should recognize that the nationals of many far less affluent countries looked to Japan as an example and believed that economic success should result in a considerably greater degree of equality than was in fact evident.

15. Ms. SINEGIORGIS said that Japan's intention of continuing to review its domestic laws in order to ensure equality between men and women was encouraging. Japan was also to be congratulated for establishing the Office for Women's Affairs and the Advisory Council to the Prime Minister on Women's Affairs. She would like to know who were members of the Advisory Council.
16. She agreed that the report did not shed much light on the current situation of women in Japan: for instance, did mass media discrimination still exist, as in television commercials showing images of role differentiation, and what was the Government doing to prevent such use of the media? Noting that former Prime Minister Nakasone was reported to have referred disparagingly to the political and intellectual maturity of women, she asked whether women's organizations had demanded an apology.
17. Ms. EVATT observed that Japan had been conscientious in bringing its legal system into compliance with the Convention and in setting up the necessary Government machinery. She agreed, however, with members who had said that it had not yet seriously tackled matters under article 5 of the Convention. The statistics which the report gave for women's participation in higher education, policy-making and similar areas showed that the traditional social and cultural patterns which were the principal obstacle to equality of the sexes still persisted. Japan now needed to make the strongest possible commitment to recognizing those traditional obstacles and designing a programme that would change attitudes and behaviour.
18. Ms. GUAN Mingqian said that the Japanese Government was to be commended for establishing the Office for Women's Affairs and the other Government bodies referred to in the report.
19. Regarding education, she asked whether only homemaking courses were now available equally to male and female students or whether other formerly restricted courses were open to both sexes. Also, although the Equal Employment Opportunity Law had been enacted in 1985, it was her understanding that serious professional segregation still existed in Japan and that few women held important posts. She wondered what had been done to change that situation and also to improve the status of women in the family.
20. Ms. OESER said that it had been interesting to learn how Japan had prepared for its ratification of the Convention by first bringing its domestic law into line with it. However, that meant that the main changes intended to enhance the status of women had occurred only recently and that it would take time for both men and women to become aware of them. It was clear that the Government was emphasizing education and consciousness-raising, but it was not so clear what the results had been. The report stated, for instance, that courses on women's issues were being offered to women in an attempt to eradicate stereotyped concepts but it could also be argued that such courses should be offered to men.

21. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS, noting the encouraging process of change that had been set in motion by Japan's ratification of the Convention, and the Government's obvious sincerity in making the Convention known to the population and in trying to achieve equality, said that a gap none the less existed between women's status under the law and their status in everyday life. Japan was therefore right to attach great importance to education as a means of eliminating deeply-rooted prejudices and practices. In that connection, she asked whether the equal rights of women were part of the curriculum for any of the social education courses referred to on page 7 of the report. Lastly, the report had supplied excellent statistics supporting Japan's very real achievements.

22. Ms. SAYOGYO asked for more information regarding any effects which the amended Nationality Law had had on the traditional structure of the extended family, in which men enjoyed higher status than women in terms of inheritance and especially in terms of employment. She also wondered whether any of the local action programmes referred to on page 8 of the report would include comparative statistical analyses of the relative status of men and women in such areas as working hours, salaries and decision-making processes. Also, it was not clear from the report how many women were doing gainful work and how many domestic work.

23. Ms. SOUMARE asked for details on how the various government bodies set up to deal with women's affairs were co-ordinating with the many non-governmental women's organizations in implementing Japan's New National Plan of Action toward the Year 2000. She would also like to hear some specific examples of the actual achievements made so far, since the report, while excellent, spoke chiefly about goals.

24. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU observed that Japan offered a unique model of a society in transition. For women in particular, Japan was at an important turning-point. Unless the Government made very definite plans to guide and train women to occupy skilled as well as managerial posts, the female work-force was likely to be exploited for the unskilled labour that would be much in demand in Japan's industrial development process. The report had expressed no explicit concern on that point.

25. Although the Government offices set up to deal with women's affairs might prove effective, it would have been preferable, to judge from her own country's experience, to have set up a specific Ministry for Women's Affairs. Usually, considerable time was lost when plans and programmes were drawn up outside decision-making circles.

26. Equality of the sexes could not be achieved in isolation, but was bound up with the entire social structure. If Japanese society were to develop into a society which was interested primarily in profit rather than in fostering the social welfare of its people, there would not be much hope for women. They would be excluded from the social structure, and statistics such as those given on page 28 of the report would only show a worse picture. It was clear from the report, however, that Japan had the political will to tackle its problems.

27. Ms. FORDE observed that the Japanese report was frank in acknowledging that article 5 of the Convention could not be implemented by legislation alone. The Japanese Government had done well to disseminate information on the Convention in the media and to pass legislation, but she wondered what the reaction of Japanese women and men had been and whether the effort had touched their lives. She also asked what the Japanese representative considered to be her Ministry's greatest achievement thus far in furthering the cause of women.

28. Ms. UKEJE said that it was clear from the report that Japan was working to eliminate discrimination against women and to conform to the Convention. She especially welcomed the effort to encourage women to enter the diplomatic service, the amendment of the Nationality Law, and the establishment of the various Government bodies dealing with women's affairs.

29. Ms. VELIZ DE VILLALVILLA said that Japan had made an admirable effort to change its laws in order to correct provisions which perpetuated deep-rooted patterns of discrimination against women. Laws could be changed more easily than patterns of conduct, however, and article 5 of the Convention demanded a change of structures both within the family and the labour force.

30. There were many dynamic non-governmental women's organizations in Japan, which had been very vocal at the Mexico, Copenhagen and Nairobi Conferences, yet the report gave them very short shrift. It also said very little about the many women's peace organizations in Japan. She would like more information on both.

31. Ms. NOVIKOVA thanked the representative of Japan for having distributed additional materials on Japan to the Committee. She wished to point out, however, that the map of Japan appearing in the 1987 statistical handbook included territory which did not belong to Japan, an occurrence she considered highly unfortunate.

32. Ms. SALEMA said she agreed with almost all the views expressed thus far. While the Japanese Government's efforts to ensure women's equality were praiseworthy, it was her impression that such equality was far from being a reality in practice. Furthermore, she wished to know what the Government meant by the concept of "essential equality of men and women", affirmed in the Japanese Constitution, to be applied in all spheres of national life.

Article 2

33. Ms. WADSTEIN asked how many cases of sexual discrimination had been prosecuted under article 90 of the Japanese Civil Code and whether any cases at all had arisen under the relatively recent Equal Employment Opportunity Law. She also wished to know whether women in Japan were aware of the recourse available to them under that legislation.

34. Ms. EVATT asked to what extent the Convention and Japan's initial report to the Committee had been publicized and whether translations of the Convention in the Japanese language had been disseminated widely in Japan.

(Ms. Evatt)

35. More detailed information about the Equal Opportunity Mediation Commissions, established under the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, would be useful: she specifically wished to know how they were composed and the number and nature of complaints that had been brought before them. While the Commissions dealt only with cases of discrimination in employment, it was obvious that discrimination could occur in many other areas. She therefore asked whether there were other procedural remedies available to women to combat discrimination and whether women were sufficiently aware of their rights under the law.

36. With regard to affirmative action programmes in Japan, any information regarding targets for increasing the number of women in policy-making positions, in higher education and in the labour force in general, particularly at senior levels, would be valuable.

37. Ms. CORTI, noting that the initial target set for women members of Government advisory councils had been 10 per cent, asked what the current percentage was. She also sought an explanation of the apparent contradiction between the Government's claim that it wanted to expand the range of activities and duties open to women in the civil service and the fact that women were still excluded from certain job categories there.

38. The Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women sought, inter alia, to "improve women's abilities". It seemed to her that that objective might reflect the notion that women must be more qualified than men to hold similar posts.

39. Finally, she wished to know whether abortion was free in Japan and whether there were any laws regulating it.

40. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked how many of the 3,194 Labour Standards Inspectors in Japan were women and who appointed them. In addition, she wished to know the number of women employed in the Prefectural Women's and Young Workers' Offices.

41. Ms. ESCOBAR asked what areas of the civil service remained closed to women and whether women had taken jobs in any of the categories opened to them in 1975.

Article 3

42. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked what courses were offered by the National Women's Education Centre. She also wished to know more about the women's classes offered by municipalities and inquired as to why participation in the Preparatory Seminars for Women's Working-Life was restricted to women; such a restriction appeared to perpetuate stereotyped sex roles.

Article 4

43. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU commended the special vocational counselling measures adopted in respect of mothers of fatherless families and widows, which included subsidizing their travel expenses when they participated in training courses at Women's Employment Assistance Centres. It would be interesting to know how long such programmes had been in existence and how many women had benefited from them.
44. The appointment of maternal health management promoters was a real innovation and she wished to learn more about their achievements.
45. Ms. WADSTEIN asked whether the Government had any programmes involving quotas or preferential treatment for women in employment and professional life.
46. Ms. FORDE requested more detailed information about the assistance provided to women workers and to women re-entering the labour market through the Welfare Centres for Working Women. As the importance of maternity was mentioned more than once in the report, she wished to know whether women's prospects for promotion were altered if they took maternity leave.
47. Ms. UKEJE observed that the Japanese Government's determination to address all topics of interest to women had resulted in a proliferation of women's institutions; it seemed possible that their duties might overlap to some extent. She asked what steps had been taken to streamline women's organizations in Japan so that resources allocated to them would not be dissipated.
48. The report indicated that women's classes were not open to men. However, as it was men who often stereotyped women, it would be useful to know what steps the Japanese Government was taking to encourage men to change their attitudes towards women.

Article 5

49. Ms. CARON commended the representative of Japan on her introduction of her country's report; the Japanese Government was also to be commended for its efforts to promote women's equality. She wished to know whether any efforts were being made to eliminate discrimination from the media and whether there was a prohibition against including gender specifications in job vacancy announcements.
50. Ms. WADSTEIN expressed satisfaction with regard to the activities to combat the stereotyping of women described in the report, but wondered what results they had produced. She asked whether women spent more time on the job than men, noting that Japan's economic progress was due in part to the unpaid labour done by women in the home.
51. It would be interesting to know what the normal family structure was in Japan. Similarly, information about the prevalence of domestic help in Japanese homes might explain the extent to which men participated in household chores.

(Ms. Wadstein)

52. Japanese employers appeared to view women's jobs as supplementary, and she asked what was being done to dispel that notion.

53. A characteristic feature of Japanese society was that men and women used different languages, yet it seemed necessary for women who wished to establish a professional career to use a language that was inappropriate for them. She therefore wished to know how Japanese women were to be equipped in terms of social behaviour to compete with men in society.

54. The influence of religious institutions on Japanese society, and on women in particular, ought to be examined: did they hamper or encourage women's equality? Finally, she wished to know how men were included in programmes designed to achieve equality for women.

55. Ms. TALLAWY said that Japan's problem lay in achieving de facto equality for women. The report failed to discuss the actual obstacles which impeded the application of progressive legislation, nor did it describe the Japanese Government's efforts to overcome those obstacles. In the case of article 5, the report discussed Government action in connection with paragraph 5 (b), relating to family education, but not with paragraph (a), dealing with the modification of social and cultural patterns of conduct, which was in fact the more important aspect. Information ought to have been provided on the role of the mass media, which must be central if genuine equality was to be achieved.

56. Concern was often expressed that technological developments changed society at women's expense, since it was frequently the manual jobs done by women that were replaced through mechanization. The question of whether technology was also used to improve women's status was relevant to all countries and the Committee would benefit greatly from Japan's experience in that regard.

57. Ms. EVATT said that insufficient attention had been paid to such issues as domestic violence, sexual harassment and the portrayal of women in the mass media. She wished to know what attitudes were currently held in Japan with regard to those problems and what measures had been devised to help women overcome the attitudes and behaviours associated with them.

58. Ms. GUAN Mingqian noted that, although Japan was a highly developed country, it was an oriental country nevertheless and thus shared many attitudes and social customs with her own country. She shared the view that prejudice and discrimination against women were deeply rooted in women's own thinking and could only be overcome by concerted efforts. The Japanese Government had conducted a widespread campaign to publicize the Convention following its ratification of that instrument. She wondered, however, how the country was portraying women in its mass media.

59. Ms. ESCOBAR asked whether Government approval was required to set up a television station in Japan. If so, could the Government control or impose sanctions on a station?

(Ms. Escobar)

60. With regard to the parent education handbooks prepared by the Ministry of Education, she wished to know how Japanese men responded to their emphasis on the importance of sharing housekeeping duties between husband and wife.
61. Ms. SOUMARE asked whether maternal and child health centres in Japan were free of charge for all women and whether maternity education classes were provided only by the Ministry of Public Health or by other organizations - e.g. companies, especially those employing women - as well.
62. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS noted that the report provided much information about "enlightenment programmes" undertaken to promote the concept of equality between the sexes. It would be interesting to know the extent to which men had participated in such programmes and what their reaction to them had been.
63. Ms. CORTI asked whether the mass media and national women's agencies were mobilizing women journalists to promote women and eliminate discrimination against them in the media.
64. In the area of family education, it appeared that the role of the father was being emphasized by the Japanese Government. It would thus be useful to know how the male population in Japan regarded its new role. She also wished to know how maternal and child health centres dealt with the issue of birth control.
65. Ms. FORDE asked what the results of the enlightenment programmes referred to in the report had been, particularly among women. She wondered to what extent existing cultural patterns affected the status of women and the thrust towards equality. For Women's Week 1986, the report said that a "wide range" of activities had been undertaken all over the country: she wondered whether the response by women to those apparently institutional activities had been enthusiastic.
66. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked whether the number of working fathers attending parent education classes had increased as the number of working mothers reportedly had done.
67. It was important to promote the image of women whenever possible. The statistical handbook provided to supplement the information in the initial report appeared to contain not a single photograph of a Japanese woman, nor anything to suggest that Japanese society was not run entirely by men. That point might perhaps be borne in mind when future editions of the handbook and other important Government publications were produced.
68. Ms. VELIZ DE VILLALVILLA asked whether the policies developed by the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women were expected to have much impact on the mass media in Japan. She also wondered whether facilities such as crèches and day care were provided to help women combine their family obligations with a job. She asked whether sex education was provided as part of the maternal and child health care service and, if so, whether it was provided at the Health Centres or in schools. Finally, she asked about the attitude of Japanese society to single mothers.

Article 6

69. Ms. ESCOBAR asked whether the Prostitution Prevention Law penalized men as well as women for acts of prostitution, and whether there were any statistics on the subject. She wondered whether there was any law against rape, and whether rape by fathers in rural areas was prevalent in Japan, as it was in her own country. Again, she would be interested in receiving statistics. She also asked for information on the subject of battered women and centres for their protection, if such existed.

70. Ms. FORDE asked how, if the Prostitution Prevention Law contained no penal provisions for violators, it could be enforced.

71. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked whether the Japanese Government intended to establish any penalties for violators of the Prostitution Prevention Law.

Article 7

72. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS asked whether there was any explanation for the very small number of women occupying decision-making positions within the Government and political structure of Japan.

73. Ms. OESER remarked that, although very few Japanese women held prominent political positions within the country, a surprisingly large number of women seemed to hold such positions at the international level. She wondered whether it was really easier for Japanese women to participate in politics outside the country.

74. Ms. NOVIKOVA asked what specific policies and programmes there were to enhance the status of women in Japanese political life.

75. Ms. EVATT asked whether women's non-governmental organizations in Japan had been consulted about the Convention or the report now before the Committee; whether there were many active women's organizations; and whether Japanese political parties had any special policies for bringing about women's equality or for getting women directly involved in their activities. She also asked whether trade unions had any special policies to promote equal participation by women in their management.

76. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU, commenting that an active women's movement would be very important during the period of transition to women's equality, asked whether women's organizations in Japan were generally oriented towards issues of special concern to women or towards charitable work, and whether they received any Government subsidies or grants. She endorsed Ms. Evatt's question about trade unions, but would also like information on the total number of women belonging to trade unions.

77. Ms. UKEJE asked why, when the proportion of women voters turning out for elections was generally higher than that for men, so few women were actually elected to public office, and whether any steps were being taken to correct the imbalance.

Article 8

78. Ms. TALLAWY commented that the majority of Japanese women reported as participating in international political life seemed to have done so as delegates to the Third Committee of the General Assembly. She wondered why they had not also been designated to serve as representatives on other General Assembly Committees.

Article 10

79. Ms. EVATT observed that far fewer women enrolled in universities than in junior colleges and that female university students appeared to choose a very different range of subjects to study from male students, according to the information given in the statistical tables (CEDAW/C/5/Add.48, Amend.1, tables 16 and 17). Clearly, the problem was not so much one of access to higher education as of identity and men's and women's perception of their roles in society. She wondered, therefore, whether any programmes were being developed to modify attitudes within the teaching profession itself and to change the content of curricula and textbooks, and whether any affirmative action had been taken or was being contemplated in the area of vocational choice.

80. Ms. ESCOBAR, noting the decision by the Ministry of Education to eliminate differential treatment between boys and girls in homemaking curricula, asked whether it was intended that homemaking courses would continue to be offered after the next curriculum review and, if so, what they would comprise.

81. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked why so many more women than men enrolled in junior colleges, and what kind of courses those colleges offered.

Article 11

82. Ms. ESCOBAR asked whether the Mariners' Law applied to women working on land in maritime industries or to women seafarers.

83. Ms. PILATAXI DE ARENAS asked whether, under the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, women were entitled to paid maternity leave and, if so, how much. Moreover, given the need to increase the availability of child care, she wondered whether there was any law requiring employers to provide child-care facilities.

84. Ms. WADSTEIN said she was pleased that legislative restrictions on the employment of women had been reduced and that the Equal Employment Opportunity Law had been passed, but wondered whether any results could yet be cited. She noted that the guidelines on equal recruitment drawn up in 1986 did not apply to certain jobs where provisions of the Labour Standards Law made it "difficult to provide for equal treatment for women": what were the provisions in question? Restrictions on the employment of women in some job categories had been abolished; what restrictions still applied and why?

85. The report spoke of equal pay for equal work. The Convention went further, speaking of equal pay for work of equal value. She wondered how that was applied in practice: whether, for example, there was any gender-neutral job evaluation

(Ms. Wadstein)

system. The statistical tables appended to the report furnished evidence of salary differentials between men and women with comparable levels of education, suggesting that women had to be better than men just to start out even.

86. The report suggested that in some cases social security systems treated women more generously than men. She would like to be given some examples.

87. Table 23 revealed a marked shift in labour force participation by men and women between the age ranges 20-24 and 25-29. She wondered whether there was an explanation for that shift. Did all women looking for a job actually register as unemployed, or was there hidden unemployment in Japan? Also how many hours per week were worked, on average, by men and by women?

88. Finally, she wondered whether there were any plans to introduce paternity leave in Japan.

89. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU asked whether the Japanese representative could provide any examples of violations of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law being brought before the competent bodies. She also asked whether maternity leave entitlements were the same in the public and private sectors and whether maternity leave was paid or unpaid.

90. The report mentioned the "need for child-care leave, during which ... women [could] take leave in order to care for their children" without losing the right to return to their jobs. She saw in that statement a risk of perpetuating the distinction between the sexes: children were also their fathers' responsibility and there was no reason why only women should take time off from their jobs to care for them.

Article 12

91. Ms. OESER asked the Japanese representative to comment on the varying numbers of expectant and nursing mothers having medical check-ups in the period from 1975 to 1986.

Article 13

92. Ms. WADSTEIN asked for information on the Japanese tax system: whether couples could file separately or jointly and whether taxes were proportionate or progressive - in short, whether the system penalized women who wished to take up paid employment.

Article 14

93. Ms. SAYOGYO asked whether agricultural extension services and similar facilities were available to women or whether farming was still regarded as a man's business.

Article 16

94. Ms. CARON noted that, under article 750 of the Civil Code, couples could take the surname of the husband or the wife, but asked what the actual practice tended to be and whether there were any statistics on the subject. She wondered also whether Japan was contemplating the passage of legislation prohibiting a woman from entering into a legal commitment or obligation under any name other than her own. Further, she wondered whether the law allowed children to take the surname of either their mother or their father. She would like information on admissible grounds for divorce in Japan. Finally she welcomed the information that the Government intended to review article 733 of the Civil Code, which forbade women to remarry for six months after the dissolution or termination of a marriage.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.