



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

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 3 April 1984, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. IDER

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER
ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued) (CEDAW/C/5/Add.7/Amend.1 and
Add.10/Amend.1)

Initial report of Norway (continued) (CEDAW/C/5/Add.7/Amend.1)

1. Ms. JAYASINGHE thanked the representative of Norway for her interesting introduction of the report. Referring to article 11 of the Convention, she requested more specific information on the position of women in the higher decision-making and administrative echelons and particularly on the number of such posts they occupied. She commended the Norwegian Government for the Equal Status Act and said that perhaps the most noteworthy of its provisions was the prohibition on the advertising of jobs for one sex only, unless there were obvious reasons for doing so. That provision would improve women's employment opportunities, especially in non-traditional areas and those which had been dominated by men.
2. Although the Norwegian Government was obviously concerned with every aspect of the protection of children, the report indicated that about 40 per cent of children between 8 and 10 needed care, while there was actual provision for only 16 per cent. It would be useful to know what steps the Government had taken to improve that situation. The Norwegian Government was to be commended for the institution of the Ombudsman, which was extremely useful and facilitated the assessment of the situation of women and the development of measures which might be needed to improve it.
3. Ms. PATIÑO commended the representative of Norway for her excellent introduction of the report. Referring to article 14 of the Convention, she quoted a paragraph in the report which stated that the special situation of women married to self-employed men, for instance, farmer's wives, was often not clear, for there was confusion about whether they were to be regarded as housewives, employees, or spouses of a self-employed man. She requested information on the situation of unmarried women who worked in rural areas.
4. The report noted that a new Children's Act had been adopted in 1981, replacing separate acts which had previously differentiated between children born in and out of wedlock. She asked whether those categories had been abolished and if no distinction was now made between them. Elsewhere, the report indicated that the retirement age was 67; she requested clarification as to whether that age was the same for both sexes. With regard to the minimum old-age pension, the report indicated that a single person received a proportionally higher amount than one who was married; that raised the question of whether married people were being discriminated against, since it was to be assumed that both spouses made pension contributions.
5. With regard to prostitution, the report stated that in 1982, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs had granted the Oslo Municipality a subsidy for the establishment of a crisis shelter for prostitutes. She asked for examples of the crises envisaged by that measure and for clarification as to whether prostitution was prohibited, regulated or unrestricted.

6. Ms. MUKAYIRANGA said she had been favourably impressed by the account in the report of the significant progress made regarding the situation of women and, particularly, by the machinery the Government had set up for the promotion of women's rights. Although some members of the Committee had raised questions about the civil rights of Norwegian women, after reading the report she had concluded that Norway had an impeccable record in that regard. Nevertheless, experience throughout the world had shown that women's legal status often did not coincide with their real situation. Was there such a discrepancy in Norway, especially with respect to the situation in the home?

7. She associated herself with those who had expressed concern regarding violence against women, which was apparently a social phenomenon, and asked how the emergence of that phenomenon was to be explained. Finally, she inquired whether the Government had made any reservations with respect to article 7 (b) of the Convention, given that, under the Norwegian Constitution, women were excluded from succession to the throne.

8. Ms. OESER said that the Norwegian report and the introduction to it given by that country's representative had been impressive. The representative had referred to the Norwegian Government's desire to ensure that all women from the many social groups benefited equally from its policy on women. She associated herself with the questions raised by other members of the Committee about the role of women in political life and the number of women who held positions, both governmental and non-governmental, of high authority.

9. With regard to violence against women, she said that the report mentioned a crisis telephone service. She wondered whether that service was restricted to large cities or was available also in smaller urban centres and rural areas. She asked for more information on the problem of prostitution and inquired to what extent it was really a problem in a society like the one described in the report.

10. Ms. SMITH said that recent surveys had revealed that young women opted for traditional careers like teaching and nursing, which indicated that the steps the Government had taken so far had not been adequate. She personally was very concerned by the young women's lack of interest in the sciences, particularly the exact sciences, since through that indifference they were preparing themselves for unemployment. She wished to know whether the Government was considering the possibility of adopting other measures to rectify that situation.

11. Ms. EL-FETOUH congratulated the representative of Norway on her introduction of her country's report and expressed appreciation for the efforts the Government had made to achieve equality between the sexes. After having read the report, she thought that the situation could still be improved, since Norway was a developed country and did not have the economic problems which afflicted other States parties. The report pointed out that 57 per cent of all young women chose the general studies branch - while 15 per cent selected the commercial branch - in other words, 72 per cent of all young girls were studying traditional subjects. Nothing was said, however, about the preferences of the remaining 28 per cent. It would be useful to have statistics on that point, as well as information on the steps the Government was taking to correct that trend. The report also noted that the Government had begun to adopt various measures to break down the traditional

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sex-role patterns in education, including preferential treatment for the under-represented sex in admissions to schools and universities. She asked what form that preferential treatment took and whether it was also applied when it was boys who were under-represented.

12. With regard to article 11 of the Convention, she said that the report was frank about the number of complaints the Commissioner had received; it would be interesting to know to what extent women were aware of those problems and of violations of the regulations in force. She would welcome information on how the Norwegian authorities defined the Commissioner's mandate, how the Commissioner settled disputes and how complaints were processed. With respect to article 15 of the Convention, she said that although detailed information was provided on regulations to prevent discriminatory practices in certain employment sectors, the legal status of women and the degree of real economic independence that they enjoyed were not indicated clearly. Could women take economic decisions independently? Did the law differentiate in any way between women's and men's legal status?

13. The report noted that one of the objectives of the Children's Act was to strengthen the rights of children to self-determination and to participation in the decision-making process. Did the Act establish any age of reason or puberty after which a person was no longer considered a child? The concept of self-determination should also be clarified: did it refer to decisions adopted within or outside the child's family? What sort of decisions, and on what matters?

14. With reference to articles 5 and 12 of the Convention, she endorsed the questions raised by Ms. Regent-Lechowicz. The fact that the report dwelt at great length on violence was noteworthy: could it be inferred that violence against women in their homes was common? Was violence considered a crime? Had studies or research been done to determine the causes of violence? Might one of them be a high level of alcohol consumption? The lack of references to the personal status of women was also noteworthy: for example, the rules governing matrimonial relations were not mentioned. There was also a lack of information to judge how article 16 of the Convention was being applied, how the equality of political rights was implemented and what Norway's current position was with respect to article 7 of the Convention.

Initial report of Egypt (continued) (CEDAW/C/5/Add.10 and Amend.1)

15. Mr. NORDENFELT explained that when he had asked that the Legal Counsel should be consulted on the compatibility between the reservations expressed by Governments and the provisions of the Convention, his request had been prompted not by the fact that the report of Egypt was at that moment being considered but rather by the Committee's discussions, during which a number of experts had expressed an interest in having such information. He had had to make a formal request because he had not received confirmation from the Chairperson that such a request would be transmitted to the Legal Counsel; in fact, he had still not received such confirmation. He had mentioned the case of Egypt by way of example because neither the wording of the reservations of the Government of Egypt with respect to article 2 of the Convention nor the report of Egypt contained any indication of the extent to which the reservations limited the implementation of the Convention.

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16. The CHAIRPERSON informed the Committee that Mr. Nordenfelt's request had been transmitted to the Legal Counsel, who had transmitted his reply to the Committee.

17. Miss EMARA (Egypt) said that she welcomed the opportunity to reply to the important questions raised by the members of the Committee, which demonstrated their interest in the implementation of the Convention in Egypt. She particularly welcomed the question asked by Mr. Nordenfelt during the consideration of her country's report. In answer to the questions of several Committee members on the reservations made with respect to the Convention and the validity of the provisions of the Convention before Egyptian courts, she explained that the provisions of the Convention, with the exception of those subject to reservations, coincided with the legislation and the Constitution of Egypt at all levels. Therefore, any violation of the Convention was also a violation of Egypt's legislation and Constitution and was a punishable offence. Furthermore, article 151 of the Constitution of Egypt stipulated that treaties had the force of law after they had been concluded, ratified and published.

18. With regard to Ms. Smith's question as to whether the Constitution expressly prohibited discrimination against women, she said article 40 of the Constitution stipulated that all citizens were equal before the law and enjoyed the same rights and duties, without distinction of sex, origin, language, religion or belief. That article was cited in the report, as she had clearly stated in her own introduction.

19. Many of the experts had asked for explanations of the provisions of Islamic law and the consequences of her Government's reservations with regard to article 16 of the Convention. In Islamic religion, women had a sublime position as mothers, sisters and wives and Islam recognized their human dignity, granted them rights in all areas and relieved them of the burden of discrimination. Aside from matters relating to equality between men and women in connection with marriage and with family relations during marriage and after divorce, it could be seen that Islamic law had guaranteed to women all the rights and all the kinds of equality provided for by the Convention. That had happened hundreds of years before other States had thought of drafting the Convention and before the enactment of positive law by any State in the world. Egypt, as an Islamic country, had adopted the principles of Islamic law as the main source of the country's positive law. With regard to Ms. Ilić's question on whether positive law or Islamic law had priority or precedence, she expressed the view that positive law prevailed. She reaffirmed that equality between men and women was provided for in the Constitution in conformity with Islamic law and was applicable to civil and political rights, which included, for example, equality of educational opportunities. The financial independence of women, whether married or single, was also provided for. Such independence was important because it allowed women to enjoy the same rights as men and dispose of goods and property.

20. Replying to the question concerning the force that Islamic religious law (Shari'a) and the Convention had in Egypt, she said that article 16 of the Convention was, except for paragraph 1 (c), was compatible with the principles of the Shari'a. Concerning paragraph 1 (a), she said that the Shari'a granted women the same rights as men to enter into marriage. Concerning paragraph 1 (b), she explained that Islamic law, like the Convention, gave both men and women the same right to choose a spouse and contract marriage of their own volition and with their

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full consent. It should be made clear, regarding the aforementioned reservation to paragraph 1 (c), that under the Shari'a, marriage was a contract, and that contract contained clauses which had been agreed to between the contracting parties before the marriage and were binding on both spouses. Those clauses stipulated that the husband had to provide for financial expenses and the wife did not have to do so if she did not wish to. Actually, such discrimination worked in favour of women rather than against them because under that arrangement the wife was financially independent and had the right to spend her money freely.

21. As concerned divorce, the Shari'a granted women the right to divorce, provided that marriage contract so stipulated. The Personal Statute Law stipulated various cases in which women had the right to sue for divorce: specifically, if the husband contracted a second marriage, if he had concealed the fact of a previous marriage or if he refused to comply with the obligation to provide for his wife's financial support. The other paragraphs of article 16 of the Convention were perfectly compatible with Egypt's Personal Statute Law, which gave women rights they did not enjoy in other parts of the world. With regard to polygamy, Islam permitted a man to contract marriage with more than one wife but imposed certain conditions. Egyptian legislation also imposed certain restrictions on the practice of polygamy. There were fewer and fewer men in Egypt who contracted marriage with more than one wife. The next report of Egypt would provide more statistics on the question.

22. Some members of the Committee had asked whether the Shari'a was applicable to both Moslems and non-Moslems; she said that it was applicable only to Moslems. The provisions applicable to Moslems were those taken by Egyptian legislation from the Shari'a, which was one of its sources. The Shari'a was not applicable to non-Moslems; with regard to the Personal Statute Law, there were special courts for non-Moslems in Egypt.

23. As for Ms. Mukayiranga's questions regarding the tradition of stoning women, she stated that stoning absolutely did not exist in Egypt. The punishment for adultery, applicable to both men and women, was imprisonment for two years.

24. With regard to children, the Personal Statute Law of 1979 stipulated special treatment in the case of divorce. The Law gave the mother custody of her sons until the age of 10 and of her daughters until the age of 12. After that, boys could remain with their mothers until they were 15 years of age, and girls until they married. Although boys were in their mothers' custody, their fathers could visit them and had an obligation to be fully concerned with them. The Law stipulated that the parent who had custody of the children in case of divorce should occupy the family home.

25. Regarding the role of women in legal and political affairs, she said that there was a woman on each list of candidates in the 31 electoral districts of the People's Assembly. That was the minimum level of participation by women in each district, but the number of women representatives in each district could be higher, depending on the results of the elections. Similarly, in the local councils, a minimum number of seats, usually one or two, was allocated to women. There was thus a minimum of 31 women in the People's Assembly, and that number was expected

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to double at the next election. As for women in diplomatic careers, she said the fact that there were only 81 women in diplomatic posts was due not to discrimination but rather to the lack of interest on the part of women in taking the necessary examinations.

26. With regard to Ms. Bernard's question on the participation of women in scientific fields, it should be noted that the number of women registered in scientific courses of study at the universities was steadily rising. The entrance requirements were exactly the same for men and women, and everything depended on the results of the entrance examinations and on the secondary-school records. As for the questions raised by Ms. Patiño and Ms. Macedo de Sheppard, she said that women had to have a law degree from a university in order to enter the Police Academy and were required to take a one-year course of police studies at the Academy.

27. In answer to the questions asked by several members of the Committee about the transmission of nationality, she said that children's acquisition of their father's citizenship did not constitute discrimination against the mother. When a woman married a foreigner, she could agree to have her child assume the foreign nationality. However, if the child of an Egyptian mother and a foreign father so desired, he could acquire Egyptian nationality by making an application to the Ministry of the Interior.

28. In connection with a number of questions on the role of women in the family and society, she cited certain articles of the Constitution: article 9 stipulated that the family was the foundation of society and was based on the religious and moral principles which sustained it. Article 10 stipulated that the State guaranteed the welfare of children and mothers and would assume responsibility for children in order to develop their potential. Under article 11, the State ensured that women could combine their work obligations within the family with their social, economic and cultural activities, without prejudice to the terms of the Shari'a. Article 16 stipulated that the State provided social, health and educational services, with preference given to the inhabitants of rural areas. Article 17 stipulated that the State provided health and retirement services. Under article 18, the State guaranteed the right to primary education. The State also supervised all levels of education and assumed responsibility for the necessary facilities. Under article 20, the State guaranteed that education was free of charge at all levels. Article 21 stipulated that special services to eliminate illiteracy would be provided. Her delegation would submit new statistical data concerning the Egyptian educational system in the next report.

29. The report stated that the first girls' secondary school in Egypt had been established in 1924, and that since then, the State had become increasingly interested in the education of women. In 1983 there had been more than 13,000 primary schools. Approximately 47,000 women graduated from universities annually. Education was free in Egypt and no distinction was made on the basis of sex at any level of education. The report stated that women accounted for 40 per cent of all students. In 1982 and 1983, 33 per cent of all students enrolled in doctoral courses had been women.

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30. There were private and State nursing schools. Labour legislation required employers in some cases to establish child-care centres. A pension was given to men and women at age 60. A divorced woman was entitled to receive part of her former husband's pension. Women could thus receive two pensions, which meant that they had more benefits than men in that respect. Unpaid maternity leave was granted to women for a period of two years in the public sector and for one year in the private sector. Following their period of leave, women returned to work with no loss of rights.

31. The National Commission for Women was related to a number of ministries. The Commission was an adjunct of the Ministry of Social Affairs and included representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice; it also included representatives of the People's Assembly, the press, television, radio, trade unions and some leading national corporations. It drew up plans for women at the national level and co-ordinated the efforts of the various organs active in women's affairs. She concluded by emphasizing that all the measures contained in the report were being rigorously implemented in Egypt.

32. Ms. CARON expressed her appreciation for the clarifications which had been given concerning the relationship between Islamic law and positive law; however, she wondered why the Government had decided to formulate reservations with respect to article 16 of the Convention. She asked whether women could seek divorce only when that possibility had been specified in their marriage contract. She asked whether the fact that husbands must assume responsibility for all their wives implied that polygamy was a widespread custom, particularly among certain social classes.

33. Ms. SMITH asked, in connection with article 11 of the Convention, what was meant by the statement that the State guaranteed harmony between women's family duties and their activities in society. She wondered whether that measure really promoted equality between men and women or whether it gave women the sole responsibility for domestic tasks.

34. Ms. MUKAYIRANGA said that no answer had been provided to her question about a husband's unilateral renunciation of his wife. She asked why women were kept in such a state of dependency vis-à-vis their husbands, especially in view of the fact that household expenses were the husband's responsibility.

35. Ms. CORTES said that the custom of renunciation, widely acknowledged in literature, did not indicate equality between men and women in marriage. She asked what happened if a woman did not wish a divorce when her husband took a new wife. She also asked what the percentage of women in the People's Assembly was and how many women there were altogether in the legislative branch of government.

36. Ms. BERNARD asked whether the 246 women's clubs which had been established were independent or were organized by the Government; she also wished to know the functions of the institutions which cared for girls exposed to moral danger. She also asked what the exact meaning of "moral danger" was.

37. Ms. MACEDO de SHEPPARD asked once again why a law degree was required of women entering the police force and whether that requirement was also applied to men.

38. Miss EMARA (Egypt) said that formerly, only men had been allowed to enter the police force; they had studied law and criminology for four years. Subsequently, when women, as a result of their own initiative, had been given the opportunity to enter the Police Academy, the competent authorities had decided that they needed to hold a university degree in law to do so.

39. With regard to the women workers' homes mentioned in the report, she said that they were governmental institutions intended to train women to engage in productive activities in order to increase the family's earning capacity. There were also clubs associated with women's organizations. The institutions for the protection of women came under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs. With regard to article 11 of the Convention, she said that a form of co-ordination between spouses existed within the family and that not all responsibilities fell to the woman. What the State was trying to achieve was a balance between women's family and social obligations. For example, the Labour Code stipulated that kindergartens or nurseries must be established to care for the children of working women.

40. With regard to Ms. Caron's question about women's right to divorce, she said that there were different cases. In general, grounds for divorce were included in the marriage contract; however, there were some cases in which women might institute divorce proceedings even though the contract did not mention that specific situation - for example, when a husband contracted marriage with another woman, served a term of imprisonment or withdrew financial support from the family, or when the wife no longer wished to live in the family home.

41. In reply to Ms. Mukayiranga, she said that there had been a misunderstanding: she had thought she had referred to "stoning" rather than "renunciation", to which Ms. Cortés had also referred. While the Shari'a was the source of much of Egyptian law, the latter did not necessarily reproduce all the provisions of Islamic law. That was the case with renunciation, which, while provided for under the Shari'a, was not included in Egyptian law. Egyptian law accorded equal rights to men and women in the matter of divorce.

42. Some members of the Committee had asked questions about polygamy, a notion which must be viewed within a historical context. Centuries ago, as a result of unfortunate social circumstances, there had been a much higher number of women than men in the population; since at that time women had not been employed, marriage had been the sole institution capable of offering them an honourable and secure life. Consequently, the institution of polygamy had been established; it should be stressed, however, that while it was admitted under Islamic law, it was subject to significant restrictions, the most important one being that equality, justice and equity must be guaranteed to both spouses. Egyptian law also imposed severe limitations on men's right to marry more than once, so that many men refrained from taking new wives and the number of persons living in polygamy was continually declining. Specific data on that subject would be added in the next report.

43. With regard to the manner in which household expenses were paid, Egyptian

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wives were in a privileged position. They had the right to dispose freely of their own finances; on the other hand, the husband was required to bear household expenses. Many women did, of course, spend their money on their own families, but that was entirely voluntary, and they were under no obligation to do so. In that respect Egyptian women held an advantage, and one might wonder whether there was reason for Egyptian men to demand equal conditions.

44. Concerning representation in the People's Assembly, the law stipulated that for each of the 31 districts there must be at least one woman. That number was a minimum, which meant that it could be increased without limitation, contingent only upon women's ability to secure more votes in free electoral contests.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

45. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ proposed that in order to accelerate the work, the time for statements concerning the item should be limited.

46. After an exchange of views, in which Ms. BIRYUKOVA, Ms. CORTES, Ms. OESER, Ms. PATIÑO, Ms. BERNARD and Ms. EL-FETOUH took part, with regard to the question of limiting the time for statements during the consideration of the item entitled "Organizational and other matters", the CHAIRPERSON suggested postponing the decision until the following morning's meeting, when it could be decided whether a time-limit was required, bearing in mind the progress that had been made in the work of the Committee.

47. The CHAIRPERSON informed the experts that various sections of the Committee's report had been circulated, and she requested them to communicate to the Rapporteur any difficulties they found with regard to the wording.

Statement by Mrs. Leticia R. Shahani, Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women

48. Ms. SHAHANI (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women) said that it gave her great pleasure to have an opportunity to address the Committee, a body composed of distinguished experts who had spent many years working for the advancement of women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had entered into force only three and a half years earlier and had been ratified by 56 States parties, was considered one of the major international events of the United Nations Decade for Women. The General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session had expressed satisfaction about the status of the ratification of that instrument and at the fact that many countries had set in motion the machinery for according women their rightful place in society. However, in various instances, resistance to change was strong, and it was not possible to improve women's condition owing to prevailing socio-economic circumstances and cultural traditions.

49. During the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), Governments and

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non-governmental organizations had made efforts to implement the World Plan of Action adopted at Mexico City in 1975 and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade For Women, adopted at the Copenhagen Conference in 1980. Since the Mexico City and Copenhagen Conferences, important advances had been made. The world at large, and leaders in many instances, had begun to understand the crucial role of women in many spheres of national and international importance. As a result, women were participating more and more in economic activities essential for the survival and progress of their societies.

Governments, policy-makers, planners and institutions at the national, regional and international levels had come to understand that women's participation was essential for the achievement of their socio-economic goals and were taking steps to remedy, to the extent possible, the inequalities and the various forms of discrimination imbedded in stereotyped attitudes related to women's and men's roles in family and society. In other words, the objectives of the Decade - equality, development and peace - had been implemented in varying degrees over the past years.

50. As Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi from 15 to 25 July 1985, she was particularly interested in the results of the Committee's work. While the Committee reviewed and appraised the progress made by States parties in implementing the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and considered the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they had adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention, the 1985 World Conference would review and appraise the results of the United Nations Decade for Women, identify obstacles and difficulties encountered in achieving the objectives of the Decade and propose strategies of implementation up to the year 2000. The General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session had adopted a provisional agenda for the Conference, which would concentrate on two major substantive items: review and appraisal of the achievements of the Decade and forward-looking strategies of implementation for the advancement of women, including a study of the perspectives on the status of women up to the year 2000. In the consideration of those two items, special emphasis would be placed on the threefold theme of the Decade - equality, development and peace - and on the subthemes of employment, education and health.

51. With regard to the review and appraisal, the Commission on the Status of Women, acting as Preparatory Body for the World Conference, had stressed at its second session, held at Vienna in March 1984, that the Secretary-General's report on the review and appraisal of the achievements of the Decade should clearly identify areas in which considerable progress had been achieved and those in which little progress had been seen, highlighting obstacles of a common or specific nature. The objectives of equality, development and peace should be given a balanced treatment, with a detailed analysis of the subthemes of employment, health and education. The Secretary-General's report would be based on a questionnaire which had been sent to Member States, and she hoped that the members of the Committee would have an opportunity to examine the questionnaire and the replies by countries, since they would contain a substantial section on legislation. The Preparatory Body had emphasized that the review and appraisal should serve as a basis for formulating the forward-looking strategy of implementation, which would

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include practical short-term measures as well as long-term forward-looking implementation strategies for the advancement of women at the national, regional and international levels. In order to formulate those strategies, which would be the blueprint for women's programmes until the year 2000, it would be necessary to identify clearly the major obstacles at all levels which still constituted stumbling-blocks on the road to equality of women and men and to the full integration of women into the development process, both as agents and as beneficiaries, and of the achievement of peace. Therefore, the work of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was crucial to the preparatory work for the Conference, since the experts' careful analysis of reports from States parties would help to identify both the progress and the obstacles observed, in law and in practice, in implementing the provisions of the Convention. In the preparation of the documentation for the Conference, use would be made of the information provided by States parties to the Committee, and the results of the experts' analysis would also be taken into account. The Conference and future activities in behalf of women would benefit greatly from the work of the Committee.

52. She drew the experts' attention to the fact that the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirtieth session, held in February 1984, had adopted a provisional programme for 1986, which included an item entitled "Elimination of discrimination against women in accordance with the aims of the Convention". The reports submitted to the Committee and the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention would be considered in connection with that item.

53. At the regional meeting of ESCAP, concluded on 30 March 1984, which had been the first regional preparatory meeting for the Nairobi Conference, the Convention had been a prominent subject of debate. When ESCAP had met at Tokyo, the question of the possible ratification of the Convention by the Government of Japan had been widely discussed in the communications media, in many governmental quarters and also in many non-governmental organizations. Thus, the Convention was an important vehicle for arousing the interest of Governments, the public and non-governmental organizations in the theme of equality between men and women.

54. The Branch for the Advancement of Women was extremely pleased with the work of the Committee during the present and the preceding sessions. The Committee's efforts gave tangible proof of the political will of Governments to improve women's condition and achieve equality between men and women, both in law and in fact, in the political, civil, economic, social and cultural fields.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.