



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

Distr.: General
18 November 2022

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Eighty-third session**

Summary record of the 1924th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 19 October 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

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

Ninth period report of Honduras (continued) (CEDAW/C/HND/9; CEDAW/C/HND/Q/9; CEDAW/C/HND/RQ/9)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Honduras joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras** said that the Office would be grateful if the Committee would urge the Government to provide adequate funding to all the institutions that made up the Inter-Agency Commission for the Monitoring of Investigations into Violent Deaths among Women and Femicides. The Committee might also ask the Government to improve access to justice for women; respond promptly to the applications for the constitutional review of the prohibition of abortion; guarantee the independence of the Office and provide it with adequate funding; and adopt the bill on combating violence against women and the bill on shelters for women victims of violence.
3. The Office would appreciate it if the Committee recommended that urgent measures be taken to prevent political violence, punish the perpetrators of such violence and provide redress to the victims. The Committee might consider proposing that the Government reverse the legal reforms, introduced during the previous administration, that undermined women's rights to life, integrity of person and health.
4. The Office had received complaints that religious groups were being consulted about the proposal to revoke the law prohibiting abortion. It had also received complaints relating to violations of women's employment rights, the lack of differentiated support for women with disabilities and the State's failure to respond adequately to requests for the protection of women's sexual and reproductive rights.
5. The Office welcomed the Government's plans to amend the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to femicide and rape and recommended that all national laws should undergo a gender impact assessment in which civil society participated. During the constructive dialogue, the delegation might inform the Committee of any measures being taken to strengthen the Office.

Articles 10–14 (continued)

6. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras) said that the problems facing women in Honduras had long-standing structural causes that had never been addressed. The majority of households living in poverty or extreme poverty were headed by women. The Guide to Gender Inclusion in the Classroom had been used to promote the gender perspective in schools in 9 of the country's 18 departments. In that regard, priority had been given to the poorest departments, which generally had high populations of Indigenous Peoples and persons of African descent. In 2022, courses on leadership with a gender focus had been delivered to the heads of 5,000 educational establishments around the country.
7. A comprehensive strategy on sex education had been developed and the capacities of teachers in the country's 18 departments had been strengthened. A diploma course on educational management with a gender perspective would be developed for the 18 departmental directorates. Priority attention was being given to efforts to reduce the illiteracy rate among women, which was particularly high for women aged 60 years and over.
8. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she wished to know whether the State party would make contraceptive devices and sex education available to all girls in order to reduce teenage pregnancy and the school dropout rate for girls. The Government might consider engaging with stakeholders opposed to sex education for girls with a view to persuading them to change their attitudes.
9. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras) said that the Government and all institutions involved in girls' education were taking comprehensive measures to reduce the school

dropout rate for girls. Those measures would be supported by the appropriate legislative amendments.

10. **A representative of Honduras** said that efforts were being made to identify the structural causes of teenage pregnancy and gather data on the problem in order to respond to it strategically. When such data were available, they would be used to strengthen the Multisectoral Plan for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy with a view to converting it into a public policy. The objectives established by the Government were to reduce the pregnancy rate among girls, combat the stigmatization of pregnant girls and ensure that girls who had given birth were able to resume their education and subsequently participate in the economic life of the country.

11. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that she wished to know how the Government would ensure the provision of secular education in Honduras and how it would prevent religious groups from influencing the content of educational curricula, including in relation to sex education.

12. **A representative of Honduras** said that sex education had been taught in State schools prior to the coup d'état of 28 June 2009. After the coup, the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls had suffered serious setbacks but the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with civil society, were now striving to make up the ground lost under the previous administration.

13. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras) said that the Government in power prior to the coup had legalized the morning-after pill but the dictatorship had prohibited it as soon as it had come to power. The Government was committed to re-establishing women's rights but it faced powerful political opponents and a hostile media.

14. **The Chair** said that she wished to know whether the State party would amend the country's labour laws to ensure that women were protected in the workplace, including women working in unsafe conditions in maquilas. She wondered whether any policies were in place to protect domestic workers against labour exploitation and to promote access to formal employment for women working in the informal economy. Noting that free-trade agreements had given rise to flexible hiring practices and insecure working conditions, she was curious to know whether any measures would be taken to improve working conditions for women. It would be interesting to learn how the Wage Equality Act was being implemented, what mechanisms were in place to monitor its implementation and whether it had benefited self-employed women, for whom the gender pay gap was particularly high.

15. She wished to know whether any steps had been taken to make it illegal for companies to ask women recruits to furnish proof that they were neither pregnant nor HIV-positive and to ensure that they were not dismissed on those grounds. The Committee would be grateful for a description of any steps to prevent the sexual harassment of women in the workplace. She asked whether measures had been adopted to eradicate child labour and whether there were any economic and financial counselling programmes which might further the creation of secure, long-term jobs, particularly for older women? The Committee wondered whether the State party intended to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

16. **A representative of Honduras** said that all the issues raised by the Chair had been discussed during the regional consultations on a third National Gender Equity and Equality Plan, which had been held in July, August and September 2022. The huge gender pay gap had widened under the previous administration. Women's working conditions in maquilas had always been bad. Some legislation had been passed in an attempt to improve their occupational safety and health, but there were many grey areas of compliance. It was therefore necessary to introduce more effective measures to protect the health of women who worked in those factories. Some steps had been taken towards enhancing women's economic empowerment. Since the Government recognized that poor education and working conditions clearly had a very adverse effect on women's lives, it regarded the advancement of women's employment as a priority. The Ministry of Women's Affairs had therefore considered a number of programmes aimed at offering women better employment opportunities in an economy based on solidarity.

17. Women living with HIV received health care and were given antiretrovirals. The guidelines that were being formulated on combating sexual harassment in the workplace acknowledged the fact that it was vital to build the capacity of managers and persons in positions of authority in institutions to engage in gender mainstreaming.

18. Her Government and civil society were discussing a number of proposals specifically aimed at securing better living and working conditions for domestic workers. Some groups of Indigenous women required separate attention. Hence the new National Gender Equity and Equality Plan would encompass capacity-building for rural women and facilitation of their access to financial resources, for example through rural banks and training courses. A national strategy envisaged a variety of mechanisms to improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of the agricultural holdings of women of African descent. She emphasized that the new Government's vision of women's affairs was centred on respect for their human rights.

19. **A representative of Honduras** said that in September 2022 it had been agreed that a working group should be set up to review the possibility of ratifying ILO Convention No. 190. Informal consultations were also being held with trade unions on ratifying ILO Convention No. 189. International free trade agreements would be revised to guarantee workers' rights.

20. **Ms. Al-Rammah** said that she would appreciate information on the State party's efforts to widen access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health-care services, particularly in rural areas and to allocate budgetary appropriations for the implementation of future health strategies. The Committee wished to find out whether there were any education and awareness-raising programmes to help women protect themselves from the human papilloma virus (HPV) and whether measures had been adopted to immunize every girl in the country. She asked whether the delegation could shed some light on the Adolescent Health Action Plan 2020–2024 and any new policies to reduce the adolescent pregnancy rate. She was curious to know what would be done to avoid interference by religious fundamentalists in the plan to prevent teenage pregnancy and ensure that it was applied without prejudice or discrimination. She would be grateful if the delegation could explain what measures the Government intended to adopt to secure teenage girls' access to high-quality health clinics with well-trained staff, where they would be treated with dignity, and to ensure the availability of free contraceptive products. She asked whether the Government would support rural women and women in low-income groups to allow them to obtain free contraception and emergency contraception. The Committee would like to hear what measures the State party had taken to safeguard women's fundamental right of reproductive autonomy. Would the State party be prepared to waive the ban on abortion in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, or where the mother's life was in danger, or there was severe foetal impairment? The Committee was anxious to learn of any measures to ensure that women with disabilities had access to high-quality health services and of any measures to enhance the knowledge of health workers so as to guarantee the adequate provision of those services without discrimination. What action had been taken to prohibit the involuntary sterilization of women with disabilities? The Committee would be grateful for an account of efforts to eliminate stereotypes and discrimination against women living with HIV, to ensure their equal access to high-quality, effective treatment and to prohibit their forced sterilization. Lastly, she would appreciate information on efforts to assist women with mental health issues and those affected by substance abuse.

21. **A representative of Honduras** said that the health-care budget had gone up significantly in 2022 and there were plans to increase it in 2023. In March 2022 a round table had been set up to formulate a policy on preventing teenage pregnancy. Sexual and reproductive health rights formed part and parcel of government policy. Measures were in place to guarantee health care during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-partum period. The third National Gender Equity and Equality Plan, which would have a multisectoral focus, would be implemented by the start of 2023. A constructive dialogue was being held on a new legal framework to protect women with disabilities.

22. **A representative of Honduras** said that the social development strategies that had been rolled out for persons with disabilities encompassed poverty-reduction and provision for their comprehensive health care and treatment. The Directorate General for the

Development of Persons with Disabilities had been tasked with coordinating and harmonizing public policies to assist those women. Work was being done to repeal legislation passed by the dictatorship. A new law that was being drafted would promote the equality and the all-round development of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in the productive life of the country.

23. Sexual and reproductive health counselling for teenagers had undergone a setback during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. With the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), measures were currently being stepped up to ensure that adolescents had access to psychological support and gynaecological assistance in order to guarantee their sexual and reproductive health rights.

24. **Ms. Al-Rammah** said that, in the light of the alarming incidence of HPV and the percentage of women who had incipient cervical cancer, she wished to know whether the State party ran any educational programmes for schoolgirls and women to help them protect themselves against the virus. If no such programmes existed, would it consider their introduction?

25. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras), acknowledging that cervical cancer was a serious problem in the country, said that a whole-of-society approach was needed to prevent the disease. The Government had forged partnerships with a number of organizations working on the topic with a view to rolling out information campaigns.

26. **A representative of Honduras** said that other measures taken in the area of women's health since 2020 included the development and dissemination of guidelines and manuals on various topics, such as prenatal care and delivery in the context of coronavirus disease, the handling of obstetric complications, access to family planning services in rural areas, the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, the comprehensive treatment of maternal and congenital syphilis, psychosocial support for persons living with HIV/AIDS and the establishment of a technical round table on adolescent health and local committees for the prevention of early pregnancies.

27. **A representative of Honduras** said that Women's City Centres tackled sexual and reproductive health issues comprehensively and played a considerable role in women's health, especially in the largest cities. They ran HPV screening programmes and vaccination campaigns for target age groups. However, since the vaccines were not necessarily as effective for all variants, there was also a need for awareness-raising.

28. **Ms. Bethel**, underscoring the importance of women's economic empowerment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, said that she wished to know what steps the State party was taking to generate disaggregated data on women's employment in urban and rural areas in order to develop effective public policies on women's economic empowerment and ensure that women in vulnerable employment were covered under the social protection system. In the light of the large number of women domestic workers, it would be interesting to know the status of the bill on domestic work and whether the State party intended to ratify the ILO Convention No. 189.

29. She wished to hear about any plans to conduct a study to better understand the differences in how women and men used their time, the State party's readiness to adopt transformative fiscal policies and strategies to meet the needs imposed by care work and any measures to address the causes of women's disproportionate burden of unpaid household work.

30. She would welcome information on efforts to improve access to credit for vulnerable women, with a focus on agroecology and artisanal production, and to protect the ancestral intellectual property of Indigenous women, as well as information on measures to help Indigenous women find a suitable market and fair price for their products. Lastly, what was the percentage of women landowners in rural and urban areas compared to men and might the State party consider using temporary special measures to increase women's land ownership, especially in rural areas?

31. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras) said that the discussions on the matter of domestic work should yield concrete outcomes by the end of 2022. The Government was considering a national survey on violence against women and girls, as well as, for the first time, a time-

use survey. The intention was to adopt a law on equality that would include a focus on the care economy, as had been done in other Latin American countries, and to harmonize existing legislation to remove contradictory provisions and better serve the interests of women. The working group on gender-responsive budgeting would also be tackling that issue, in addition to the gender pay gap.

32. While a credit programme for rural women had been developed, the budget allocation had never been made. The idea had been taken up again under the National Entrepreneurship and Small Business Service. The Service also provided training to women, including those in rural areas, to enhance their technical and financial skills and thus enable them to develop the full potential of their small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the decision-making authority of women entrepreneurs was improved through the provision of legal assistance, and efforts were being made to involve more women entrepreneurs in the public procurement process.

33. Discussions about land tenure had been initiated with the National Agrarian Institute, leading to a strengthened titling procedure, especially for Indigenous communities. For instance, between September 2021 and October 2022, over 11,000 land titles had been legalized; 37 per cent of the households concerned were headed by women. Furthermore, Honduras was a party to the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). Some 11,000 families had received assistance through a business conversion programme.

34. **A representative of Honduras** said that the National Bank for Agricultural Development had introduced a preferential rate for rural farmers to facilitate access to credit.

35. **A representative of Honduras** said that the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion was holding regional dialogues with women leaders to foster women's active role in community-level, needs-based initiatives for social development.

36. **Ms. Bethel**, welcoming the news of the planned time-use survey, asked what its intended purpose was, for instance the monetization of care work, and how the study would contribute directly to the economic empowerment of women.

37. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras) said that the intention behind the review of women's conditions of work from a rights perspective was to give women due consideration. To that end, the study would take stock of women's situation, enumerate what activities they engaged in and report their views on time allocation and task distribution. Aware of the major challenges hindering Indigenous women's income-generating activities, the Government had entered into cooperation agreements with civil society and other partners to promote initiatives that created favourable conditions for them.

38. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that she would be interested to know what progress had been made under the Public Policy against Racism and Racial Discrimination for the Comprehensive Development of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples, whether Indigenous women and women of African descent had participated in the drafting of the Government's new plans, whether the State party relocated rural women whose housing was precarious or who were forced to live in areas rendered unsafe by climate change and how it guaranteed the right to housing and access to drinking water. Given the effects of climate change and environmental degradation on fisherwomen, she wished to know how the right to a healthy and sustainable environment was upheld. Lastly, information on measures to ensure the safety of women defenders of the land would be welcome.

39. **A representative of Honduras** said that the Government sought to integrate Indigenous and Afrodescendent communities into initiatives that promoted individual and collective development. Central to the Our Roots Programme, therefore, were intercultural education, the transmission of ancestral knowledge and communities' participation and leadership, in accordance with their own structures and legal systems. Gender equity and equality were a key part of the Programme, and indeed all social development initiatives, and indicators had been developed to monitor equality and the inclusion of the gender perspective in those initiatives.

40. **A representative of Honduras** said that the Government had taken action to address mistrust of the national mechanism to protect rights defenders, including a significant increase to its budget and its inclusion in the 2023 budget of the Ministry of Human Rights,

thereby allowing it to honour its protection commitments, and mainstreaming of the gender perspective. Operational protocols and manuals had been produced in response to the significant number of irregularities that had been detected in the administration of the mechanism, which was currently addressing all the cases that it had received, including 53 involving women. Reviews had been undertaken of the protection measures afforded to the family of murdered environmental activist Berta Cáceres and Garifuna rights defender Miriam Miranda, and protection measures were also in place for the Garifuna community as a whole. Work was under way to link the protection mechanism to the Women's City (Ciudad Mujer) Programme to provide sexual and mental health services and access to social development programmes to beneficiaries. Inter-agency efforts were being made to address international judgments against the State linked to its failure to grant land titles to the Garifuna people.

41. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras) said that the Government provided low-interest loans to facilitate citizens' access to housing. The municipal authorities of Tegucigalpa had recently assumed responsibility for the water supply, a step that would provide more direct access to drinking water for women. For the first time, women from the Gracias a Dios and Bay Islands departments were participating in the drafting of a national plan on gender equality and justice.

Articles 15 and 16

42. **Ms. Reddock**, noting that the continued involvement of municipal authorities in child and early marriages suggested a degree of complicity on their part, said that she would welcome information on any plans to improve municipal compliance with the provisions of the Family Code that prohibited child marriage and on whether the State party would consider regulating de facto unions involving girls under the age of 18. While the State party's efforts to reintegrate returning migrant women and girls were commendable, there were concerns that it had been non-governmental organizations that had led the humanitarian response. It would therefore be useful to have details of any plans to adopt a formal, gender-informed humanitarian strategy with well-defined and coordinated procedures, protocols and resources that allowed State institutions to provide protection to women and girls who were involuntary returnees and victims of gender-based violence. She also wished to know whether the proposed migration policy incorporated the gender perspective and institutional mechanisms to support its implementation and, if not, whether they could be included.

43. She would appreciate an update on the appeal launched in 2018 against the provisions of the Constitution and the Family Code that prohibited same-sex marriage. She wondered whether the State party might consider removing the legal prohibition of marriage, civil unions and recognized de facto unions for lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons and recognizing the right of all women, including lesbian and bisexual women, to have access to adoption and medically assisted pregnancy.

44. Persistent patriarchal attitudes and traditional stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family remained a concern, and she would like to know the extent to which the Second National Gender Equity and Equality Plan for 2010–2022 addressed the division of labour in the home and included mechanisms to ensure the full implementation of the provisions of the Family Code in that regard, whether the equitable sharing of childcare and household responsibilities formed part of the programming of the National Institute for Women and, if not, whether the matter could be included in the new national equality and equity plan. She would also like to hear whether the State party would consider developing programmes for schools and teacher training institutions to encourage the equitable sharing of childcare and household responsibilities and whether a review of the images used in the news and advertising would be undertaken to guide policies on the media's depiction of the division of household labour.

45. **Ms. García Paredes** (Honduras) said that responses to the questions posed by Ms. Reddock would be submitted in writing. Rather than reporting on the failures of the dictatorship, her delegation's responses during the interactive dialogue had reflected the work

undertaken over the previous eight months by the current Government, which was committed to translating words into reality.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.