



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Fifty-seventh session**

Summary record of the 1201st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 20 February 2014, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ameline

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**
(continued)

*Seventh periodic report of Finland (CEDAW/C/FIN/7; CEDAW/C/FIN/Q/7 and
Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Finland took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Kosonen** (Finland), introducing the seventh periodic report of Finland (CEDAW/C/FIN/7), said that a range of initiatives for the promotion of human rights were being actively pursued in his country. An independent evaluation of the Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights would be submitted to Parliament in 2014, and a network of human rights focal points had been established in the various ministries to monitor its implementation and strengthen follow-up to the treaty bodies' concluding observations. Reforms at the local level of government would provide better access to integrated social and health-care services.
3. Since the submission of the seventh periodic report, the Government of Finland had ratified the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In 2014, it planned to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and start the preparations for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol. A bill was being prepared to provide for the establishment of an office of the ombudsman for equal treatment, which would replace the Ombudsman for Minorities, and to merge the Discrimination Tribunal and the Equality Board. The bill was also designed to provide more effective responses to cases of multiple discrimination. While the Gender Equality Act would remain a separate statute, the new bill would provide a more efficient means of countering multiple discrimination in cases where gender was one of the grounds of discrimination but was combined with another ground that was prohibited by the Non-Discrimination Act. The Gender Equality Act was being amended to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression. The Government also intended to improve the wage surveys conducted as part of gender equality plans in order to ensure that men and women received equal pay for work of equal value.
4. A progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2012–2015 had been submitted to Parliament in November 2013. Examples of advances achieved under the plan included amendments to legislation on family leave that promoted gender equality. A project funded by the European Union focused on attaining greater gender equality in economic decision-making. In 2013, training in the use of gender impact assessments as inputs when drafting legislation had been provided to personnel in all the ministries. The Valtava gender mainstreaming development programme was promoting gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels and was designed to support women entrepreneurs.
5. An interministerial working group coordinated efforts to combat violence against women. Under the Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women, social welfare and health-care professionals were trained to detect signs of violence and to broach the topic of domestic violence with their clients.
6. A bill had been submitted that would provide for stiffer penalties for sexual offences and expand the definition of rape contained in the Criminal Code. Any rape of a person under 18 years of age would be classified as aggravated rape, and a new provision on

sexual harassment would be introduced. A two-year project on sexual harassment was being funded by the European Union and carried out in cooperation with NGOs and the police academy. Videos and other instructional materials dealing with the topic were being developed for use in schools and seminars.

7. The use of preventive measures for combating violence, including domestic and sexual violence, was a key priority for the police. In November 2013, the Government had assumed financial responsibility for shelters for victims of domestic abuse, and a project was under way to plot out a distribution plan so that shelter services would be available to everyone in need of them, regardless of their place of residence. A 2013 study had explored the factors that prevented Roma women who were victims of domestic violence from seeking help, and its findings would be used in the development of training materials to teach service providers how to identify cases of domestic violence.

8. Comprehensive reforms in the field of education and research that promoted gender equality included a shift in the national core curricula from the current gender-neutral approach to gender-aware instruction. In 2013 the Ministry of Education had issued instructions that steps were to be taken to ensure that all basic education textbooks were gender-sensitive, and special training on non-discrimination and gender equality was provided to educational staff. Institutions of higher education were required to report to the Ministry of Education on their work in the field of gender equality and on their gender studies curricula, and a research project on gender equality in education had been launched.

9. The unemployment rate for women was slightly lower than the rate for men, but more women than men were employed on a part-time or temporary basis. The Equal Pay Programme had made a great deal of progress towards the target of reducing the gender wage gap to no more than 15 per cent by 2015, with the gap as of 2013 amounting to 17 per cent. Measures intended to help reconcile work and family life included efforts to introduce a flexible care allowance that would encourage parents to share responsibility for childcare and safeguard parents' right to return to work after taking family leave.

10. The national policy on issues of importance to the Roma people had increased awareness of those issues and enjoyed the support of the Roma community. Roma children had made considerable progress in school, and there was little difference in educational achievement between Roma boys and girls. A study on the needs of female Roma prisoners — the first of its kind to be conducted in Finland — had served as a basis for a number of recommendations to improve their situation. A study on the health and well-being of the Sami people had found that, while their identity, language and culture had all gained in strength, their access to services in the Sami Homeland was clearly more limited than elsewhere in the country and that there was a need to provide public services to the Sami people in their own languages.

11. The Government's integration policy focused on improving employment rates among immigrants and on gender-sensitive integration training. Programmes on immigrant health focused on immigrant women, in particular, and an integration centre that was to be opened in 2014 would encourage local authorities to take into account the impact of gender on an individual's integration. A project on integration training in 2013 had focused on immigrants in vulnerable situations and those who required special support.

12. The country's foreign policy devoted particular attention to women's participation in power structures and to the elimination of violence against women. The second national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security focused on crisis management, peacebuilding and the human rights of women and girls. The implementation of the plan was monitored by a cross-sectoral working group led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs which reported annually to Parliament. A network of NGOs also helped to implement the resolution.

13. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she welcomed the presence of a Member of Parliament in the Finnish delegation and wished to remark on the valuable contribution to the work of the Committee made by Mr. Bruun, an independent expert from Finland and currently the only male member of the Committee. She would like clarification as to whether the provisions of the Convention and its Optional Protocol had been incorporated into national legislation and whether they could be directly invoked by the courts. If so, examples of cases in which the Convention had been directly invoked would be appreciated. Was the general public aware of the content of the Convention and the Optional Protocol?

14. More details on the amendment of gender equality laws would be welcome, in particular with regard to provisions covering multiple discrimination. She also wished to know why the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or gender expression, which she understood was intended to protect transgender and intersex persons, had been incorporated into the Gender Equality Act, rather than the Non-Discrimination Act. In addition, she would like to know whether any measures were in place to ensure that the planned merger of the Discrimination Tribunal and the Equality Board would not weaken either of the two institutions.

15. **Ms. Neubauer** said that she would like to know what shortcomings in government gender mainstreaming activities had been identified in the 2010 Equality Report. She would appreciate further details on the findings presented in the interim report on the Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2012–2015, particularly with regard to the organizations working for gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

16. **Ms. Pires** said that she would like an update on the progress made towards introducing a high-level mechanism to coordinate the gender mainstreaming strategy in every government department and at every level of government, as recommended by the Committee in its previous concluding observations. More information would be welcome on the role of the parliamentary Employment and Equality Committee, its work and its links to other structures focusing on women's rights.

17. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland) said that the texts of the Convention and the Optional Protocol were available in the two official languages — Finnish and Swedish — online and in public libraries. All documents relating to meetings with the Committee, including periodic reports and concluding observations, were available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had a special office that was responsible for forwarding such information to citizens on request.

18. Awareness of the Convention and the Optional Protocol was enhanced by the availability of translations of the Committee's concluding observations into the country's official languages and into minority languages when required, as well as by the dissemination of those documents to Members of Parliament, other government authorities, the courts and major NGOs. The Government worked closely with the Human Rights Centre, which shared information on the Convention and its implementation with other stakeholders.

19. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that the Convention and the Optional Protocol had both been fully incorporated into national legislation and were directly applicable in the courts. The courts nonetheless tended to invoke national laws, which mirrored the Convention, rather than the Convention itself. Her country took a human-rights-friendly approach to interpreting international law, and all relevant Conventions were taken into account by the courts and authorities when examining a given topic. The amended Non-Discrimination Act would apply to cases of multiple discrimination in which gender was one of the grounds of discrimination. It would also be applicable in cases where gender was

a contributing factor but did not qualify as a ground of discrimination as defined in the Gender Equality Act.

20. **Ms. Martikainen** (Finland) said that one of the reasons why amendments to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or expression had been inserted into the Gender Equality Act, rather than the Non-Discrimination Act, was that cases of discrimination against gender minorities had traditionally been prosecuted under the previous Gender Equality Act. Gender mainstreaming in policy and legislation had been the practice in Finland for many years; recent measures in that area had included a series of training courses, organized in the latter half of 2013, for civil servants from all the ministries. The courses had focused not only on general methods of gender mainstreaming, but also on the specific needs of each ministry. Similar courses would be conducted in 2014. Even though gender mainstreaming was standard practice in Finland, it nonetheless posed challenges: a large number of bills were drafted each year and a great deal of time was required to ensure that the necessary gender impact assessments were conducted and that gender mainstreaming measures were taken.

21. **Ms. Mäkinen** (Finland) said that target groups for the gender mainstreaming programme for 2008–2014, which was funded by the European Social Fund, included regional government authorities and the staff of tertiary-sector organizations, consultants, and companies. The Programme's main outputs would include a handbook on gender mainstreaming and an overview of good practices in gender equality projects.

22. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that the Ministry of Justice offered 220 training days for judges, court staff and legal aid officers which included training in human rights and the special needs of victims of rights violations. Participation in those training days was free of charge.

23. **Ms. Naclér** (Finland) said that parliamentarians had been involved in preparing the State party report. Although human rights issues, including the implementation of the Convention, were the responsibility of the Constitutional Law Committee, there was also an informal parliamentary group that considered human rights questions, often from an international perspective. The parliamentary Employment and Equality Commission also played an important role in deliberations on many issues related to gender equality. Finland had been a pioneer in granting legal and political rights to women, and women had held positions of the highest authority. The Government and other stakeholders were more than willing to share the country's experiences and best practices in that regard with women around the world. Issues of concern in the context of the Convention were also discussed by the parliament of the Åland Islands. The positions of the Finnish and Åland legislatures differed with regard to some issues, and closer cooperation was therefore required. One such issue had to do with the question as to whether there was a need for a telephone helpline for women; such a helpline had been set up in the Islands with assistance from the Government of Sweden, but there was no such helpline in the rest of Finland.

24. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that the Government was aware of the need to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to the authorities responsible for monitoring gender mainstreaming in legislation. A Ministry of Justice working group was focusing on the preparations for the administrative unification of the various ombudsmen's offices and tribunals, which should help to improve resource distribution. Steps were being taken to ensure that the independence of the ombudsmen was not compromised by the upcoming administrative changes.

25. **Ms. Martikainen** (Finland) said that the midterm review of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2012–2015 had been submitted to the Government in the autumn of 2013. The Action Plan included some 60 activities or projects and was a key tool for the coordination of the country's gender equality policy. The midterm review had

shown that, while some of those activities had been completed and most were well under way, some were still in the initial stages of implementation. Further efforts would be devoted to ensuring that all the planned activities were completed in the time remaining.

26. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that, while she commended the State party on its efforts to provide thorough training and capacity-building for judicial staff, she was concerned about the apparent lack of resources — human and financial alike — for the gender mainstreaming of draft legislation. What was being done to redress the balance between needs and resources? She wished to know whether the remedies provided for in multiple discrimination cases under the Non-Discrimination Act and under the Equality Act were the same.

27. **The Chairperson** said that she wished to know how the State party, which had been held up as an example of human rights promotion and protection, could account for the fundamental challenges that it continued to face with regard to domestic violence. Did the State party intend to evaluate the impact of developments in women's political participation in terms of the evolution of society at large? She would also like to know whether the root causes of obstacles to implementation of the Convention had been analysed.

28. **Ms. Martikainen** (Finland) said that, in cases of labour discrimination against sexual minorities, the new Equality Act would provide for compensation, as in all discrimination cases, of between €3,000 and €16,000. The best approach for resolving the issue of the lack of resources for gender mainstreaming in legislation would be to provide training for all relevant ministry staff to ensure that gender mainstreaming was conducted in parallel with, rather than after, drafting.

29. **Ms. Nautilér** (Finland) said that the issue of domestic violence was a problem relating to the whole of society that could not be solved by women's rights promotion alone. In the Åland Islands, a high-level body had been established to consider methods of addressing violence against women. A similar body should be set up under the aegis of the Finnish Parliament.

30. **Ms. Šimonović** said that she was concerned by the fact that the Convention and Optional Protocol were apparently not a specific topic of discussion in the State party. It would be useful to use the Convention in training activities on gender mainstreaming. Under article 13 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, States parties undertook to make the Convention and Optional Protocol widely known. The Convention and its Optional Protocol were vital human rights instruments that should be discussed and used as a tool for the promotion of human rights at the national level.

31. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland) said that the Convention and Optional Protocol were well integrated into Finnish national legislation and policies. In drafting its first national plan of action on human rights in 2011, the Finnish Government had taken account of the concluding observations and recommendations issued by United Nations treaty bodies and the Council of Europe. The action plan contained direct references to the Convention.

32. **Ms. Pimentel** said that she wished to know whether the State party would consider instituting temporary special measures to promote the inclusion of minority women in positions of authority. She also wondered whether special measures could be taken to prevent illegal dismissals of pregnant women.

33. **Ms. Neubauer** said that, given the increasing number of cases of eating disorders among young women in Finland, she would be interested to know whether proactive measures had been taken to raise awareness among children of how the media altered images and of the impact of those images on women's self-esteem. While advertising regulations in the State party prohibited the use of sexualized images in a derogatory

manner when not relevant to the product or services being advertised, she wondered whether, if deemed relevant, the use of such images was considered acceptable.

34. She wished to know whether any measures had been taken to halt the increasing trend in hate speech against women and girls, as well as ethnic and sexual minorities, and whether any specific steps had been taken to protect immigrant women in Finland who were at risk of being subjected to female genital mutilation or so-called honour-related forms of violence. She welcomed the adoption of the Action Plan for the Prevention of Circumcision of Girls and Women for 2012–2016 and would appreciate receiving further information on the content of the plan and the measures taken to ensure its comprehensive implementation. She also wished to know what was being done to identify girls and women who were at risk of becoming victims of violence.

35. **Ms. Acar** said that gender mainstreaming in legislation would be more effective if overseen by a separate coordinating mechanism with a specific budget, rather than being carried out and funded by different ministries, as was currently the case. While she welcomed the adoption of the National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women for 2010–2015, she was concerned that no budgetary resources had been specifically earmarked for its implementation. The rate of domestic violence was particularly high in Finland, and the number of shelters for victims fell short of Council of Europe standards; the absence of a helpline for victims was also a cause for concern. She welcomed the news that the State party intended to ratify the Istanbul Convention and would like to know whether there were any specific plans to create stronger, properly funded government units to address violence against women. Would services for victims, including shelters, crisis centres and telephone hotlines, be expanded? She would also be interested to know what the Government's approach was to mediation in cases of domestic violence.

36. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she wished to introduce a note of caution about the tendency to use gender-neutral language in references to domestic violence, since the majority of victims were women. Violence against women should be addressed specifically. In view of the fact that rape was categorized in Finnish legislation according to the level of violence committed against the victim, she would appreciate information about the definition of rape that would be included in new legislation. She wondered why cases of abuse of positions of power to convince persons to engage in sexual relations were classified as sexual abuse rather than rape. She would welcome comparative data on prosecutions and sentences handed down in rape cases.

37. **Ms. Leinarte** said that, while Finland was not a country of origin for trafficking in women and children, it was a country of destination. She wished to know what steps were being taken to clarify existing provisions of the Criminal Code that related to sex trafficking offences. She would like to know what measures were being taken to support victims of trafficking, who were legally entitled to assistance and protection but were often afraid to report the crimes committed against them. Did the State party intend to amend the Aliens Act to improve protection for women victims of sex trafficking and those forced into prostitution? She wondered whether victims of trafficking were provided with support in exchange for their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement officials in identifying perpetrators and bringing them to justice. Prostitution per se was not illegal in the State party; only prostitution in a public place was prohibited by law. The flexibility of legal provisions in that regard might work to the detriment of foreign women, who were not discouraged from arriving in Finland with the intention of earning money from prostitution. She wished to know what assistance was available for foreign women forced into prostitution and whether the State party intended to criminalize prostitution altogether.

38. **Ms. Mäkinen** (Finland) said that statistics on the number of minority women in leadership positions were not available owing to legislation that prohibited the disaggregation of data by ethnicity. Discrimination on grounds of pregnancy, including the

dismissal of pregnant women, was prohibited by law. Although there was no special protection against dismissal when on parental leave, an employer must have adequate legal grounds for the dismissal of any employee at any time. A tripartite working group had been set up to analyse legislative gaps and recommend amendments or additions to bridge them. The working group would complete its mandate and submit its proposals by the end of April 2014.

39. **Ms. Arrhenius** (Finland) said that Sami women were represented on the Sami Council and on boards and committees at the municipal level. The national government and the Sami Council held direct consultations. There was no specific legislation in place to promote and protect Roma rights, but there were national and regional bodies that specifically addressed Roma issues, and there were 20 municipal-level working groups on problems of importance to the Roma people. Roma issues tended to be considered from the perspective of men and women alike; women's issues and double discrimination should be given greater attention. As for the issue of the political participation of immigrants, some Members of Parliament were immigrants, and the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, comprising representatives of all government ministries and migrants' organizations, addressed issues related to immigration and, in particular, the situation of immigrant women.

40. **Ms. Kaunismaa** (Finland) said that the Government had published public policy guidelines on media literacy in 2013 that built on the principles set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with special emphasis on children with disabilities and those belonging to minority groups. Media literacy would be included in the new national core curricula. The Ministry of Education and Culture was also working with non-governmental organizations on initiatives to promote gender equality and gender awareness in early childhood education.

41. **Ms. Arrhenius** (Finland) said that the steps being taken to address the problem of hate speech against women and girls and minorities included the establishment of a follow-up coordinating body to organize anti-discrimination media campaigns and the provision of educational materials on minorities and immigrants to the country's schools. The Ombudsman also played an active role in addressing minority issues by conducting surveys and drawing media attention to problems affecting minority groups.

42. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that the Council of Ethics in Advertising issued expert opinions on the acceptability of advertisements and responded to consumer complaints. An assessment would be compiled in 2014 on the implementation of the 2008 amendments to the Consumer Protection Act and the performance of the Council of Ethics in Advertising.

43. **Ms. Manns-Haatanen** (Finland) said that the main objective of the action plan for the prevention of circumcision of girls and women was to raise awareness and change attitudes, particularly among young people from countries where the practice was prevalent. Although there was no Finnish legislation on female genital mutilation as such, sending persons abroad to undergo such a procedure would be a criminal offence.

44. Shelters, telephone hotlines and other services for victims of violence were being developed in line with the provisions of the Convention and the Istanbul Convention. The creation of a coordinating body to monitor implementation of the Istanbul Convention was under consideration.

45. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that mediation in domestic violence cases was constantly under review and best practice was being followed. Cases were carefully assessed to determine whether or not mediation was suitable. Those assessments included separate interviews with the parties concerned to ascertain the level of violence and determine whether it was recurrent. Special training was given to volunteers dealing with

cases of domestic and intimate partner violence. No government statistical studies on the impact of mediation had been carried out. The only studies that were available had been based on practitioner interviews, which had indicated that most victims had expressed satisfaction with the outcome of mediation. There were no studies on the effectiveness of mediation in convincing perpetrators to cease their violent behaviour. In any event, mediation was not aimed at changing long-term behaviour, but rather at encouraging perpetrators to attend programmes that would teach them how to control their violent behaviour. She had no comparable data on prosecution and sentencing in rape cases, but would forward statistics to the Committee at a later date.

46. **Ms. Manns-Haatanen** (Finland) said that Finnish legislation used gender-neutral terminology because the Finnish language was itself gender neutral. Campaigns had been organized to raise public awareness of rape and sexual violence against women, the topic was discussed in schools, and victims were provided with information on the criminal law procedures to be followed.

47. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that the bill before Parliament to amend provisions in the Criminal Code on sexual offences would expand the definition of rape and introduce harsher punishments for that offence. It would also introduce a new provision on sexual harassment. Lack of consent by the victim was not at the heart of the legal definition of rape because the Government feared it would focus negative attention on the victim's behaviour.

48. **Mr. Huhtamäki** (Finland) said that the Aliens Act already provided for protection and assistance. However, a working group had recently identified weaknesses in those areas, and a bill containing suggested improvements would be prepared and submitted to Parliament in late 2014.

49. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that specialized prosecutors handled trafficking cases involving women and children and organized special sessions to teach other prosecutors how to identify trafficking victims. Amendments to legislation on trafficking were planned that would clarify the difference between trafficking offences and pandering. A bill containing those amendments was to be submitted to Parliament in early 2014. The purchase of sexual services was currently illegal only if such services were provided by a victim of pandering or human trafficking. A report on the possible criminalization of the purchase of sexual services had been submitted to the Minister of Justice in September 2013, but no decision had yet been made as to whether or not to amend existing legislation.

50. **Ms. Naclér** (Finland) said that the Constitutional Law Commission was responsible for addressing minority issues in Parliament. The number of minority women in positions of authority could not be ascertained because the compilation of statistics on ethnic backgrounds was prohibited. However, she knew that no women from the Åland Islands held top positions, but, then again, neither did any male Åland Islanders due to the language barrier. Immigrant women were at a disadvantage in the election system in Finland because there were no quotas or positive discrimination for such groups.

51. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that the prohibition on collecting statistics on people's ethnic backgrounds in order to protect their privacy and anonymity was detrimental to the interests of less-empowered and more vulnerable groups. She wished to repeat her question as to why the bill amending legislation on sexual offences still defined the abuse of positions of authority as an inducement for sexual intercourse as sexual abuse rather than as rape.

52. **Ms. Acar** said that she would like to know whether consideration had been given to the fact that the referral of domestic violence cases to mediation might be regarded as a human rights violation. The careful assessment of each case did not guarantee the protection of women's rights. Were there plans to review the policy on mediation?

53. **Ms. Jahan** said that pornographic images and the representation of female sexuality in the media were known to influence young girls and boys by heightening body insecurity in girls and prompting unrealistic expectations of sexual relations. Non-governmental organizations in Finland had called for a campaign to change attitudes and gather support for halting the increasing pornification and sexualization of public media. In that connection, she would like to urge Finland to expedite the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

54. **Ms. Leinarte** said that it was not clear to her whether or not the Finnish Government was considering amending the Aliens Act. What action was taken when immigrant women were identified as prostitutes, other than deporting them to their country of origin?

55. **The Chairperson** said that she would recommend that Finland should look to and draw inspiration from legislation and good practices in promoting women's rights in the rest of Europe.

56. **Ms. Arrhenius** (Finland) said that a solution to the prohibition on collecting data on ethnic backgrounds had been found by commissioning a number of focused studies on a number of different groups within the population, including minority women, migrants and older women from minority groups. One of the strengths of those initiatives was that they garnered the participation of non-governmental organizations from the outset.

57. **Ms. Naucclér** (Finland) said that legislation had not been amended to allow the collection of data on ethnic backgrounds because Finland had a tradition of respecting privacy and anonymity. The prohibition was viewed as being more positive than negative, and it was therefore unlikely that it would be reversed.

58. **Ms. Huotarinen** (Finland) said that the bill on sexual offences defined sexual coercion as rape. That definition included cases in which advantage was taken of a victim's powerlessness and cases in which threats other than the threat of violence were used.

59. **Ms. Manns-Haatanen** (Finland) said that the possibility of making fewer referrals to mediation in domestic violence cases (but not halting the practice altogether) had been discussed, as had ways of clarifying existing regulations.

60. **Ms. Kaunismaa** (Finland) said that gender stereotypes were being addressed in both education and the media. In addition to the changeover from a gender-neutral approach to gender-awareness instruction in the new national core curricula, teachers and student teachers were being trained in gender awareness, and new textbooks and instructional materials were free of gender stereotypes. A research project on equality in education was being developed. Finland was also co-organizing a conference, to be held in Helsinki in late 2014, with the Council of Europe on ways of combating stereotypes in education. A national media education unit provided materials and information for the authorities and worked closely with the private media to eliminate gender stereotypes. A major objective was to provide a safer media environment for children.

61. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland) said that the State party had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which had entered into force in June 2012. The Government was also in the process of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

62. **Mr. Huhtamäki** (Finland) said that the cases of immigrants who had been working as prostitutes were considered on an individual basis, taking into account their particular histories and circumstances.

63. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she would like to know whether a gender perspective had been incorporated into the study on older women belonging to minority groups and, indeed, into all of the focused studies that had been mentioned earlier. She also wished to know whether the data presented in those studies had been disaggregated.

64. **Ms. Arrhenius** (Finland) said that she would have to review the study on older women in order to respond to that question. In general, however, she knew that a gender perspective had been lacking in the focus studies. More recent studies had taken into account the need for gender-specific information, however.

65. **Ms. Schulz** said that she would be interested to learn what further steps were being taken to raise the number of women in decision-making positions in the private sector. Had the Government set time-bound objectives to increase women's participation in the private sector and was it negotiating with employers associations on possible incentives to facilitate progress in that direction?

66. Were there plans to review existing legislation that excluded women with disabilities who were under guardianship from voting or being elected on an equal basis with others? She would welcome gender-specific information on the initiatives taken to encourage voting and political participation by minority groups, including immigrants and persons with disabilities.

67. **The Chairperson** said that the prohibition in a number of European countries on collecting statistics on ethnic origin clearly interfered with efforts to obtain a clear picture of which segments of the population were most vulnerable.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.