



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

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

Twenty-seventh session

Summary record of the 566th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 14 June 2002, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Acar (Vice-Chairperson)

later: Ms. Abaka (Chairperson)

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In the absence of Ms. Abaka, Chairperson, Ms. Acar, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

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

Combined third and fourth periodic reports of Tunisia (continued) (CEDAW/C/TUN/3-4, CEDAW/PSWG/2002/II/CRP.1/Add.3 and CEDAW/C/PSWG/2002/II/CRP.2/Add.2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Tunisia took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 1 to 6

2. **The Chairperson** invited Committee members to continue with their questions and comments concerning articles 1 to 6.

3. **Ms. González**, speaking on behalf and in support of Ms. Manalo, who was absent, noted that, according to the report and the responses to the list of issues, domestic violence was not recognized as a social problem to be dealt with by society or a crime that could be prosecuted under the Penal Code but rather was viewed as a private family matter. She wondered whether the very low number of charges and complaints filed reflected women's fear of compromising their dignity by exposing such problems within the family. Ms. Manalo had also noted that the Penal Code did not deal with marital rape, incest or sexual abuse within the family, or sexual harassment in the workplace and schools. She called on the Tunisian Government to tackle the problem of domestic violence directly, as it seemed to be shifting a large share of its responsibilities to the country's very active non-governmental organizations.

4. **Ms. Regazzoli** echoed the concerns expressed by previous speakers regarding domestic violence. She would also appreciate more information on women detained in police custody — when they were detained (before the trial or at some other phase) and the main crimes of which they were convicted. She enquired about the number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and about children born in prison. Were they allowed to stay with their mothers for at least two or three years? Noting that men were not allowed to

enter women's jail cells, she asked whether female guards were given sufficient physical and psychological training to handle prisoners.

5. **Ms. Kapalata** congratulated the State party on its efforts to guarantee gender equality. Although the answers provided thus far under article 6 were not as comprehensive as they could be, she looked forward to receiving additional information in the course of the Committee's discussions.

6. **Ms. Kwaku** said that, coming from an African country where Islam was practised, she admired the bold steps taken by Tunisia to promote women's rights. Like a number of previous speakers, she would appreciate clarification of certain points under article 6, particularly with regard to "authorized prostitution", since prostitution was supposedly prohibited under article 231 of the Penal Code.

7. **Mr. Khemakhem** (Tunisia), replying to Ms. González, stressed that domestic violence and sexual harassment were not criminalized because they occurred so infrequently. Nonetheless, under the Government's three-pronged policy of prevention, treatment and deterrence, child-protection officers intervened in situations where children were at risk, and under Tunisian legislation, violence was regarded as a crime, irrespective of the perpetrator's gender. Moreover, the national legislation was flexible and could be amended at any time to adapt to new situations. A planned study should generate more precise figures on incidents of domestic violence and the number of complaints filed in court. While the Penal Code did not cover marital rape, because the situation did not arise, women were not restricted from filing complaints against their husbands; indeed, he recalled that during the time that he personally had sat on the Appeals Court, a husband had been convicted for wrongdoing.

8. In reply to Ms. Regazzoli, he said that the crime rate among women was extremely low; prostitution and killing infant children were the kinds of crimes of which they were most often convicted. There was no special category known as "political prisoners". As for protection of pregnant female prisoners, the Penal Code provided that pregnant women condemned to death should not be executed until after delivery; fortunately, there had never been an instance of that. New legislation adopted in 2000, which superseded the 1980 legislation allowed female prisoners to keep their

children with them up to three years of age unless a child-protection officer determined that that was not in the child's best interest. Female prisoners were guaranteed equal treatment. They were detained in special prisons facilities for women, which even male prison directors could not enter unless accompanied by two female guards. The Ministry of Justice, to which the Ministry of the Interior had transferred responsibility for prisons under the new legislation, recruited doctors to provide medical or psychological treatment for prisoners. Under article 231 of the Penal Code, prostitution was a crime punishable by six months' to two years' imprisonment. Penalties for male procurers and other intermediaries, and for trafficking in prostitution, were prescribed in article 232.

9. **Ms. Ben Romdhane** (Tunisia) said that, in a 1998 survey of slightly over 1.7 million families, 2,046 complaints of domestic violence had been registered by female victims and 186 by male victims. Another survey in 2000 had confirmed that, proportionately, domestic violence did not exceed other family-related problems, such as abandonment. Referring to Mr. Khemakhem's comments on child-protection officers, she said that the Child Protection Code required witnesses to report incidents of violence against children. A seminar on violence inside and outside the home, organized by the Ministry for Women and Family Affairs in November 2000, had led to the formation of a committee to establish guidelines for a broader study of the topic.

10. *Ms. Abaka took the Chair.*

Articles 7 to 9

11. **Ms. Manalo** said, with reference to article 9, that the Tunisian Government was to be congratulated for its progress towards the achievement of legal equality between men and women with respect to the transmission of nationality. The amendments of 1993 and 2002 to the Nationality Code had made it possible for a Tunisian woman married to a non-Tunisian to register her children of the marriage as Tunisians even if they were not born in the country. However, there was still some imbalance, since women were subject to restrictions not affecting Tunisian men in registering their children.

12. **Ms. Goonesekere** said that the Committee appreciated the changes in Tunisian nationality law and looked forward to the time when Tunisia's laws were in

harmony with the Convention and that country could withdraw its reservations regarding article 9, paragraph 2. Citizenship was at the core of rights. Moreover, Islamic law had been one of the first legal systems to recognize that a woman had a preferential right to custody of her child, a clear acknowledgement of the maternal link, so that it would seem logical for that link to be expressed in transmission of nationality.

13. **Ms. Gaspard** asked whether Tunisia would be able to withdraw its reservation in the not-too-distant future.

14. **Ms. Corti** said that she shared the views of the previous speakers. With regard to article 7, on women in political and public life, despite the Constitutional amendment requiring political parties not to discriminate and despite the decision of the majority party to introduce a 20 per cent quota, greater efforts were needed to raise the percentage of women in parliament. Experience had shown that with more women in the legislature other needed reforms would be passed more quickly. On the other hand, she was very pleased with the progress with regard to the judiciary since 1968, when the first woman magistrate had been appointed, their own distinguished colleague Ms. Aouij. Tunisia currently had a substantial proportion of women magistrates. She wondered whether their interpretations of certain laws especially relevant to women differed noticeably from those of their male colleagues and also whether any attempt was being made to educate judges on the laws affecting women's rights.

15. **Ms. Ben Yedder** (Tunisia) said that her Government was working hard to remove the remaining obstacles to withdrawal of the reservations, particularly the one on nationality.

16. **Mr. Khemakhem** (Tunisia) said that the Tunisian authorities were firmly resolved to eliminate the remaining imbalances between men and women in the law on nationality. Thanks to the recent amendment to article 12 of the Nationality Code, the mother's declaration was sufficient for a child of a mixed marriage to acquire Tunisian nationality if the father was deceased, legally incompetent or unidentified. Much progress had been made, but Tunisia was not yet in a position to withdraw the reservation. Changing mental outlook was a slow process, and the same problem applied to the reservation concerning inheritance rights. Most personal status law and family

law was closely intertwined with religious tradition. It was difficult simply to bypass the religious rules in that regard. The Committee had approved of Tunisia's enlightened reading of the religious texts, but, to be sure, it fell short of absolute equality. Some of the problems had to do with economic opportunity. Women were relative newcomers to the work force. In Tunisian society men were still the chief breadwinners and often the chief holders of the family purse. The law could not afford to lose touch completely with social reality.

17. Tunisia took pride in that fact that nearly 25 per cent of magistrates were women. When Ms. Aouij had ascended to the bench, she had been one of the first female judges in the entire Islamic world. Women currently served in Tunisia as presiding judge in courts of all kinds, civil and criminal, including courts of appeal. They naturally strove for impartiality, the standard for all judges, but were proud of their achievement and hoped to consolidate women's success in their field.

18. **Ms. Ben Yedder** (Tunisia) said that the official position of the Tunisian Government was that women's rights were an inseparable part of human rights. But each country had to be sensitive to its own culture in its efforts to advance the status of women.

Articles 10 to 14

19. **Ms. Acar** said that she was pleased to note the great improvement in literacy and in female enrolment and achievement rates throughout the educational system. Tunisia was apparently doing well with its younger generation and had developed programmes targeting the 15-44 age group. However, there was still room for serious concern about the high illiteracy rates among the group aged 44 and older, particularly in rural areas and she would like to know if anything was being done to reduce those rates, since illiteracy would severely limit the opportunities of such women with regard to retraining or access to credit.

20. At the university level, the statistics were impressive in terms of general enrolment and distribution among the different disciplines. She wondered whether there were any women's studies programmes, which were a good way of promoting research and making women's status and conditions visible in society. Women's studies also helped to sensitize students to gender issues, whereas higher education alone often did not. The percentage of

women among senior professors seemed unusually low in a country where there were many women physicians and judges. She wondered whether there was some particular, perhaps traditional, resistance in academic circles.

21. **Ms. Livingstone Raday** said, with reference to article 11, that the increase in the employment of professional women was good, but overall women still represented under 25 per cent of the labour force, a percentage that had not increased appreciably since 1975. In view of the Government's expressed interest in increasing women's participation in economic activity, she would like to know what it was doing in terms of facilitating job placement, preventing hiring discrimination by public and private employers and researching to what extent women were engaged in "invisible employment", i.e., working outside the home for family members without wages or other employment benefits.

22. She would appreciate more sex-disaggregated data on wages and the wage gap in both the public and private sectors, preferably broken down by occupation. She would also like to know more about the legal framework for equal pay, particularly any specific equal opportunity legislation, and wondered whether anti-discrimination laws, in addition to providing for administrative action, also empowered women to pursue civil remedies in court.

23. It had been brought to the Committee's attention that there was a serious problem of sexual harassment in workplaces, and that women were beginning to have the courage to complain. Apparently, although action could be brought under article 76 of the Labour Code, the Code did not expressly mention sexual harassment. The reporting State might consider introducing legislation that would specifically address the problem.

24. With regard to social security pensions, she would like to know how women's pension rights were affected by their marital status and whether women who had not been economically active had any pension entitlements. Pensions were an important measure for combating poverty among older women.

25. **Ms. Feng Cui** said that she was interested in the ambitious goals set by the national literacy strategy, including a sharp reduction in illiteracy rates among rural women, and would like to know more about how the Government planned to achieve those goals. Another problem women faced in rural areas was that

many younger women were going to work in factories, so that the burden of agricultural work was increasingly falling on middle-aged and older women. She wondered whether any studies had been done on the problem. She also wondered whether women engaged in agricultural work had any say in rural projects and to what extent they had been made aware of their rights. Great strides had clearly been made in health and education, particularly among younger women. She would appreciate an assessment by the delegation of the major problems outstanding.

26. **Ms. Kwaku** noted that Tunisian law prohibited women from wearing the *hijab* in educational institutions and government ministries. The prohibition could be seen as a violation of their rights in that it curtailed their access to education and employment. It might be better to leave women the option of wearing the traditional garb or not.

27. **Ms. Ben Romdhane** (Tunisia) said that as a result of the Government's effort to increase schooling among girls, the gap in literacy rates between boys and girls had narrowed considerably in both rural and urban areas. A well-funded nationwide action plan was in place to wipe out illiteracy altogether. Women and girls were being encouraged to enrol in literacy programmes.

28. With regard to studies on the status of women and girls, she said that the Centre for Research, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) had set up a programme under which studies were conducted in cooperation with university professors, including both Tunisian nationals and visiting professors from other countries. The tenth national development plan for women included plans for studies of the role of women at the university level. The Ministry for Women and Family Affairs drew on a number of existing studies, as well as on information provided by the media on the image of women in society. The percentage of women professors in higher education was actually 30 per cent; the figure of 8 per cent that had been mentioned referred to positions at the highest levels.

29. Replying to a question about what was being done to protect the rights of illiterate and less-educated women and offer them greater opportunities, she pointed out that the share of women participating in microprojects carried out through the Tunisian Solidarity Bank had risen from 27 per cent in 2000 to

35 per cent in 2002. That figure reflected those women who previously had not had an opportunity to receive professional training, but who nevertheless had a level of skills that enabled them to undertake projects. The Ministry for Women and Family Affairs had set up two major programmes targeting that category of women which were conducted in close collaboration with the Tunisian Solidarity Bank and with non-governmental organizations concerned with development and women's issues.

30. Replying to questions regarding women in the labour force, she observed that the rate of female participation had risen rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s, and in the years to come, the combined effect of a number of different parameters, including education, would be reflected in further improvements. A number of studies had been conducted on the overall situation of women in the workforce. Proactive initiatives were under way to bring more women into the productive sector of the economy. With regard to salaries and wages, she stressed that in the civil service, the principle of equal pay for equal levels of competence applied. In the private sector, the fact that women often started out with lower levels of training and competence put them at a disadvantage in terms of remuneration.

31. Responding to questions about women in the countryside, she said that CREDIF had done a number of studies on the status of rural women which had served as the basis for the nationwide action plan initiated in 1999. Rural women were involved in development projects, most of which specifically incorporated the women's dimension.

32. **Mr. Khemakhem** (Tunisia), replying to questions regarding discrimination in the workplace, said that under legislation enacted in 1993, women who felt they were discriminated against could take their cases to court and were entitled to reparations. Chapter 76 of the Labour Code provided that employers of women had the obligation to ensure good conduct at work. Sexual harassment was not penalized.

33. Concerning the misgivings that had been expressed about the prohibition against women wearing the *hijab*, he said that several decrees had been issued in that regard. In 1987, the Minister of Education had issued an order requiring proper attire in educational institutions. In 1991, a decree had been issued prohibiting clerics from wearing religious garments in

public institutions. Clerics were encouraged to wear their garments for traditional celebrations and special occasions but not in the public workplace. The decrees he had mentioned did not have the same weight as legislation, but citizens were expected to abide by them. Their purpose was to support the values of the Tunisian people and provide a politically neutral environment in the workplace. There were no minorities or separate tribes in Tunisia.

Articles 15 and 16

34. **Ms. Manalo** asked for clarification regarding the age of marriage. Why was it not the same for both women and men? Although the age for women had been raised from 15 to 17, that was still a very young age to get married, since it discouraged girls from completing their education and exposed them to early pregnancy, as well as the risk of domestic violence. As for the dowry, she pointed out that the continuation of that practice gave the impression that the bride was bought and could be managed like a chattel.

35. **Ms. Kwaku**, referring to article 16 of the Convention, asked about the implications of the new article 218 of the Tunisian Penal Code, which provided for harsh punishment for perpetrators of violence against women, especially marital violence. She noted that there was a clause providing that the victim could withdraw her complaint. She would like to know how many such cases had been brought to the police or taken to court, and then been withdrawn. Coming from Africa herself, she knew the type of pressure that family members and society were likely to bring to bear on a female victim of conjugal violence. In most cases, under such pressure, the victim would withdraw her complaint. If that was the case, there was no point in providing for harsh punishment for such violence. What was the position of the Government in that regard? The withdrawal clause should be reconsidered.

36. She noted with satisfaction the reply given by the Tunisian delegation to her question regarding female family magistrates. She would like to know whether the women magistrates were lay magistrates or were professionally qualified. If so, what professional qualifications were required for the position? With regard to extra-marital relationships, she noted that the Child Protection Code of 1998 sought to protect children born out of wedlock. What specific rights did the Code protect? Did those rights include rights to inheritance and to title from the father? Lastly, she

noted that the Personal Status Code provided that a Muslim woman should not marry a non-Muslim man. Did the law specifically prohibit such marriages? If such a marriage did occur, was there any punishment? What rights did the woman's children have?

37. **Ms. Achmad** said she was encouraged by the progress made by Tunisia, considering the prevailing sociocultural and religious values which still condoned stereotypes. The abolition of polygamy, the granting of divorce rights, the capacity of women to institute legal proceedings and other achievements mentioned in the report were outstanding. In practice, however, families still followed traditional stereotypes regarding the role of women. She appreciated the reforms that had been made in the educational system. She would like to ask how that progress would be sustained; she understood that the Tunisian authorities had adopted a gradual strategy. To ensure that equality in the family was a reality, was any programme in place for educating couples before marriage? Was there some way to monitor whether equality was in fact a reality in the family? To what extent did the Tunisian authorities intend to mobilize the media in order to socialize the concept of effective partnership between men and women in the management of family affairs? That was particularly important in order to avoid violence and to ensure that women were involved in the decision-making process.

38. *Ms. Acar, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

39. **Ms. Shin** asked for clarification about the inheritance system. She understood that currently men received a double share of the inheritance. In the hypothetical case of a man with a wife and four children — one married and one unmarried son and one married and one unmarried daughter — who left a property worth one million dollars, how would that property be inherited according to the law? With regard to the reservations, she said it was her understanding that when Tunisia had legal equality under articles 15 and 16, the reservations would be lifted. The Tunisian representatives had said that it would take time, as well as political will. What were their personal opinions as to how long that process would take in the absence of political will?

40. **Ms. Goonesekere**, stressing the importance of the reforms introduced with regard to alimony, divorce, maintenance and joint property, suggested that the Tunisian authorities should consider whether the laws

on domestic violence had a normative value, setting a standard for society and indicating that abuse within the family could not be tolerated. She urged them to consider preventing the withdrawal of a complaint where there was serious injury. With regard to the question of filiation and name in the case of children born out of wedlock, she would like to know what the situation was with regard to maintenance for such children.

41. **Mr. Khemakhem** (Tunisia), replying to the question on the marriage age for women, explained that the difference between men and women lay in the minimum age for marriage. In practice, however, when young men and women were studying at a university, the average age of marriage was 28. The law was not frozen, and might be changed by the time Tunisia submitted its next report. As for the dowry question, he said that like inheritance, the custom had religious roots, and religion was the source of much legislation, especially personal status legislation. Why should marriage be considered a transaction because of the dowry? There was no basis for such a conclusion. The dowry was above all symbolic, and it was not limited to one religion. Judaism also had a dowry tradition. It was a question of mentality; perhaps over time it would be possible to eliminate the dowry, but for the time being, it was not under discussion.

42. Turning to the queries about the possibility of a woman withdrawing a complaint of domestic violence, he explained that the question of reconciliation involved the free will of the woman. The main point was to punish domestic violence, but if in exceptional cases the woman preferred reconciliation, that was also provided for. As for the situation of children born out of wedlock, they were not entitled to the family name or to inheritance. Originally, there had been no provision for them at all, but considerable progress had been achieved. The policy in Tunisia was to do things gradually; in 1998, some changes had been made, and other steps would be taken in the future.

43. There was no bar against a Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim man. Tunisia had ratified the United Nations Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage in 1967, and since international treaties took priority over domestic law, such marriages were recognized in Tunisian law. However, article 5 of the Personal Status Code required both parties to a marriage to be free of legal impediments, and

according to a publication issued by the Ministry of Justice, such marriages were prohibited unless the non-Muslim partner converted to Islam. Thus in practice, both interpretations of the law were followed. Since 1993 the Personal Status Code, and especially article 23, had emphasized partnership within the family.

44. **Ms. Ben Romdhane** (Tunisia) confirmed that the minimum age for marriage for girls was 17. By marrying a person acquired full legal capacity in all civil and commercial matters. Disparities between men and women had been considerably reduced as a result of the 1993 reform of the Personal Status Code, and the inclusion of the new article 153. Since 1996, an awareness-raising campaign targeted at the media, families and students had done much to spread a culture of human rights. The Ministry for Women and Family Affairs had issued a young persons' guide to the Personal Status Code, which emphasized the rights of both men and women. It had also prepared a guide to the common property regime. Those entering marriage were being encouraged to opt for that regime, and the Ministry was currently conducting a survey to ascertain the extent to which that option was being exercised. As to whether it had normative value, as an arrangement sanctioned by law it certainly did; moreover, it was having a positive impact on minds and behaviour. As for the situation of older women, like men they benefited from the national programme for older persons. An action plan for the family had been in effect since 1996, and a second action plan currently being developed would be integrated with the national pensions strategy.

45. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** noted that despite the concept of partnership within the family, the husband was still regarded as the head of the family and the chief provider. Did he have the sole right to choose the family's domicile and decide on the family name? Was property acquired during a marriage registered in the names of both spouses, or only in the man's name? Could a Muslim marry a non-Muslim under the same conditions as another Muslim? Article 58 of the Personal Status Code appeared to discriminate against divorced women, because if they wanted custody of the children after divorce they had to remain single, whereas a divorced man was expected to have a woman available to care for the children. It also seemed that a divorced mother could only obtain full guardianship rights over the children if the father was dead or lacked capacity; that too constituted discrimination. What was

the situation of single women with children born out of wedlock; was there any support available for them?

46. **Ms. Saiga** queried the financing of the maintenance and divorce allowance guarantee fund, and asked whether parental leave, whether paid or unpaid, was granted to new parents.

47. **Ms. Livingstone Raday** asked whether a woman married to the father of her children could obtain guardianship rights, or whether that was only possible after divorce or the death of the father. She agreed with Ms. Shin's comments on the inequalities of the law on inheritance. The amended article 23 of the Personal Status Code placed on women an equal obligation to contribute to the upkeep of the family. To fulfil that obligation, a woman must have equal access to the family's resources. The common property regime in marriage was much the most equitable arrangement for women. Was the Government considering extending that regime to all spouses, whether or not they chose it voluntarily? On the question of domestic violence, she agreed with Ms. Kwaku that a woman who had suffered domestic violence, especially if the attacks were repeated and severe, should not be allowed to withdraw a complaint once she had made it. What preventive measures against domestic violence were contemplated in Tunisia; had consideration been given to protection orders by which a violent husband could be excluded from the family home? Had the recommendation of the 1991 UNFT study to establish shelters for women victims of domestic violence been implemented, and if so, how many shelters were there? Was marital rape treated as an offence, and was reparatory marriage still permitted, whereby a rapist could extinguish his offence by marrying his victim?

48. **Mr. Khemakhem** (Tunisia), replying to the questions about the role of the husband in the family, said that according to article 23 of the Personal Status Code the husband was still the head of the family, but the 1993 revision of the Code had limited the range of his responsibilities by introducing the concept of partnership. The husband was not supposed to act in an authoritarian manner or as sole decision-maker, and the wife also had a right to spend the family's income. The family name was that of the husband, but a woman could give her name to a child born out of wedlock. The choice of the family home was a matter for the married couple to decide jointly. The system of common property after marriage was optional, and co-existed with the sole ownership system. Assets bought

by the husband during the marriage belonged to him. It was not correct that a woman had to remain married in order to have custody of her children. Custody of children was not governed by the marital status of the parents, but by the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As for the cost of maintenance following divorce, the maintenance and divorce allowance guarantee fund belonged to the State treasury. The sums disbursed could be recovered from the former husband once he was no longer poor. Parental leave could be granted to both mothers and fathers. As for inheritance, existing practices reflected religious, economic and cultural influences. However, the law was evolving in a more progressive direction. A rapist or abductor could not marry his victim. The law drew a distinction between the crime of rape and consensual sexual relations. The latter were prohibited outside marriage, but a woman was free to marry her seducer if she wished and if the relationship was consensual.

49. **Ms. Ben Romdhane** (Tunisia) said the authorities were encouraging the provision of shelters for women victims of domestic violence. The shelters were set up by non-governmental organizations and subsidized by the Ministry for Women and Family Affairs. They provided legal and psychological support.

50. **Mr. Mejdoub** (Tunisia), speaking as Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, said he appreciated the spirit of openness, objectivity and intellectual curiosity with which the Committee had dealt with Tunisia's report. Tunisia was a success within the Muslim world. With a population of only 10 million, each year it received five million visitors, 90 per cent of whom came from Europe. It was closely allied to the European Union, with which it had signed a free trade agreement in July 1995. It upheld European standards while preserving its own traditions and culture.

51. **Ms. Ben Yedder** (Tunisia) thanked the members of the Committee for their questions and observations, and for the constructive dialogue which had taken place. Tunisia would endeavour to pursue the goals mentioned by the Committee, and she would convey their observations to the Tunisian authorities. Tunisia regarded women's rights as an integral part of human rights. Its Government was aware of the importance of women's position in society. It would focus on making further amendments to those of its laws which

continued to pose problems for the Convention, and would reconsider its existing reservations.

52. **The Chairperson** noted the undertaking by Tunisia to consider lifting its remaining reservations to substantive articles of the Convention. Evidently, it had the political will to achieve gender equality. She hoped it would share good practice beyond its borders by encouraging other Arab countries in Africa to proceed in the same vein.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.