



General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
3 November 2005

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 14th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 13 October 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Butagira (Uganda)
later: Ms. Tomič (Vice-Chairman). (Slovenia)

Contents

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)

Agenda item 62: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women (*continued*)*

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” (*continued*)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

05-55073 (E)

* 0555073 *

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

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice *(continued)*

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.8: Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

1. **Mr. Cavallari** (Italy) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and also Albania, Andorra, Australia, Panama and San Marino. The draft resolution was being submitted in response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (A/60/131). A number of updates and new elements had been incorporated since the previous year's resolution, in particular references to the status of international legal instruments on transnational organized crime, the outcome of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and important regional developments such as the round-table meeting entitled "Crime and Drugs as Impediments to Security and Development in Africa", hosted by the Government of Nigeria in 2005. A revised draft based on ongoing negotiations would be distributed soon.

2. **The Chairman** announced that the following countries had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro, South Africa, the Sudan, Timor-Leste and Ukraine.

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.10: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

3. **Mrs. Muuondjo** (Namibia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of African States, said that the text remained the same as that of the previous year's resolution, except for updating. The Group of African States welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the Institute (A/60/123),

which indicated that the Institute was trying to step up its initiatives to assist the African continent in solving its problems caused by serious crime and underdevelopment, in cooperation with the African Union, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other mechanisms. In that regard, the Group of African States highly appreciated the General Assembly's continued support, especially the United Nations grant, which the Secretary-General had emphasized was vital for sustaining the Institute. The Group of African States was also grateful for the assistance of development partners, the private sector and civil society, which would help Africa enhance the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and the promotion of sustainable systems to combat crime, particularly transnational organized crime and terrorism. Such support enabled the Institute to carry out its mandate. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.11: Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

4. **Mrs. Laohaphan** (Thailand), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and also Bangladesh, Cameroon, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho and Sri Lanka, said that the Bangkok Declaration adopted by the Eleventh Congress could serve as a solid foundation for collective efforts to prevent and combat crime and strengthen the work of UNODC. Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.11 and the draft resolution on crime prevention and criminal justice introduced by Italy (A/C.3/60/L.8) could complement each other in covering all aspects of crime prevention. She looked forward to the support of all Member States in sponsoring the draft resolution and adopting it by consensus.

5. **The Chairman** announced that the following countries had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Belarus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal and Tunisia.

Agenda item 62: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

(continued)

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.4: Cooperatives in social development

6. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.4, which contained no programme budget implications. The draft resolution had been orally revised by the representative of Mongolia at a previous meeting.

7. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary) announced that the following countries had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, South Africa, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and Tunisia.

8. **Ms. Enkhsetseg** (Mongolia) announced that Bangladesh, Bolivia, Costa Rica, India and Panama had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

9. *Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.4, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.7: Follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers

10. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.7, which contained no programme budget implications.

11. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary), after drawing the Committee's attention to the fact that Brazil had been omitted as a sponsor in the Spanish version of the text, announced that the following countries had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, China, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

12. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) announced that the following countries had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bangladesh, Botswana, Canada, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Viet Nam. He looked forward to the support of all delegations and hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

13. *Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.7 was adopted.*

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women *(continued)*
(A/60/38, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79, A/60/111, A/60/137, and Corr.1, A/60/165, A/60/206, A/60/211, A/60/274, A/60/281, A/60/371 and A/60/372)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" *(continued)*
(A/60/111, A/60/170, A/60/211 and A/60/371)

14. **Mr. Ortega** (Ecuador) said that, for Ecuador, the Beijing Declaration was a key framework for the adoption of policies to promote and protect women's rights. Since 1995, his Government had made important progress on women's rights and gender equality, drawing up the first Equal Opportunities Plan (1996-2001), based on the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action, establishing the National Council for Women (CONAMU) as the national machinery responsible for shaping public policies with a gender approach and, lastly, formulating the second Equal Opportunities Plan (2004-2009). The 1998 Political Constitution, moreover, safeguarded women's rights, incorporated a gender approach and the protection of the specific human rights of women, and established a number of fundamental principles.

15. Gender equality was essential to combating poverty, hunger and disease and attaining sustainable development. However, even though the fundamental right to equality had been expressed on many occasions and in many forums, discrimination against women persisted in many countries around the world. In line with its international commitments, Ecuador had made important progress on the rights of Ecuadorian women and the institutionalization of policies that benefited

women and sought to achieve gender equality. In that context, his Government had issued the General Regulations of the Law to Combat Violence against Women and the Family, the Free Maternity Law, the Reform of the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Law on Election Quotas, to name the most important. His Government was convinced that it was essential to strengthen the role of women in order to attain the country's social and economic development goals and therefore reiterated its commitment to promoting and protecting women's rights, eliminating discrimination and violence against women, and achieving full equality for women in all areas and at all levels.

16. **Ms. Kulzhanova** (Kazakhstan) said that the Beijing Conference had become a cornerstone of efforts to promote and protect the rights of women. Throughout the transition period, the Government of Kazakhstan had been demonstrating its commitment to gender equality and to the principles laid down in the fundamental documents on the advancement of women. Kazakhstan's National Commission for Family and Women, established in 1999, had been working to implement a national plan of action to strengthen the status of women, which was mandatory for all government agencies. In 2003, the Government had adopted a gender policy approach in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, aimed at ensuring equal distribution of powers and influence in society, equal obligations in the rearing of children and freedom from gender-based violence. A gender equality strategy for the years 2005-2015 was being developed in close cooperation with government departments and international and non-governmental organizations.

17. Maternal and child health, including the reduction of mortality, was a high priority. State programmes had been adopted for developing rural areas, which placed emphasis on social infrastructure. A gender perspective was being integrated into the formulation and budget planning process for all social programmes, in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Microcredit was clearly an effective tool for eliminating poverty, and Kazakhstan's efforts in that area fell within the framework of the International Year of Microcredit. Two thirds of microcredit beneficiaries in Kazakhstan were rural women. A State microcredit programme for the years 2005-2007 was being

developed with approximately US\$ 2 million in funding from the national budget: it was expected to create some 90,000 new jobs by 2007, including jobs for women.

18. Despite the country's great accomplishments in its efforts to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, it still faced serious challenges. Women continued to be poorly represented at decision-making levels in government. Maternal mortality, though declining, was still high. The spread of HIV, especially among women, was a growing concern. While progress had been made in establishing a favourable regulatory environment, certain problems remained in providing services. The Government of Kazakhstan recognized those challenges and intended to continue its work in those areas, in close cooperation with the United Nations and with non-governmental organizations.

19. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) said that his country enthusiastically reaffirmed the Beijing and Cairo outcome documents, which together with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant human rights instruments, had provided invaluable guidance to the Brazilian Government in promoting the advancement of women. Brazil's National Plan of Policies for Women, adopted in December 2004, was largely the result of Brazilian society having discussed and internalized the guidelines set forth in those international instruments. It served to involve and commit states and municipalities, under the coordination of the Federal Government and its Secretariat on Women's Policy, which was responsible for mainstreaming gender policies across the full range of the Federal Government's activities. The Plan, which covered the period 2005-2007, had emerged from a series of consultations with civil society at local, regional and state conferences, culminating in the First National Conference on Policies for Women, convened by President Lula in July 2004 and bringing together nearly 2,000 delegates.

20. It covered four strategic areas of action. The first was the promotion of equality in the areas of labour and citizenship, including initiatives to extend women's access to the labour market and promote non-discriminatory labour relations as well as encourage entrepreneurship and extend women's access to land and housing. The second was the promotion of inclusive, non-sexist education, including the

incorporation of a gender, race, ethnic and sexual-orientation perspective in formal and informal education. The third area was health, sexual and reproductive rights for all women regardless of race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. The Government was committed to reducing maternal mortality by improving obstetric care and providing assistance for abortions, and was reviewing punitive legislation on the voluntary termination of pregnancy. Brazil was strongly committed to halting the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, in the female population. The fourth area was violence against women: Brazil was fully committed to reducing its incidence and was placing priority, inter alia, on promoting health-care services and preventive measures for women subject to domestic and sexual violence, and on expanding access to justice and legal aid.

21. Brazil would have wished to see the commitments contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome with respect to gender equality, and specifically sexual and reproductive health rights, framed in much stronger language. In August 2005, ministers from MERCOSUR and associated countries, together with parliamentarians and civil-society representatives, had adopted the Brasilia Declaration, which clearly stated that universal access to sexual and reproductive health services was essential to promote economic growth and reduce social and economic inequality. The Declaration also highlighted the need for a human-rights-based approach to sexual and reproductive health services, including sex education. Brazil nevertheless recognized that the 2005 World Summit Outcome provided a minimum foundation in that area, and pledged to continue to devote its energies to the cause of gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights at the national and international levels.

22. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine) said that, while significant progress had been achieved in advancing equality, development and peace for women in many parts of the world, millions of women still lived in conditions that deprived them of their fundamental human rights. The conditions faced by Palestinian women were difficult and unique. It was disheartening that each year their situation continued to worsen, particularly with the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, over the past five years. Throughout that

time, Israel, the occupying Power, had deliberately violated international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, bringing untold misery to the entire Palestinian population and particularly Palestinian women.

23. The countless human rights violations committed by the occupying forces had had grave and long-term consequences for Palestinian women and had compounded the pressures and constraints that already existed in regard to women's advancement. Palestinian women continued to fight inequality and discrimination in order to play an active and influential role in their society but, as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women had noted in February 2005, they faced two systems of subordination: occupation and patriarchy. The images were unforgettable and tragic: mothers mourning the loss of their loved ones, watching their homes bulldozed as their children fled in panic and fear only to find that there was nowhere to be safe, enduring innumerable indignities and harassment and witnessing as huge tracts of their land were swallowed up for the continued construction of Israel's monstrous wall and ever-expanding settlements that destroyed their property, their livelihood and the prospects for peace.

24. In addition, the increasing restrictions of movement imposed on Palestinians had gravely affected nearly every aspect of life in the occupied Palestinian territory, depriving the Palestinian people not only of their freedom of movement but also of other fundamental human rights including the right to work, to medical care and to education. The unlawful restrictions, which were imposed solely on Palestinians and not on the Israeli settlers living illegally throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, posed an additional threat to Palestinian women, who had to endure the horrifying fate of being forced to give birth at military checkpoints. As reported by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 61 Palestinian women had given birth at checkpoints between September 2000 and December 2004, resulting in the death of 36 newborns. Countless testimonies had been documented. Nothing, not even security concerns, could justify such inhumane, criminal acts. Without a doubt, such horrific incidents had resulted in widespread deterioration of the overall psychological state of Palestinian women.

25. Year after year, the Palestinian people continued to be plagued with more death and destruction and

further human rights violations. Nevertheless, an important juncture had been reached, which could constitute the beginning of the road to achieving peace. While there were many unresolved issues, the end of colonial settlement in one part of Palestinian land, the Gaza Strip — even though it represented only 6 per cent of the total land area of the occupied Palestinian territory — was a positive development. Palestine looked forward to real peace and the reversal of the colonization process of the entire occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, based on the 1949 armistice line. Only then would it be possible for genuine progress to be made towards the advancement of Palestinian women and for work to begin on securing a promising future for all the people of the region.

26. **Ms. Jouhargy** (Saudi Arabia) said that Saudi women enjoyed all their rights under the Islamic sharia, including the right to own and dispose of property and to receive an education. Over 2.3 million females were enrolled in different levels of education up to the post-graduate stage and many women occupied senior positions in Saudi universities. Saudi businesswomen owned approximately 30 per cent of liquid assets deposited in banks, and were very active in the commercial and economic sectors. Saudi Arabia had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and established a plan of action to combat violence against women. Its efforts to promote the advancement of women were consistent with the principles of Islam and the objective of ensuring women's effective participation in the development of Saudi society.

27. **Mr. Limon** (Suriname) said that his Government's policy was increasingly geared to creating opportunities for women in all sectors. One of its specific actions had been to formulate an Integral Gender Action Plan based on the Beijing Platform for Action and a CARICOM programme of action, to ensure that the drafting of policy was gender-balanced and gender-equitable. In collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the Government of Suriname had undertaken several initiatives to enhance the participation of women in all sectors of society. A successful campaign had been launched to increase the number of women in policy- and decision-making positions. Although women were still relatively underrepresented in top posts, significant strides had been made. Two women were currently serving as

cabinet ministers, and a number of women were members of parliament.

28. The National Commission on Gender Legislation had been established to improve the legislative framework for the promotion and protection of women. It had submitted proposals to amend legislation that discriminated against women and had introduced new legislation to promote gender equality. Proposals to amend the Penal Code covered such areas as domestic violence, trafficking in persons and sexual harassment in the workplace, and were in accordance with both the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, which Suriname had ratified in 2001.

29. To address the feminization of poverty, Suriname had taken specific actions to improve prospects for women's employment. A joint initiative by the Foundation for Labour Mobilization and Development, a Government organization, and the National Women's Movement, a non-governmental organization, had created opportunities for women to acquire skills in non-traditional areas. Suriname also faced an increase in HIV/AIDS infections, especially among women and girls. A proposal to update the legal framework with respect to HIV/AIDS had been prepared, and in addition to the Government's efforts a number of non-governmental organizations were contributing to the fight against HIV/AIDS, with a special focus on young women.

30. **Mr. Hayassat** (Jordan) said that his Government continued its efforts to improve the status of women by amending legislation that discriminated against women, stepping up media campaigns to address negative attitudes and practices that hampered women's full participation in society, and revising educational curricula to take account of gender issues. In particular, it had amended its personal status laws, electoral laws and laws on political parties and increased women's representation in parliament and decision-making bodies at all levels. Efforts were being made to mainstream the gender perspective in all policies, programmes, plans and human resources functions in order to achieve full gender equality.

31. **Mr. Savua** (Fiji) said that women had great potential not only to improve their own living standards but also to contribute to nation-building, if

given the opportunity and the resources. Countries must not lose sight of the commitments embodied in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had been reiterated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Some countries would require resources and technical expertise to help them implement internationally agreed conventions and national plans of action.

32. Fiji was encouraged by the growing international awareness of the female dimension of migration. With remittances becoming a prominent feature of the country's economy, Fiji had an economic as well as a social stake in making sure that its women remained safe wherever they went. Much had been made of Fiji's high participation in peacekeeping missions around the world, and the effects of driving men away from their families and placing them in dangerous situations; but women made up 52 per cent of the country's emigrants and were being subjected to violence of a different and unexpected kind when working abroad. Fiji supported the call for further studies by the United Nations at the national, regional and international levels aimed at gaining a better understanding of the dynamics of women in international migration so as to protect their rights and defend their persons in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

33. In regard to the sexual and reproductive health of women, Fiji had already achieved most of the goals established by the International Conference on Population and Development and was on track to achieve its Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Still, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 20 per cent of the country's needs for family planning services were unmet. Moreover, adolescent fertility and abortion rates were high, and the incidence of sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV/AIDS, was growing. Special thanks were due to the Global Fund, UNAIDS, Australia and New Zealand, which had provided much needed technical assistance and funding to help Fiji combat the rising rate of infection. Providing reproductive health services to rural areas remained difficult, especially given that the population was spread over an archipelago and progress was impeded by cultural factors such as gender inequality, early initiation to sex, taboos relating to sexuality and the drift of the population towards urban centres.

34. Fiji remained cognizant of the special plight of women in rural areas, and welcomed the Secretary-

General's report on the issue. Fiji consisted of over 300 islands, about half of them regularly inhabited. That posed unique infrastructural challenges which bore heavily on women owing to their traditional roles and domestic responsibilities. Improving education and access to reproductive health services was essential to redressing the situation of rural women. The Ministry of Women was working to ensure equitable development for both rural and urban women and men. The functions referred to as unpaid domestic labour had to be fairly and equally compensated. National statistics rarely captured the work done by women, who were involved in all sectors of the country's economy, and accounting for that work would recognize women's tremendous contribution, which had previously been taken for granted.

35. **Mr. Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that violence against women in all its forms, including domestic violence and harmful traditional practices, was a grave violation of women's dignity and human rights. In some countries, female foeticide and infanticide continued. Violence against women often resulted from the belief that women were not human beings with rights but objects to be exploited. In that context, there was an increase in prostitution and the trafficking of women and girls. The Holy See was collaborating with all those of goodwill to give priority to social policies aimed at eliminating the causes of such violence. For example, in June 2005 the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People had organized an international meeting of pastoral care for the liberation of street women.

36. According to recent International Labour Organization statistics, women represented 60 per cent of the world's 550 million working poor. In order to reverse the feminization of poverty, more must be done to increase women's access to and control over productive resources and capital. Several Catholic organizations were helping women in Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latin America and the Caribbean to form self-managed microcredit programmes for women. Illiteracy, particularly among women in rural areas, was an obstacle to development and the attainment of women's basic human rights. The specific health-care needs of women required urgent attention, notably in the areas of HIV/AIDS, malaria, potable water and sanitation.

37. **Mr. Taranda** (Belarus) said that gender equality and the advancement of women were increasingly

mainstreamed and showcased in various strategies at the national and international level, and that progress was steady. His Government was pleased to see the United Nations agencies had taken a lead role in that area and welcomed the declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session. However, despite successes in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, there were still many problems that impeded the full attainment of women's rights, including violence and discrimination, the trafficking of women and girls, gender inequality, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the violation of women's rights, particularly their reproductive rights. Such problems could not be solved by determination alone; results-oriented decisions must be taken in order to deal with gender problems and to expand rights and opportunities for women. His Government agreed with the approaches outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/170) concerning the need for specific recommendations on further action.

38. His delegation commended the initiatives taken by United Nations agencies to draw greater attention to the worldwide problem of the trafficking of people, in particular women and girls. A form of modern-day slavery, trafficking afflicted not only developing countries, but industrialized countries as well, and required a proper response and appropriate action by the United Nations and its Members. Aware of the seriousness of the problem, Belarus was working to improve and expand education and outreach work, and to develop a network of agencies providing social services. Moreover, a national strategy was being implemented to combat trafficking and prostitution. Lastly, he proposed that all countries concerned pool their efforts and unite under the aegis of the United Nations in a global partnership against slavery and the trafficking of human beings.

39. *Ms. Tomić (Slovenia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

40. **Ms. Mladineo** (Croatia) said that her country was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. Full implementation of the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Millennium Development Goals would be pursued through Croatia's 2006-2010 national policy for the promotion of gender equality. In the past few years, Croatia had adopted several laws in that

field, including constitutional amendments that recognized the principle of gender equality. The 2003 Law on Gender Equality was based on the provisions of the Convention. The law protected women against discrimination and established a policy of equal opportunity for men and women; it had led to the appointment of the country's first Gender Equality Ombudsperson, the creation of a national Office for Gender Equality and the establishment of gender equality commissions at the local level.

41. Her Government had adopted a National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence for the period 2005-2007. Also, it had recently adopted a protocol on procedure in cases of domestic violence aimed at ensuring conditions for effective and comprehensive responses by authorities to help both the victims and the perpetrators of domestic violence and to promote non-violent conflict resolution and respect for gender equality.

42. **Ms. Thandar** (Myanmar) said that her Government was heartened to see that since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women around the world were not only more aware of their rights, but were better positioned to exercise those rights. There had been tangible progress on many fronts, but new challenges had also emerged, most of which stemmed from the age-old problem of poverty. In Myanmar, where 70 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, women played a crucial role working on farms and engaging in off-farm activities. Access to credit enabled women to initiate, sustain and increase productivity. Credit and loans schemes were offered to women running small enterprises and to casual sellers.

43. Her Government believed that the main way to alleviate poverty was to provide educational opportunities. Furthermore, women's access to reproductive health care was crucial to ensure gender equality and better lives for women, and a basic reproductive health programme had been implemented nationwide. Trafficking of people, particularly women and children, was a form of modern-day slavery, and the international community needed to fight that scourge. National non-governmental organizations had conducted extensive, nationwide prevention and support activities, such as awareness-raising among communities and their leaders, capacity-building for volunteers through educational talks on trafficking and violence against women, and support services.

44. Her delegation took exception to the fact that the Secretary-General's report on steps taken by the General Assembly and its Main Committees to promote the goal of gender equality through the gender mainstreaming strategy chose to reproduce, without any direct relevance, information concerning the human rights situation in Myanmar. Her delegation failed to see any connection between that reference to Myanmar and the main purpose of the report.

45. **Mr. Diallo** (Mali) said that the gap between men and women in his country was widening and that many women in Mali suffered from lack of food security, high maternal mortality rates, malaria, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, genital mutilation and other forms of violence. Poverty was widespread, with more than half of the population living on less than one dollar a day. Seventy-eight per cent of women in Mali lived in rural areas and played an important role in the informal sector. To encourage true women's advancement, Mali had adopted the 2002-2006 national strategy to improve health and education and eradicate poverty among women and girls, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

46. Efforts to reduce poverty and improve the lot of women were paying off. For example, school enrolment for girls had increased from 33.4 per cent in 1995-1996 to 53.6 per cent in 2005-2006. Women's participation had increased in all spheres of public decision-making. Women had greater access to microcredit, as well as free caesarean section delivery services in public hospitals. However, if Mali were to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline, much more would need to be done to reduce maternal and child mortality rates and poverty.

47. **Mr. Gill** (India) said that there was currently a wider recognition than in the past of the need for fundamental equality between women and men. Translating that realization into reality, however, remained a major challenge, particularly for developing countries, and would require a greater empowerment of women at the social, economic and political levels.

48. The Prime Minister of India had stated that no society could claim to be a part of the modern civilized world unless it treated its women on a par with its men. The Government had, accordingly, made the political, legal, educational and economic empowerment of women one of its top priorities and a key to good

governance. It had taken institutional and legal measures, including affirmative actions to strengthen women's ability to participate at all political levels. Thirty-three per cent of local government seats had been reserved for women and a national effort was now under way towards a similar reservation of seats for women in the Indian Parliament. Changes had also been made to the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Hindu Succession Act to empower women further.

49. The Government had set a target to reduce the female poverty ratio by five per cent by 2007 and by 15 per cent by 2012. The concept of self-help women's groups in India had made a significant impact in empowering women in rural areas. In India, the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women sought to promote gender equality in all governmental laws, policies and programmes. The Joint Standing Committee of the Parliament on the Empowerment of Women supported specific gender-equality legislation and monitored the application of gender-equality principles in all laws.

50. The Indian delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women, an issue that needed to be addressed with urgency. In 2005, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act had been adopted by the Indian Parliament. National efforts to eliminate the global phenomenon of trafficking in women were not enough. There needed to be greater cohesion in the international community's efforts to address the problem. The National Human Rights Commission of India, together with the relevant national agencies of multilateral bodies, was tackling the matter, and 21 of India's states had designated focal points

51. Her delegation had unreservedly endorsed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session. It had welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), but felt that the responsibility for its smooth functioning, by way of improved financial support, rested with the Member States.

52. **Mr. Hamidon Ali** (Malaysia) said that since his country's attainment of independence in 1957 Malaysian women had actively participated in and contributed towards its social and economic development. His Government's position was that

women were an important resource that could be mobilized to achieve the national development agenda. It considered that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Millennium Development Goals were inextricably linked. Their principles and goals were compatible with Malaysia's national agenda to promote women's rights and its national action plan for the advancement of women, introduced in 1997.

53. In Malaysia, changes had been made in the legal and institutional framework to protect and safeguard the rights of women and to improve their status. As the country progressed towards achieving greater gender equality, the role of the Government had been consistently supportive. Women in Malaysia had greatly benefited from the Government's poverty reduction policies and strategies and the improvements made to health and education services, basic infrastructure and access to economic resources and markets.

54. In the workplace, women had managed to break through the proverbial glass ceiling, and many held high-ranking positions in both the Government and the private sector. Recognizing that information and communications technology could contribute to the empowerment of women, the Malaysian Government had taken steps to improve women's access to such technology. More educational and training opportunities were being provided to enable women to meet the demands of the knowledge-based economy.

55. Special emphasis was being given to programmes to improve the economic well-being of women, particularly in rural areas. Measures to facilitate women's involvement in business through the provision of easy access to capital and special schemes for women entrepreneurs were among the measures taken. Health and medical care was a priority area on the national development agenda, and the average female life expectancy had continued to improve. Awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS were also being conducted. The Government had also taken measures aimed at eliminating domestic violence and other crimes against women. It urged continued international efforts to get rid of the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, which was a new form of human slavery.

56. In May 2005, Malaysia had hosted the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on the Advancement of Women, which had adopted the Putrajaya Declaration and Programme of Action on the advancement of women in Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

57. **Ms. Hill** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was fundamental to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the promotion and protection of the rights of women around the world. She welcomed the steady momentum towards universal ratification of that Convention and called on the States that had not yet done so to ratify it as a matter of the highest priority. In addition, she urged all Member States to honour the commitment made by their leaders and to ensure that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was given adequate resources to do the job required of it.

58. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security was of fundamental importance to achieving sustainable peace and development. It wished, once again, to register its unwavering commitment and support for the full and urgent implementation of that resolution.

59. Canada, Australia and New Zealand were committed to enhancing consideration of the rights of women and gender equality in United Nations forums. Far too many negotiations went over old ground even though, on many issues, the time for negotiation was over. Debate in some cases had become stale and repetitive, with no tangible benefits for women. Accordingly, States should be careful to put forward only initiatives that added value to international debate or that promoted implementation.

60. **Ms. Enkhsetseg** (Mongolia) said that throughout the world women still suffered from violence, infectious diseases, malnutrition, lack of access to education and health services and discriminatory attitudes. If the situation did not change, it would be impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015. Recognizing that the majority of the extreme poor lived in rural areas, especially in Africa and Asia, the Millennium Project had proposed rural development as one of the

seven key development clusters. A number of recommendations had been identified in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/165) on empowering rural women and her delegation intended to incorporate the relevant recommendations in the draft resolution on improving the situation of women in rural areas that would be submitted under agenda item 64.

61. Despite the progress achieved in the 1996-2002 national programme for the advancement of women, Mongolia still had a long way to go to ensure full gender equality. The Government had adopted a new 2002-2015 national programme on gender equality following national consultations involving all the major stakeholders, with a view to removing barriers to equal participation of men and women in economic and social development and promoting the family as the basic unit of society. The programme had time-bound goals and an explicit set of monitoring and evaluation indicators. Its critical areas of concern were: gender equality in family welfare and development; rural development; gender equality in decision-making; the establishment of national mechanisms; and increased participation of women in civil society. Parliament had adopted measures to strengthen gender equality in the family and to combat domestic violence. To facilitate the implementation of those measures, it had proclaimed 2004 "The year in support of the family".

62. The first national report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Mongolia had identified a number of priorities under Goal 3, including: gender-sensitive budgeting; the economic empowerment of women and prevention of gender-based discrimination in the workplace; the formulation of policies to increase women's representation in management and decision-making; and the amendment of legislation or charters of political parties to increase the proportion of women candidates running for elected office.

63. **Ms. Holguín Cuéllar** (Colombia) said that, despite significant achievements, her country still faced many challenges in promoting the advancement of women. Women had equal access to all levels of education. They had a lower rate of school dropouts and a better academic performance than men. Having entered the labour market on a large scale, they had increased their participation in decision-making bodies and occupied some of the most important posts in the public administration.

64. The Government had seven tools to bring about gender equality: reform of the education system; extension and improvement of social protection and social security; promotion of an economy based on solidarity; social management of the rural economy; social management of the public services; promotion of entrepreneurship; and improvements in the quality of urban life. The four main areas of intervention were: employment and entrepreneurial skills; political participation; violence against women; and institutional strengthening. Each of those areas included, inter alia, income-generating and training programmes, designed to enable women to have access to small loans, to market their products and to increase their political participation. National legislation guaranteed equal opportunities for women in society and the Government had created a gender issues observatory to monitor gender issues.

65. The Government considered that boosting the rural sector was a priority and was conducting a programme to guarantee equal opportunities for rural women. Its main aim was to remove the political, socio-economic and cultural obstacles that prevented rural women from participating fully in economic growth and social development and from fully exercising their rights. In support of this programme, the Ministry of Agriculture had created a fund that focused on training rural women on ways to access the available policy tools.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.