



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
Forty-fifth session

**Summary record of the 908th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 20 January 2010, at 3 p.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Gabr

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*Fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan (continued)*

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

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

*Fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan (CEDAW/C/UZB/4; CEDAW/C/UZB/Q/4 and Add.1) (continued)*

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

*Articles 7 to 9 (continued)*

2. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan), responding to questions on article 6, said that his delegation had provided the Secretariat with unofficial English translations of the articles of the Criminal Code relating to trafficking in persons and to rape, and of the law on guarantees of the activities of non-governmental non-commercial organizations. In 2009, some 4,600 persons had been victims of trafficking, around 600 of them women. Of the total number of victims, about 400 had been sexually exploited while the remainder had suffered labour exploitation. The total number of traffickers was about 1,200, of whom one third were women.

3. Uzbekistan had ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. At the regional level, it was a party to the 1993 Minsk Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family and Criminal Cases, concluded among members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It had also concluded a number of bilateral agreements on mutual legal assistance, and had worked with a number of countries on trafficking cases.

4. **Ms. Narbaeva** (Uzbekistan) said that the Women's Committee was the main body dealing with women's issues and had regional and local branches throughout the country. In addition, the *Oila* (Family) Practical Science Centre carried out research on a variety of issues relating to the family and issued practical recommendations aimed at both government bodies and civil society organizations. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated in the work of local

government through special commissions that had been set up in all *khokimiyats*. In addition, every ministry, agency and organization had a committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of State programmes for the advancement of women.

5. Although the Women's Committee did not report directly to the President, Government or Parliament, the information which it issued on a regular basis helped to shape Government policy on matters such as the implementation of the Convention, the fulfilment of national obligations relating to women under the Millennium Development Goals and State programmes on women's issues.

6. **Mr. Pirimkulov** (Uzbekistan) said that there had been a gradual increase in the number of women in the judicial, legislative and executive branches of government. About 20 per cent of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were women, and in recent years there had been a gradual increase in the number of women at the middle and senior management levels. In the past two years, two women had been appointed ambassadors.

7. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that, under the 2004 law on the funding of political parties, those parties that won enough seats to be represented in the lower house of Parliament, the Legislative Chamber, were entitled to receive funding from the State budget. The Court of Audit monitored the use of State resources by political parties, and party leaders were required to report to Parliament. His Government would look into the idea of using funding mechanisms as a means of encouraging parties to prioritize gender issues.

*Articles 10 to 14*

8. **Ms. Bailey**, referring to article 10 of the Convention, said that the Committee welcomed the State party's achievements with regard to the provision of compulsory primary and secondary education and the high overall literacy rate. However, it would like to know the literacy rate among women compared with that of men. In addition, certain sources indicated that the hidden costs of education acted as a barrier to children from families in the lower socio-economic strata and that in many cases sons were sent to school in preference to daughters, owing to the belief that male children would be the future breadwinners. The Committee would appreciate further information on

those issues and on rates of dropout, repetition and absenteeism in primary and secondary education, particularly with regard to girls. More information should also be provided about the education of girls and women in rural areas and how it was affected by the need to work during the cotton harvest season. In addition, the Committee had heard that it was difficult for refugee girls and women to access education; more information in that regard was needed.

9. The Committee was concerned about the extent to which both formal and informal education programmes reinforced patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes. She commended the efforts to eliminate stereotypes, but wished to know whether a mechanism had been put in place to monitor change in that regard, in accordance with the Committee's previous concluding comments. Such a mechanism was critical, since the report suggested that inequalities based on traditional views of gender roles persisted in areas such as vocational training and employment, with women concentrated in the education and health-care sectors. There was also greater unemployment and underemployment among women and a significant wage gap between men and women. On the subject of higher education, women had accounted for more than two thirds of students following correspondence courses in the 2005/2006 academic year and had therefore been disproportionately affected by the subsequent cancellation of such courses. The measures being taken to address those problems should be indicated.

10. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega**, referring to article 11 of the Convention, said that the report indicated that women were less likely to be hired than men because of their family responsibilities and that they could decide whether or not to exercise their rights under the Labour Code. However, the Government should be pursuing active policies to combat discrimination in the labour market and to ensure that women did not bear the entire burden of family responsibilities. She asked whether any such policies were in place, and whether any cases of employment discrimination had been brought before the courts and, if so, how many.

11. The responses to the Committee's list of issues and questions indicated that local self-government bodies such as *makhallyas* administered childcare allowances. Additional information should be provided about the functions of *makhallyas* and the extent of their influence in comparison to other State bodies

such as ministries. Lastly, she asked whether lesbians and other sexual minorities suffered discrimination in employment.

12. **Ms. Patten** asked whether there were plans to incorporate a definition of direct and indirect discrimination in employment into the Labour Code and to introduce provisions prohibiting sexual harassment and placing an obligation on employers in cases of alleged discrimination to prove the absence of intention to discriminate. It would also be interesting to know what further steps were planned in order to modify the sex-segregation of the formal labour market and to eliminate wage differences between men and women, as recommended by the Committee in its previous concluding comments, and what methods were used by the labour inspectorate to ensure compliance with the Labour Code, particularly in the private sector. The State party should indicate whether temporary special measures had been adopted with a view to increasing the number of women in management positions, as mentioned in paragraph 505 of the report.

13. Noting the efforts to promote home-based work, she asked what forms of legal and social protection were available to home-based workers and whether such workers were covered by the Labour Code. She also asked what was being done to increase the proportion of women working in the formal sector of the economy.

14. **Mr. Bruun** said that, according to alternative sources, one problem affecting the informal sector of the economy was the difficulty of obtaining residence registration in Uzbekistan, particularly in Tashkent, where large numbers of people were living and working illegally and were therefore not protected by the Labour Code. The measures in place to assist women in that situation should be indicated, and the statement in the report that women could decide for themselves whether to exercise their rights under the Labour Code should be clarified. Did it mean that a female worker could agree to forego the protection otherwise afforded by the Code? In addition, he asked whether female workers participated in trade unions and reiterated an earlier request for further information on the registration procedure for NGOs and trade unions, such as how long the procedure took and what requirements had to be met.

15. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez**, referring to article 12 of the Convention, said that, despite the positive steps taken to improve women's health, some areas of concern remained. For example, table 1 in the report showed that there were some 77,000 more boys than girls under the age of 4. She wondered whether that was because fewer girls than boys were born, because mortality was higher among girls in that age group, or because there was an explicit preference for male children. The Committee welcomed the reduction in maternal mortality but would appreciate a breakdown of the figures for urban and rural areas.

16. It would be interesting to learn why the increase in the rate of HIV infection from 2005 to 2006 was greater among women than among men and what specific programmes were in place to help women deal with the growing phenomenon of HIV/AIDS. Noting that accidents, poisonings and injury had accounted for 36.5 deaths per 100,000 population in 2006, she asked whether women were more frequently victims of that type of violent death than men.

17. Other treaty bodies had expressed concern in the past about malnutrition, particularly in rural areas. More information was needed on how that problem affected groups with specific nutritional needs, such as children, the elderly and pregnant women, and what programmes existed to address it.

18. **Ms. Rasekh** said that only general information on women's health was provided in the report. Specific laws and programmes in place to ensure that women had access to reproductive health services, including contraceptives and HIV/AIDS prevention should therefore be indicated, as well as how many national and international NGOs were working on such issues in Uzbekistan. The delegation should also clarify what specific measures were covered by the "screening of mothers and children" referred to in the report. Noting that more than 14,000 women suffered from psychiatric disorders, she asked what percentage of those cases resulted from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, violence and other causes, and what programmes and services were in place to help such women, including in rural areas. Lastly, the Committee would welcome disaggregated data on the use of contraceptives by men and women.

19. **Ms. Ara Begum**, referring to article 14 of the Convention, noted that, despite the large number of women working in the agricultural sector, only

7.2 per cent of farms were headed by women. In addition, in its previous concluding comments, the Committee had expressed concern about the low percentage of women, as compared to men, who owned land. She asked whether the special land funds referred to in the responses to the Committee's list of issues and questions had been established and whether any other steps had been taken to improve the situation. The State party should also indicate what efforts had been made to implement the principle of equal pay for equal work in the agricultural sector.

20. In rural areas, women represented only 15 per cent of people who had received microcredit in 2006. It would be useful to know whether any measures had been put in place to increase that number, so that women would have greater opportunities to start businesses, and whether any training was provided for women in that regard. Disaggregated data on the situation of women in rural areas, including older women and disabled women, should be provided. In addition, the Committee would welcome information on the quality of health services for rural women, including reproductive health services and the availability of contraceptives, and on sex education in rural schools.

21. Further information should be provided on access to education, including adult education, and on housing and transport conditions in rural areas. The State party should also indicate whether there was an integrated action plan for rural development in which women played a leading role.

22. The Committee would be interested to learn the percentage of young women among labour migrants, both within and outside the country, and what measures were in place to protect their rights. Since migration was often closely linked with trafficking, the steps taken to facilitate safe migration should be described.

23. Further information should be provided on the current status of the national platform and plan of action to improve the status of women, including rural women, which had been adopted 10 years previously. The Committee would appreciate specific examples of how the plan had helped improve the quality of life of rural women. In addition, as 2009 had been declared the Year of Rural Development in Uzbekistan, she would like to hear what specific measures had been taken to provide rural women with job placements, to reduce the wage gap and to provide training, including

for older women, in setting up microenterprises. Lastly, it would be interesting to know what legal services were provided for women victims of violence in rural areas. Were shelters available to them and, if so, how many?

24. **Ms. Zou Xiaojiao** said she was pleased to note that in 2007 young women had received 70 per cent of the microcredit issued by the country's credit unions. However, women accounted for only 30 per cent of recipients of credit from banks, while in rural areas they represented only 15 per cent of microcredit recipients. The Committee would be interested to learn the reasons for those discrepancies and whether in practice women had the same opportunities as men to obtain bank loans and microcredit.

25. Noting that more than 12,000 people were engaged in home-based work in the agricultural sector, she asked whether such workers enjoyed the same social benefits as workers in the formal sector of the economy. The Committee would also welcome further information on the situation of rural women with regard to social life, recreation and sports. Lastly, she asked what measures had been taken to alleviate poverty among rural women and to support children and women, including the elderly, who were left behind when rural men migrated to the cities or to neighbouring countries to find work.

26. **Ms. Narbaeva** (Uzbekistan) said that the literacy rate among women in Uzbekistan was the same as the rate for the population as a whole. Education was one of the Government's major priorities and accounted for more than 50 per cent of the overall State budget. Every child received 12 years of compulsory free education; Uzbekistan had therefore not only implemented the Millennium Development Goal of providing universal primary education but had also achieved universal access to secondary education. Girls and boys enjoyed equal opportunities with regard to education; girls accounted for 49 per cent of school pupils, while 41 per cent of university students were female, although in some subject areas, such as teacher-training and medicine, women outnumbered men. A comprehensive reform of the education system had been carried out over the past few years, including the renovation of thousands of schools and the opening of new vocational colleges. The final stage of reform would focus on improving lifelong learning, a goal to which the Government attached great importance.

27. There were no differences between urban and rural areas with regard to education provision. All the new institutions that had been established provided the same education irrespective of their location.

28. The problem of children dropping out of school did not exist in Uzbekistan. However, sometimes children failed to attend school for short periods for a variety of reasons, such as illness or because the family had moved to a different area. Every school had a parents' committee which monitored such absences.

29. As a result of the education reform, correspondence courses at higher education institutions had been abolished. All courses now required attendance at an institution.

30. **Mr. Pirimkulov** (Uzbekistan) said that refugees in Uzbekistan enjoyed full access to education and health care and were not subject to any restrictions as to their place of residence. Over the past seven or eight years, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had granted refugee status to some 2,000 people in Uzbekistan, mainly Afghans, of whom 1,600 had since been resettled in third countries. According to statistics from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), there were currently fewer than 400 refugees, or about 150 refugee families, in Uzbekistan. Up to three quarters of them would be resettled in third countries in 2010.

31. **Ms. Marufova** (Uzbekistan) said that the Women's Committee conducted vocational training programmes and activities to help women develop leadership qualities. Since 2005, a special programme had been in place to provide the chairs of local and regional women's committees with training at the Academy for the Development of the State and Society, and seminars were held to give them an opportunity to share their experiences. The Women's Committee had also set up a "club for women leaders" with more than 800 members, who held seminars on such matters as social and political activities and the development of leadership skills.

32. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that there was no segregation of girls and boys in education; the entire system was coeducational. It was also aimed at eliminating social stereotypes, including those relating to gender, and ensuring that all students developed an awareness of human rights, freedoms and obligations. Courses on human rights had been in place in all

educational institutions since 1997, and more recently courses on the rights of the child had been introduced. In addition, all law enforcement officials were provided with training on the Convention. In recent years, Uzbekistan had been at the forefront of efforts to draft an international declaration on human rights education and had also carried out a number of activities in connection with the International Year of Human Rights Learning in 2009.

33. **Mr. Kanyazov** (Uzbekistan) said that there were more than 5,000 NGOs in Uzbekistan, of which 43 carried out activities in other countries as well as Uzbekistan. There were also 45 offices or branches of foreign NGOs. The percentage of women in NGOs was higher than that of men. Women were also well represented in trade unions: they accounted for more than 3 million of a total of 6.5 million members and occupied more than 40 per cent of leadership positions. Trade unions made active efforts to prevent discrimination and to ensure the protection of women's rights.

34. Uzbek NGOs were actively involved in international cooperation. For example, one women's NGO based in Samarkand had established a partnership with a women's NGO in the United Kingdom. The two organizations had carried out a number of joint projects, including a women's cultural and business forum in London in 2009.

35. In order to register a non-governmental organization, applicants had to provide the relevant authorities with the necessary documentation, including the statutes of the future organization and the document setting out the decision to establish it, and pay the required fee. The registration process took two months. The list of allowable grounds for rejecting an application was clearly established by law: for example, an application could be rejected if the organization's activities were likely to lead to infringements of citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms, if they advocated war or social or racial hatred, or if they would be detrimental to people's health. The fact that an organization planned to work on sensitive issues was not, under the law, sufficient grounds for rejection.

36. **Ms. Narbaeva** (Uzbekistan) said that her Government attached great importance to social policies aimed at increasing the population's prosperity. Assistance was provided to the most

vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and the disabled, and special emphasis was placed on job creation. Under the Government's regional employment programmes, 40 per cent of projected new jobs were set aside for women. Women were employed in many sectors besides those regarded as their traditional domain; for example, they represented 42 per cent of people working in industry, 51 per cent in agriculture and forestry, 45 per cent in the finance sector, 17 per cent in transport and communications and almost 13 per cent in the construction industry. Unemployed women were entitled to unemployment benefits and were also provided with various types of training in order to help them find new jobs. Of the 290,000 women who had been seeking jobs in 2009, 250,000 had found work.

37. In the past few years, measures had been taken pursuant to two presidential decrees to encourage the expansion of home-based work. Home-based workers enjoyed all the social benefits provided for in the Labour Code, and companies that employed them were exempted from property tax.

38. Microfinance was available to women through Mikrokreditbank, a special bank which provided mostly small loans to women to start their own businesses, and through the country's 49 credit unions. In recent years, the number of female entrepreneurs had increased, particularly in rural areas, and 90 per cent of the credit unions themselves were headed by women. Lastly, according to surveys that had been conducted over the past few years, the number of women expressing satisfaction with their work had increased from 68 per cent in 2005 to 84 per cent in 2008.

39. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan), referring to the subject of child labour, said that Uzbekistan had ratified International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. A national plan of action for the implementation of both conventions had been adopted, and the relevant legislation had been amended to criminalize any employment of children that did not conform to their provisions. In total, Uzbekistan had ratified 13 ILO conventions, including those pertaining to equal employment rights for men and women, and their provisions had been fully incorporated into the

Labour Code. At the end of 2009, Parliament had approved the Government's national employment plan.

40. With regard to the *makhallyas*, it was regrettable that there were so many negative and inaccurate perceptions of their role in Uzbek society. They were a centuries-old democratic institution and were the organs of self-government closest to the grass roots. Since the country had become independent, a number of functions of the State had been transferred to them, and they were now responsible for dealing with most day-to-day issues relating to the family.

41. Lastly, with regard to the situation of rural women, he referred Committee members to the information provided by his Government to the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 62/136, entitled "Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas", and 62/206, entitled "Women in development".

42. **Ms. Narbaeva** (Uzbekistan) said that the Government had approved a strategy for improving living standards, particularly in rural areas, for the period 2007 to 2011. As a result, the poverty level had fallen from 28 per cent in 2005 to 22 per cent. The national health programme also placed special emphasis on the rural population. In 2008, the Government had introduced measures to improve reproductive health care, particularly for women and adolescents, including measures to prevent children from being born with congenital or hereditary conditions, the development of ongoing training for medical personnel and the provision of better equipment for obstetrics and paediatric centres. Yearly health checks had been introduced for the 7 million women of childbearing age in Uzbekistan and had led to a reduction in the incidence of extragenital diseases.

43. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that life expectancy had risen to 74 years as a result of the Government's health programmes.

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

44. **Ms. Awori** said that, according to alternative sources, arranged marriages were common in Uzbekistan and early marriages were particularly common in rural areas. In addition, the minimum marriage age for women was 17 and could even be lowered to 16 in some circumstances, while the marriage age for men was 18. She welcomed the efforts being made to amend the law in order to equalize the

marriage age for women and men and requested further information on the status of that legislation and the practical steps that were being taken to ensure that it was enacted. She asked whether traditional and religious marriages were recognized by law and, if not, what steps were being taken for their regulation and registration. The Committee would also welcome further details on the definition of polygamy under Uzbek law.

45. Alternative sources indicated that matrimonial disputes had to be referred in the first instance to the *makhallyas*, and that the courts did not accept divorce petitions unless they were accompanied by the minutes of the *makhallya* reconciliation committee. The same sources suggested that the *makhallyas* followed strict traditional rules and often, in effect, punished women for not respecting patriarchal attitudes and for not behaving in the way traditionally expected of women. Such discrimination was a clear breach of the Convention. She would like to know how many women were successful in obtaining divorces and what steps were being taken to bring about equality between men and women in cases of dissolution of marriage.

46. **Ms. Hayashi** said that, according to alternative information, many refugee women were not in a position to exercise their rights because they did not have a valid passport or visa. The Committee would appreciate further information in that regard, in particular whether refugee women could file for divorce in the Uzbek courts without the aforementioned documents or their marriage certificate. In addition, alternative sources indicated that an exit visa was required in order to leave the country, and that if a woman was married she needed the permission of her in-laws in order to apply for such a visa. It might therefore be difficult for a woman to leave the country if she wished to escape an abusive husband or to study or seek employment abroad. The rationale for that system should be clarified.

47. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she was concerned about the quasi-judicial powers given to the *makhallyas* in family disputes. Such systems for informal dispute resolution tended to disadvantage the weaker party, usually the woman. It would be useful to know whether there was a mechanism to safeguard against abuse of power in that context and whether appeals could be lodged against *makhallya* decisions. Was specific training provided for those in the

*makhallyas* responsible for mediating disputes and for dealing with domestic violence cases?

48. The definition of polygamy in Uzbek legislation did not conform to the requirements set out in the Committee's general recommendation No. 21. A marriage could be polygamous regardless of whether or not all the spouses lived under the same roof; polygamy in any form violated the rights of women and should be abolished. She urged the State party to reconsider the need to expand the definition of polygamy to cover all forms of multiple marriage.

49. The Committee was pleased to note that women in unregistered religious marriages were entitled to benefits for their children, but it would appreciate further information on the rights, including property rights, of women in such marriages who did not have children. More information on the property rights of women in formal registered marriages should also be provided. In particular, where property accumulated by a couple was registered in the name of other family members, could the woman nonetheless claim her rightful share?

50. **Mr. Kanyazov** (Uzbekistan) said that marriage was a contract entered into voluntarily by both parties and that men and women had equal rights in marriage. A marriage was recognized by the law only if the necessary legal documents were registered with the relevant authorities. Therefore, a marriage entered into only by means of a religious ceremony was not legally recognized. Both spouses had equal rights to own, use and dispose of property acquired jointly not only during the marriage but also before it, unless the individual marriage contract provided otherwise. Those rights applied even if one spouse, usually the wife, had not had her own income during the marriage. The law also protected the rights of children in that regard.

51. Polygamy was an offence under the Criminal Code and was characterized by cohabitation of a man with two or more women on the basis of a common household. The wives could live either in one home or in various places. The important point was that each woman's household, separately or together, constituted a single whole with the husband's household. If a man cohabited with a woman or several women but did not maintain a common household, there was no polygamy. There was also no polygamy in cases where a person who had not dissolved a marriage ceased to have marital relations and entered a new marriage. However,

if a man who was in a new marriage continued to cohabit with both women on the basis of a common household, the actions of the perpetrator constituted polygamy. In 2008, 16 cases of polygamy had been brought before the courts.

52. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that there had been a steady decrease in the number of girls under 18 getting married, partly owing to the introduction of the compulsory 12 years of education. In 2009 such marriages had accounted for less than 3 per cent of the total. Nonetheless, the Government was drafting an amendment to the Family Code to equalize the marriage age for men and women and would be submitting it to Parliament in the near future.

53. The *makhallyas* were not quasi-judicial bodies but organs of local self-government. Any woman seeking a divorce could bypass the *makhallya* and apply to the courts.

54. **Ms. Patten** requested a response to her previous question on amendments to the Labour Code.

55. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that her concerns about polygamy remained: the law should be amended to cover cases in which a man did not keep a single household with several women but nonetheless had more than one wife. In addition, whatever the precise status of the *makhallyas*, it seemed that they did indeed have a role in reconciliation and mediation of family disputes, and special training should be provided for those involved in such activities.

56. **Ms. Hayashi** said that, in response to a question she had asked at the previous meeting, the delegation had provided some general information on prison conditions for women detainees. However, she would welcome specific information on the case of Umida Akhmedova, a female photographer whose work had led to her being charged with defamation of the Uzbek people.

57. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that the Labour Code complied with all 13 ILO conventions ratified by Uzbekistan. It also contained a general definition of discrimination but was not the appropriate place for a comprehensive definition covering all types of discrimination.

58. He agreed that the law on polygamy should be reviewed in the light of general recommendation No. 21. With regard to the *makhallyas*, newly elected leaders were given special training in various areas of



their work. Lastly, the case against the photographer mentioned by Ms. Hayashi had been suspended.

59. In concluding, he said that the constructive dialogue between the Committee and his delegation would contribute to his Government's continued efforts to implement the Convention. The forthcoming concluding observations would be translated into Uzbek and widely disseminated, and a plan of action would be developed in order to implement the Committee's recommendations with the participation of both State and non-governmental organizations. The concerns expressed by the Committee about a number of laws would be conveyed to Parliament with a view to making appropriate amendments. His Government was committed to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and would be holding events to mark its fifteenth anniversary in 2010. It also supported the Committee's efforts to draft general recommendations on older women and protection of their human rights and on the economic consequences of marriage and its dissolution, and fully endorsed the initiatives for the protection of women's rights outlined by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

60. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee welcomed the efforts made by the Government of Uzbekistan to improve the situation of women and hoped that those efforts would continue. In particular, she encouraged the Government to ratify the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention and to broaden the mandate of the Women's Committee so that it could protect the rights of women more effectively. The Government should also increase its cooperation with civil society and NGOs and allow them to play a greater role in advocacy for women. Lastly, the Committee hoped that greater efforts would be made to combat gender stereotypes in Uzbek society; it looked forward to hearing about progress in that regard when the State party submitted its next report.

*The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.*