



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

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

Summary record of the 1022nd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 15 February 2012, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Pimentel

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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

*Combined initial and second to fifth periodic reports of Grenada
(CEDAW/C/GRD/1-5; CEDAW/C/GRD/Q/1-5 and Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the representative of Grenada took a place at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada), introducing his country's combined initial and second to fifth periodic reports, said that, while there had been a very long delay between Grenada's ratification of the Convention in 1990 and its submission of its reports, his country was committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. In fact, the combined reports, which covered the period from 1990 to 2007, showed steady progress in many areas. He invited the Committee to reflect on how reporting procedures could be adapted to make it easier for small, resource-constrained States parties to submit their reports on time.
3. The Government had recently adopted several laws designed to enable it to meet its commitments under article 2 of the Convention, including a strengthened version of the Domestic Violence Act and a statute on domestic violence and sexual assault. Legislation on spousal and child maintenance and on sexual harassment and amendments to the Criminal Code provisions on sexual offences were under consideration.
4. With regard to women in leadership positions, it was to be noted that a majority of the country's judges were women, while 18 per cent of Members of Parliament and 20 per cent of Cabinet members were women. Women were also well represented in public service leadership positions. The Division of Gender and Family Affairs of the Ministry of Social Development, which served as the national machinery for the advancement of women, was using participatory, data-driven techniques and funding from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to develop a national gender equality policy and action plan whose objectives included achieving gender equality, eradicating gender-based violence, strengthening families and empowering women. The policy would guide the formulation of gender-sensitive initiatives that incorporated a rights-based approach to human development.
5. In connection with article 11, the Committee should be advised that the recently revised Minimum Wage Order had lifted the income levels of all workers above the poverty line, with a substantial increase in pay for domestic workers. The minimum monthly wage for care providers for the elderly had been set at EC\$ 700, and differences between the wages of male and female agricultural workers had been eliminated. With respect to article 12, it was noteworthy that in 2011 the World Health Organization had listed Grenada as being among the three countries with the lowest maternal mortality rate in the world.
6. Turning to the issue of violence against women, he said that intense efforts to combat the problem were under way with the support of a project funded by the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In addition to various training activities, public education programmes would be conducted to boost primary prevention and to reduce the stigmatization of victims as well as tolerance for violence against women in society at large. Psychosocial services provided by the State and by civil society partners for victims and perpetrators would be enhanced, and data collection would be improved. A national strategic action plan to end gender-based violence was being prepared.
7. Constraints and challenges in the effort to eradicate violence against women included inadequate budgetary allocations, adverse social and cultural norms and a lack of

coordination among stakeholders. The Government planned to take advantage of the efforts required to comply with its obligations under the Convention as an opportunity to educate the public about women's issues and secure donor support for needed changes.

Articles 1 and 2

8. **Ms. Šimonović** said that it was advisable for States parties to inform the Committee in advance of any financial or logistical difficulties they had in preparing and presenting their reports, as the Committee would then have time to look into the possibility of providing help. She asked whether the report had been submitted to the Cabinet or Parliament and, if it had not, whether it would be submitted subsequently, along with the Committee's concluding observations. She also asked whether steps were being taken to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

9. According to information provided to the Committee, the State party was conducting a constitutional review. The Committee would welcome further information about the process and particularly about the Constitution's applicability to the private sphere since, according to the report, the Constitution did not provide for the private sector to be held accountable to it. Information would also be appreciated on the implementation of international treaties, including the Convention, since, again according to the report, such treaties were not directly applicable in the State party.

10. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that remote transmission technology such as webcasting might be an option for presenting reports to the Committee. A summary of the reports had been presented to the Cabinet; he did not think that it had been presented to Parliament but would confirm that later. According to the Ministry of Social Development, the issue of the Optional Protocol was being considered, and further steps could be expected soon. The constitutional review had been widely discussed in society, but he believed that few concrete steps had yet been taken.

Article 3

11. **Ms. Gabr** said that the State party would need ample resources if it were to achieve its ambitious goals for implementing the Convention. Further information would be welcome on the national gender machinery's role, mandate and funding. She asked what body was responsible for assessing the national gender equality policy and action plan.

Article 4

12. **Ms. Awori** said that the State party's hesitation to use affirmative action was contrary to article 4 of the Convention, which mandated the adoption of temporary special measures to bring about de facto equality. Grenada should not rely solely on cultural change to reach that objective. Additional information on the national gender equality policy and action plan would be appreciated. Regarding the constitutional review process, she asked for comment on assertions by alternate sources that NGO input on affirmative action proposals and on women's empowerment had not been well received by the Government-appointed consultant. Information on the types of provisions on human rights, gender equality and temporary special measures that might be included in a new Constitution would be of interest.

13. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the Division of Gender and Family Affairs of the Ministry of Social Development was a small unit, but a great deal was being done to build it up, and the Committee's advice on the matter would be appreciated. Most plans, including the national gender equality policy and action plan, had a timeline of from three to five years, and the Committee would be given a copy of the road map for that plan. The Committee would also receive a document identifying its focus areas, programmatic

objectives and related strategic actions. The idea of “hesitation” was not tantamount to saying “no” to affirmative action: the road to equality was a two-track process which relied not only on cultural change but also on modifications to legislation, policies and programmes. The Constitution of Grenada already guaranteed the protection of all human rights, and therefore the review process would seek only to enhance those rights. The review process was in its early stages, and feedback received during the present dialogue with the Committee would inform it.

Article 5

14. **Ms. Šimonović** asked if the Convention and general recommendation No. 19 were an integral part of programmes dealing with violence against women. Additional information would be appreciated on the number of shelters for women, the helpline for victims of domestic violence, the issuance of protection orders and the types of violence prohibited by domestic violence laws. Could the representative confirm that work continued on the preparation of amendments to the Criminal Code, including one that would criminalize marital rape and redefine rape?

15. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the Government was intent on implementing the five-year national strategic action plan to end gender-based violence. The helpline was up and running, but more needed to be done to expand its coverage. Data collection was inherently problematic for small island States like Grenada that faced challenges such as limited capacity, sociocultural taboos around reporting crime, and a lack of disaggregated data. He lacked specific information on how gender issues and elements of the Convention would be incorporated into the changes to be made in the Criminal Code, but that area of endeavour was embedded in key focus No. 5 of the national strategic plan.

Article 6

16. **Ms. Jahan** said that, though trafficking in persons did not yet appear to be a widespread problem in Grenada, the country could quickly evolve into both a source and transit country. There were reports of internal trafficking of girls for forced prostitution, and the tendency of young women to emigrate in search of employment could make them more vulnerable to recruitment into prostitution. The Committee would appreciate specific data on that matter. She asked what legislation or mechanisms were in place to combat trafficking; how the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, was being implemented in terms of prevention, prosecution, penalties and victim protection; and what measures were being taken to prevent and punish perpetrators of trafficking in the absence of comprehensive legislation. Given that there were still no laws on sex tourism, despite the sector’s fast growth, what precautionary steps were being taken to ensure that women did not fall victim to that industry? She wondered what measures the State party was considering to address the acknowledged challenges of poverty, high unemployment and reluctance to report violence, all of which were impeding efforts to eradicate the exploitation of prostitution. Since amendments to the Criminal Code would punish both procurers and sex workers and would be likely to send them underground and therefore make it difficult to monitor women’s health, she would like to know what protective mechanisms were in place and if there were any specific plans to create alternative sources of employment for women.

17. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada), quoting paragraphs 188, 190 and 202 of the Criminal Code, confirmed that the procurement of females for prostitution was a punishable offence and that a guardian could be appointed for girls under the age of 16 who had been forced into prostitution. The national strategic action plan to end gender-based violence included a public relations component aimed at changing behaviours and attitudes and promoting job-creating initiatives. The Grenada Rural Enterprise Project, funded by the International Fund

for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and currently in its second phase, had been launched in 2004–2005 with the main objective of increasing the number of rural women in employment. There was no system in place to monitor the involvement of emigrants in prostitution, and the Committee's advice on that subject would be greatly appreciated. Grenada was a small country that relied heavily on tourism and had therefore been especially hard-hit by the global recession, but it would persevere in confronting its challenges in that regard.

18. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega** said that she wished to know what percentage of the reports of sexual offences had led to convictions and how many individuals had been arrested on charges of sexual harassment. She requested confirmation that same-sex relationships were a punishable criminal offence and recalled that plans were by no means binding in the way that laws were.

19. **Ms. Jahan** asked whether Grenada was considering comprehensive legislation on trafficking pursuant to its ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. She was concerned by reports that women's NGOs were not being heard as part of the constitutional review process and that they were not being consulted about the design of the national gender equality policy and action plan.

20. **Ms. Awori** asked whether it was correct that sexual offences not reported to the police by the victims or their representatives within three months could not be prosecuted. If that was the case, an urgent review was needed, as there should be no statute of limitations for such crimes.

21. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that he would endeavour to obtain statistics on the number of convictions handed down in cases of violence against women, as well as clarification regarding the statute of limitations for sexual offences. It was true that same-sex intimacy remained illegal under the Criminal Code. Although the issue was to be debated in Parliament, it was unclear whether there was sufficient political will for legislative change in that respect. No comprehensive plan for combating human trafficking was currently envisaged, as many of the relevant issues were already addressed in the sections of the national strategic plan dealing with gender equality and gender-based violence. However, a renewed impetus within the Division of Gender and Family Affairs and the Government's decision to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography placed the possibility firmly on the agenda.

22. It was his belief that the involvement of the highly proactive, preponderantly women-driven NGO sector in the constitutional review process should preclude any possibility of male centrism and should ensure inclusive consultations in which women's views were given due weight. The Division of Gender and Family Affairs would also be instrumental in driving change in the State sector and wider society.

Articles 7 to 8

23. **Ms. Schulz** said that, while levels of female representation in the civil service were commendable, fluctuations in the number of female parliamentarians and the reduction in female representation relative to the previous session of Parliament were a regrettable trend. In the Ambassador's introductory statement, those fluctuations had been attributed to the fact that the composition of Parliament was determined by party political structures and the democratic election process. While not disputing that statement, she wished to highlight the value of legislation as a tool for equality and, on that basis, to suggest that the State party might consider introducing gender parity provisions into its Constitution or electoral law. Civil service legislation might also be reviewed to ensure that the current very positive

situation was not reversed. Temporary special measures could also be effective in stabilizing and increasing female representation and were therefore also worth considering. Experience had shown that the likelihood of gender issues being addressed in a way compatible with the Convention increased in direct proportion to the number of female parliamentarians.

24. She would also like to know what the Government's position was on the use of quotas and other targeted measures to enhance female representation in the private sector, in political party and trade union leadership positions and on boards and other statutory bodies. Although such bodies were not part of the State apparatus, the Government had the power to employ legislative reforms, quotas and other measures to guarantee women an equal chance of accessing high-level positions in those areas.

25. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the level of female representation in Parliament reflected the democratic process, and his Government had not considered using legislation to increase it, although it was recognized that women added value to decision-making and that the decline in the number of female parliamentarians was regrettable. He would be sure to convey the Committee's suggestions to his Government. He also wished to highlight the fact that women in Grenada had made significant advances without any specific legislative framework for promoting equality and that there were no social, economic or political constraints on what they could achieve in education, employment or any other area. Furthermore, non-legislative initiatives such as the Programme for Adolescent Mothers were also effective in giving women opportunities to move up the social and economic ladder. In addition, increased minimum wages in female-dominated sectors such as tourism were helping to reduce the risk of economic deprivation.

Article 9

26. **Ms. Gabr** said that she had noticed an anomaly in the State party's naturalization provisions. According to paragraph 12 of the responses to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/GRD/Q/1-5/Add.1), those provisions made no distinction between men and women, yet it also stated that the citizenship application form for Commonwealth citizens asked for detailed information on the father but not on the mother. Since that provision could be discriminatory for single mothers who wished to pass their nationality on to their children, she would appreciate an explanation and assurances that the form would be revised.

27. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that he would bring the anomaly to the relevant authorities' attention.

Articles 10 to 14

28. **Ms. Arocha Dominquez** said that she welcomed the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the State party, but regretted the report's late submission and the absence of Government representatives involved in policy development and implementation and of female representatives, in particular. That situation should not recur.

29. Although there were no apparent obstacles to girls' education, she had some concerns about the quality of that education. Paragraph 134 of the report (CEDAW/C/GRD/1-5) indicated that, while girls tended to outnumber boys in the early years of education, the gender balance shifted at the onset of puberty, that is, when children reached the age of 11. Since sexual relationships and early pregnancies were likely to be factors in that shift, she wondered whether the primary school curriculum included adequate sex education content to enable young girls to make informed decisions and choices.

30. She also perceived a lack of political will within the Ministry of Education to ensure that pregnant teenagers and young mothers returned to mainstream education and were not excluded from subsequent opportunities. While paragraph 138 of the report referred to the development of a specific policy for such women's continuing education that was to be submitted to the Cabinet for approval, the lack of further details suggested that the consultation process had stalled. Additionally, in its concluding observations to Grenada's second periodic report (CRC/C/GRD/CO/2), the Committee on the Rights of Child had noted with concern that pregnant teenage girls were often requested to leave school and that their return to school was left to the discretion of school principals. Since that observation was at odds with information given in paragraph 144 of the report under consideration, which indicated that expulsion on the grounds of pregnancy was prohibited under the Education Act, she would appreciate clarification. Whatever the legal situation, the fact was that pregnant teenagers often dropped out of school, even if they did so voluntarily, and action was needed to redress that situation.

31. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the rate of school dropouts due to pregnancy was recognized to be a major problem. School principals' discretion to prevent girls from returning to school was a reflection of sociocultural attitudes and an admitted slowness in devising an appropriate policy response. However, the consultation process was ongoing, and he would seek an update.

32. **Ms. Awori** said that the many inequalities that women faced in employment, which included disproportionately high unemployment, lower average pay and gender segregation, were of great concern in a country where almost 50 per cent of households were headed by women. Those inequalities were exacerbated by a legislative lacuna that permitted disparities, such as the different hourly rates paid to women and men in the agricultural sector. Information about any Government initiatives or legislative reforms to address those disparities and bring the employment situation in Grenada into line with the Convention and the relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions was therefore needed. Temporary special measures would be an effective tool, in her view, and she would like to know the State party's position regarding the possibility of their adoption. Lastly, she sought an update on progress towards adoption of the new legislation on sexual offences.

33. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the Government had revised the minimum wage regulations in 2011 to address gender disparities and that the new provisions had taken effect in January 2012. As a result, wages in the female-dominated domestic service and care sectors were significantly higher. Measures to address many of the remaining issues were included in the gender equality component of the national strategic plan.

34. He had been informed that the bills dealing with sexual offences were being discussed by the Legal Affairs Department and the Ministry of Social Development at that time and would be submitted to the Cabinet and Parliament upon conclusion of those discussions.

35. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that, while the women's health indicators provided in the report were generally very positive, there were no statistics on abortions, particularly abortions performed in unsafe conditions, or any indication as to whether they were a factor in maternal death. She wondered whether such deaths might be recorded under other headings. More generally, it appeared that Grenada faced particular challenges in relation to the health of young women. Although HIV/AIDS infection rates were generally low, they were disproportionately high among women aged between 15 and 24. Restricted access to contraception, principally because persons under the age of 17 had to obtain parental consent before being given contraceptives, was likely to be a factor in that situation, especially when combined with deficiencies in sex education programmes. Since those same issues probably contributed to the relatively high numbers of teenage pregnancies and

young single mothers, a specific strategy for addressing the needs of women in that age bracket appeared to be needed. She would also welcome clarification as to whether married women required their husband's consent for tubal ligations or hysterectomies.

36. Information about the State party's mental health policy would also be appreciated. She was particularly interested to know whether research had been conducted into the possible links between psychiatric problems and child sex abuse and gender-based violence and, if so, whether the findings had led to any specific initiatives.

37. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that statistics on abortion and any related deaths were not readily available, as the procedure was not generally performed in official health-care facilities. However, his Government recognized the need for awareness-raising initiatives and research in that area. Research on the links between economic and social exclusion and early pregnancy and other health issues, including HIV/AIDS, was called for, as was action in that connection. Many of the areas of concern highlighted by Committee members were being addressed through the national strategic plan, which encompassed a broad spectrum of policies, practices and programmes, including education and training programmes to improve employability, initiatives for addressing gender segregation, measures to promote good parenting strategies and policies for improving family life.

38. AIDS awareness-raising and prevention programmes were the responsibility of the National AIDS Directorate of the Ministry of Health, which already had a very active public relations programme targeting young people.

39. **Ms. Bailey**, returning to the issues of labour segregation and unequal pay, said that she wished to posit that the source of the problem lay in the education system and the gender-segregated curriculum, which was attributed in the report to the persistence of traditional gender stereotypes. In its responses to the list of issues, the State party had acknowledged the lack of any specific programme or policy for addressing the ideological and structural barriers that prevented both boys and girls from entering non-traditional areas. She would suggest that the Ministry of Education should address that lack as a matter of urgency. She had been concerned to read that, while not the first criterion, political patronage was likely to influence the award of scholarships. She would welcome the delegation's comments on that situation, since it could open the door to sexual discrimination.

40. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that he did not have information on unsafe abortions readily available, but would try to obtain such statistics if they existed. Because such abortions were performed under illicit circumstances, it was difficult to collect reliable data. The cycle of teenage pregnancy, single-parent families and poverty, in which young rural women and girls, in particular, were often caught up, was indeed a challenge. The national gender equality policy and action plan did address the issue, as it was aimed at strengthening families and empowering women through skills development. It was also designed to encourage girls and young women to pursue non-traditional trades in such industries as construction and to promote equal employment opportunities in various fields.

41. Turning to the issue of HIV/AIDS, he said that the National AIDS Directorate, a Government agency, had an active public relations programme. Sex education had not yet been introduced into the school curriculum, however.

42. **Ms. Bailey** said that unequal career opportunities in areas such as construction work stemmed from stereotyped concepts in the educational system. While girls were not discouraged from studying technical subjects, nor were they encouraged to do so. She would like to know what steps the Ministry of Education was taking to overcome ideological barriers to the pursuance of non-traditional careers.

43. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega**, noting that maternity leave was granted to women who were employed for more than 18 months by the same employer, asked whether agricultural workers were eligible for maternity leave and whether special measures should not be implemented for the many women who did not qualify for it, including those working in the informal sector. Clarification was needed on the length of service required for receiving a pension and the measures in place for women who had not fulfilled the requirement.

44. **Mr. Bruun** asked whether Grenada had plans to ratify the important ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

45. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** asked whether the Government had plans to introduce sex education in schools and said that contraception should be available to girls under 18 without parental consent.

46. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that although progress had been made in encouraging girls to study non-traditional subjects, more needed to be done. He did not have specific data on the number of girls engaged in non-traditional areas of study. Nevertheless, school curricula were currently under review, and his Government was making every effort to eliminate stereotypes. It must be pointed out that the hurricanes that had struck Grenada had put a tremendous strain on resources, and some schools were still awaiting renovation. If girls did not enjoy equal educational opportunities, it was not owing to a lack of political will or, indeed, will on the part of society, for the citizens of Grenada acknowledged the important role played by girls. With respect to the influence of political patronage on scholarships, attempts had been made to depoliticize the selection process by transferring the selection panel from the Cabinet to the Ministry of Education. He was grateful that the question had been asked as to whether gender played any role in the process and would raise the issue with the relevant authorities. As to the question about contraception, condoms were widely sold in pharmacies and many other shops, and a major free condom initiative was being sponsored by the European Union. Lastly, he would look into whether ILO Convention No. 189 had been ratified.

47. **Ms. Zou Xiaojiao** asked whether persons working in the informal sector were covered by the national insurance scheme. It would be useful to have gender-disaggregated data on insurance coverage. She would appreciate further information on the terms and conditions applying to bank loans and whether there were differences between those terms for men and women.

48. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the national insurance scheme was mandatory and covered all workers. All employees were required to register for the scheme and all employers to pay into it. He did not have data on total coverage, however. In recent years, the media had reported widely on various aspects of the scheme, and employees were encouraged to know the law and their rights. His Government had also undertaken a review of the country's social security programmes with support from the World Bank in order to make them more effective and coherent. He would provide the Committee with information on the outcome of the review. The criteria for extending loans were gender-neutral. However, the financial sector was largely driven by private companies, which left open the possibility of gender bias, and there was currently no legislation to encourage the establishment of women's credit institutions, for example.

49. **Ms. Zou Xiaojiao** asked what measures had been taken to increase women's awareness about their rights and the Convention. The report referred to a poverty assessment report completed in 1999, which stated that 52 per cent of poor households were headed by women and 57 per cent of poor women who headed households were unemployed. She would like to know whether any progress had been made since then and whether Government poverty reduction efforts incorporated a gender perspective.

Commending the gender-disaggregated data on land ownership provided by the State party, she asked how women generally acquired property.

50. **Mr. Fletcher** (Grenada) said that the majority of the country's population lived in rural areas, and rural women, in particular, faced many economic challenges. Issuance of the Minimum Wage Order was among the important actions taken to address poverty and ensure equal pay for equal work among men and women in rural areas. The Government sought to promote the development of the entire family unit by increasing women's employment and eliminating all forms of discrimination. As for the question of landownership, women acquired land by purchasing or inheriting it or entering into lease-purchase agreements. He would transmit to the Committee further information on the measures, strategies and research concerning progress made on gender issues and the implementation of the Convention, in particular, since the submission of the present report.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.