



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2462nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 10 August 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Crickley

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

**Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties
under article 9 of the Convention** *(continued)*

*Combined eighteenth to twenty-second periodic reports of Lebanon
(CERD/C/LBN/18-22 and CERD/C/LBN/Q/18-22)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Lebanon took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Assaker** (Lebanon) said that over the past 10 years Lebanon had witnessed unprecedented events that continued to adversely affect the country on a daily basis. The situation since 2004 had been one of economic, social and political instability and volatile security, characterized by political assassinations, deep divisions and the paralysis of the country's institutions. With regard to the regional situation and the war in the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon had found itself as a front-line host for Syrian refugees fleeing their country. Such immense numbers could not be accommodated by a continent, as had been seen in Europe, let alone by a small country such as Lebanon, which had only 4 million citizens and one of the highest population densities in the world. The hosting of 1.6 million Syrian refugees was exerting economic and social pressure on the country and could have a long-term impact on its delicately balanced multi-confessional society. In addition to those issues, terrorist organizations established in the Syrian Arab Republic now had bases near the border with Lebanon, compelling the Government to use all available resources to counter them.
3. The country was also confronted with other long-standing challenges, such as the recurrent aggression and occupation by Israel of parts of Lebanese territory, which had resulted in the destruction of infrastructure and the displacement of thousands of people and had required the State to undertake enormous efforts in order to find solutions. Lebanon was still suffering the consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict and was hosting more than half a million Palestinian refugees in refugee camps. The situation had drained the State's capacity to reinforce stability and was undermining its efforts to fulfil its obligations to its citizens and provide them with a decent standard of living. Furthermore, the country was experiencing increasing levels of unemployment and the migration abroad of its youth.
4. Despite of the various issues that Lebanon was facing, it endeavoured to cooperate constructively with international organizations, meet its obligations and implement the international agreements that it had ratified. It had submitted a significant number of reports on the situation of human rights and other relevant issues, including a national report under the universal periodic review and a periodic report for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Government had also collaborated with international delegations and independent experts which had visited Lebanon, such as the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, and had addressed the resulting reports and recommendations with a high level of responsibility and transparency.
5. Turning to the periodic report (CERD/C/LBN/18-22), she wished to highlight that the Lebanese Constitution guaranteed equality among all citizens in terms of their rights and obligations and it provided for their democratic freedoms. It also guaranteed absolute religious freedom and, in its preamble, underscored the commitment of the Government to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Based on those founding principles, Lebanon had adopted a number of legislative texts on combating discrimination and achieving equality and it had amended other relevant laws, including the act concerning punishment of the crime of trafficking in persons and the act on the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence. Significant progress had been made regarding the

proposed law on the establishment of a national human rights institution, which was to be adopted by the Parliament before entering into force. The National Human Rights Plan for the most vulnerable groups in society, developed by the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, was also pending discussion and adoption by the Parliament.

6. The Lebanese Government had also been working on the three main pillars discussed with the Committee in 2004, namely Palestinian refugees, foreign domestic workers and the pluralistic, multi-confessional system. Regarding Palestinian refugees, the steps taken included the creation of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, which had carried out significant work on issues such as education and employment and had played a constructive role in improving Lebanese-Palestinian relations and implementing the Government's policy on Palestinian refugees. The return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland, which was underscored in the preamble to the Constitution, remained an important target given the delicately balanced composition of the Lebanese population and the fact that Lebanon was barely able to accommodate its own citizens. Ensuring adequate living conditions and access to education and health care for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was not a responsibility that the Lebanese Government should have to shoulder alone. It was also part of the duties of the international community in the form of the services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other United Nations agencies. She hoped that such agencies would be provided with the human, financial and technical resources necessary for them to continue to aid the Palestinian refugees and that the humanitarian crises in the region would not lead to any reduction in their support.

7. Regarding foreign domestic workers, the Minister of Labour had established the National Committee on the Situation of Foreign Domestic Workers, which was tasked with preparing and implementing projects to support and protect domestic workers in cooperation with international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The pluralistic, multi-confessional system, which integrated 18 confessions in a balanced manner and guaranteed equal rights, was a source of richness for the country which aimed to ensure continuous cultural interaction and dialogue. While the system might be difficult to understand and some might think that it could lead to discrimination among Lebanese citizens, it was considered by many as a potential model solution for the re-establishment of stability and security in multicultural States.

8. **Mr. Kemal** (Country Rapporteur) said that he understood from the State party's periodic report that equality among citizens was defined in general terms so as to cover all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, or religion, but the fact remained that those prohibited grounds for discrimination were not clearly defined in the Constitution itself. That ambiguity could be removed by enacting a more specific definition of equality into law. In order to offer better protection to the Lebanese people and to facilitate the implementation of its policy of ending discrimination, the State party should consider adopting a law defining racial discrimination or, better yet, a comprehensive law prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, religion (including different sects), nationality, gender, skin colour, disability or refugee status and that satisfied the requirements of all the United Nations international human rights instruments to which it was a party.

9. When considering the fourteenth to sixteenth and seventeenth periodic reports of Lebanon (CERD/C/383/Add.2 and CERD/C/383/Add.2 (Suppl.)), the Committee had judged the provisions of articles 317 and 318 of the Criminal Code to respond, for the most part, to the requirements of article 4 of the Convention, and it had invited the State party to consider instituting a general aggravating circumstance for elements of racial bias in criminal offences to enable judges to award heavier penalties for offences with such a bias. Since 2004, the Committee's interpretation of article 4 had become more precise, especially

in view of the adoption of its general recommendation No. 35 on combating racist hate speech. A further examination of the aforementioned articles of the Criminal Code had revealed a number of lacunae. He regretted the absence of a legal provision punishing the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority, acts of violence or threat thereof against any racial group and the provision of assistance to racist activities. He asked whether the Criminal Code explicitly prohibited organizations promoting racial discrimination. The delegation should also provide concrete examples of the practical application of the Criminal Code's provisions as they related to the reporting, prosecution and punishment of racist acts.

10. The Committee had received reports that politicians and the media played a significant role in disseminating hate speech against foreign nationals and refugees living in Lebanon and that, at times, the Government failed to take action. He asked how the State party prevented and punished hate speech, including indirect forms of the phenomenon. The Committee had also received information to the effect that some segments of Lebanese society resented the presence of Syrian refugees on account of the increased pressure that they placed on the country's public services. He asked whether politicians had publicly defended Syrian refugees and called upon the Lebanese population to be patient until the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic had come to an end.

11. In as much as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had already drawn attention to the continuing discrimination against women in respect of the right to transmit Lebanese nationality, which was transmitted exclusively on a patrilineal basis, he took note of the State party's view that the provisions of Decision No. 15 of 19 January 1925, which regulated the acquisition of Lebanese nationality, were not inconsistent with article 1 (3) of the Convention as they applied to all foreign nationals and did not discriminate against any particular nationality. The Committee considered the issue to fall within its purview on account of the intersectionality between gender-based and racial discrimination. There was also a need to ensure that children born in Lebanon to parents who were foreign nationals were issued with a birth certificate.

12. Recalling the origins of and the requirements imposed by the State party's system of political confessionalism and the provisions of the Taif Agreement of 1989 relating to the distribution of seats in the Parliament, he noted with concern that the Parliament remained in a state of deadlock as it had failed to elect a President. Although the Committee had previously requested the State party to specify when the system of political confessionalism would be completely phased out, as required in the preamble to the Constitution, and had recommended that the State party should take appropriate measures towards its gradual elimination in its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/64/CO/3), he found the State party's observation that the denominational political system was perceived as one of the mainstays of coexistence among the Lebanese people to be cogent and persuasive. In view of the fact that Lebanon had endured repeated foreign military interventions, massive influxes of refugees from neighbouring States and a destructive civil war and that some 76,000 persons remained displaced within the country, he recommended caution in requesting the State party to disrupt the status quo.

13. Although the process of setting up an independent national human rights institution that complied with the Paris Principles had begun in earnest, progress remained slow. He asked when the institution would become fully operational. He also wished to know why the post of the Mediator of the Republic, created by Law No. 664 of 4 February 2005, had still not been filled. He invited the delegation to explain the apparent contradiction between the Code of Civil Procedure, which guaranteed the right of all persons to litigate and did not discriminate between Lebanese nationals and foreigners, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, which required non-Lebanese plaintiffs to provide a surety. He would also like to know whether progress had been made in achieving the five basic objectives of the

national strategy for development and whether the programmes to educate students about the need to reject all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of extremism had yielded positive results.

14. He had been alarmed to learn that, following a number of clashes and security incidents involving local residents, foreign workers and refugees in some areas of the country, a number of municipalities had engaged in certain types of unlawful action, such as imposing curfews on foreign nationals, especially Syrian refugees. Given that such action could only be taken by the supreme military authority and in exceptional circumstances, such as a declared state of emergency, he was forced to conclude that the municipal authorities in question had taken the law into their own hands. He asked what measures the State party planned to take to ensure that the rule of law was respected throughout the national territory.

15. It would also be useful to know whether the State party planned to accept the recommendations contained in the November 2015 concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5), which called upon it to review and revise the artist visa scheme to ensure that it was not misused for the sexual exploitation of women, to take appropriate steps to decrease the demand for prostitution and to amend article 523 of the Criminal Code to ensure that victims of trafficking were not prosecuted.

16. Another serious cause for concern was the situation of the Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, in particular the discrimination that they faced in accessing employment, housing, health care and education. The State party was to be commended for having granted Palestinians the right to work and for having opened up some 70 previously off-limits professions to them. However, Palestinians born in Lebanon were still denied the right to own and inherit property. He understood the sensitivity surrounding the issue but said that extending that right to them in the interim would not preclude them from permanently settling elsewhere in the future. Furthermore, unlike Lebanese children, Palestinian children were not entitled to free education, even if they had been born in Lebanon. He asked whether the State party could consider changing its policy in that regard.

17. The State party deserved high praise for its open-border and reception policy towards refugees from the State of Palestine, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. At present, Lebanon was hosting some 2 million refugees and had the highest per capita population of refugees in the world. The country was to be commended on its sustained efforts to guarantee their protection. The Committee understood that the large number of refugees in Lebanon continued to place the country's infrastructure and limited resources under considerable strain and that that had led to the emergence of various social, health-related and economic problems. With the United Nations-led humanitarian response so grossly underfunded, fewer Syrian refugees were receiving assistance and the assistance being provided to them fell well below the subsistence level. The rights of refugees and asylum seekers located on Lebanese territory should be fully respected. They should not be detained or deported solely on the ground of unlawful entry and stay, in keeping with articles 2 and 5 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 on discrimination against non-citizens. He asked whether the State party had indeed imposed restrictions on visas for new arrivals and recalled the need to protect the rights of domestic workers and to punish abusive employers and intermediaries. Lastly, Lebanon could not be expected to bear the expense of caring for some 2 million Syrian, Iraqi and Palestinian refugees without substantial assistance from the international community, which also had an obligation to help create the conditions that would allow the safe return of the refugees to their homes.

18. **Mr. Kut** said that the State party was indeed to be commended on its open-border policy during a critical period of upheaval in the Middle East and on shouldering a burden

that was incommensurate with the resources and capabilities of a single State. Referring to the Committee's follow-up procedure whereby the Committee could request a State party to provide information on the steps taken to act upon the recommendations contained in its concluding observations within one year of their adoption, he noted that the Committee's previous concluding observations on Lebanon (CERD/C/64/CO/3) predated its decision to include a specific paragraph on its follow-up procedure in its concluding observations, and that was why no request for a follow-up report had been sent to the State party.

19. Inasmuch as the State party's common core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.27/Rev.1) dated back to 1996, he urged the State party to begin the process of updating it to reflect the urgent situation in the country and to provide the Committee with the information necessary to contextualize its next periodic report.

20. **Mr. Amir** said that Lebanon was to be commended on having submitted its periodic report in the extremely challenging context that had arisen as a consequence of, inter alia, foreign occupation, war and the fact that it was, at present, hosting an ever-growing population of refugees and migrants. Few other States would be able or willing to shoulder such a burden. It was high time for the international community to pay more attention to Lebanon and to the serious problems with which it was grappling. In particular, those Mediterranean countries that, after having received only a few thousand refugees, had felt the need to renegotiate the conditions under which they received refugees should give serious thought to how they could better assist States such as Lebanon that were bearing the brunt of what was a global refugee crisis. Lebanon itself had arguably suffered discrimination at the hands of the members of the international community that had left it to shoulder such a burden alone. It was important for Committee members to take account of the current situation in Lebanon when evaluating its efforts to fulfil its obligations under the Convention.

21. **Mr. Avtonomov**, highlighting the importance of the ratification of the proposed amendment to article 8 of the Convention to the Committee's work, said that, while the amendment was connected with financing, it had more to do with the procedures for funding the Committee and would not result in increased contributions from member States. He asked whether the State party intended to make the optional declaration under article 14 of the Convention on the competence of the Committee to receive individual communications.

22. While Lebanon had adopted some legislation on migrant labour, it had not yet ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Did it intend to do so, given that convention's significance in the light of the large numbers of migrant workers in the country?

23. He expressed concern at the procedure for acquiring Lebanese nationality, which appeared to be almost impossible to obtain under current legislation. That posed a problem because of the growing number of foreign nationals living in Lebanon; in fact, there was an entire new generation of non-nationals who had been born in the country, such as Palestinian refugees and the children of stateless parents. Furthermore, many Lebanese women were married to non-nationals, who had no entitlement to nationality.

24. **Ms. Dah** said that the periodic report, although short, was well written, balanced and clear. She understood that the State party did not have the means to collect information on Lebanese nationals living abroad, but acknowledged their much-appreciated and active contribution to their destination countries and the support they could provide in the reconstruction of Lebanon.

25. Echoing the request for an updated core document to be submitted before the next review, she wondered why the voting age was still set at 21, and not 18 as in most countries nowadays.

26. She wished to know why Lebanese women were still not entitled to transmit their nationality to their children and non-Lebanese husbands. The granting of temporary discretionary residence for three years did not resolve the problem; it could in fact even lead to additional problems.

27. Although there had been significant improvements in the situation of domestic workers since the previous periodic report, including the implementation of almost all of the Committee's concluding observations, efforts needed to continue. Ratification of ILO Convention No. 189 would ensure further progress in that area by helping to ensure that domestic workers had access to the justice system.

28. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** asked if, in the absence of an updated core document, the State party could provide additional information on levels of economic growth and other relevant information to help the Committee understand the current situation in Lebanon and the challenges it faced.

29. Noting the measures taken to combat racial discrimination, including in the area of criminal legislation, he would appreciate receiving data on racial discrimination perpetrated via the Internet. Did existing criminal legislation comply with article 4 of the Convention and provide for reversal of the burden of proof in matters of racial discrimination?

30. He asked the delegation to provide further information on the scale of the problem of human trafficking in the country and data on cases, prosecutions and convictions. What was the scope and impact of measures taken to address the problem? Similarly, what was the situation concerning hate crimes in Lebanon?

31. **Ms. Shepherd**, noting that the judiciary had ruled that the practice of seizing the passports of foreign domestic workers was illegal and that the passports were being returned directly to the domestic workers concerned, asked whether the rate of return was commensurate with the rate of violation by employers.

32. She said that she welcomed the establishment of a national committee on the situation of foreign domestic workers. As domestic workers came from a variety of countries with different languages, she wished to know who translated the terms and conditions of their employment contracts for them. She commended the attempts made to create a model employment contract, but asked whether it contained penalties for employers who failed to honour their obligations vis-à-vis domestic workers. What was the level of compliance or non-compliance with contract terms and conditions? She asked whether complaints against employers were documented, what they related to and whether they were similar to the complaints filed by trafficked workers. She also asked what recourse was available to domestic workers when a contract was breached and what opportunities existed for them to remain in the country after their contracts expired, to change their occupation or to avail themselves of upward mobility. She requested information on the kind of work undertaken by foreign domestic workers and statistics on the percentage of males versus females.

33. She would appreciate receiving disaggregated data on unemployment and illiteracy rates in Lebanon.

34. **Mr. Calí Tzay** asked why the Parliament had not yet approved the draft law on the establishment of a national human rights institution submitted in 2012, and whether, once created, the institution would be in line with the Paris Principles.

35. He said that he was concerned that many refugees often found themselves in an irregular situation and lived in constant fear, often too afraid to approach the police or the immigration authorities to regularize their situation. Lebanon had not established a procedure to simplify the regularization of refugees, and the situation had been exacerbated by the fact that displacement often resulted in refugees losing their residency permits. Non-

governmental organizations had reported that female-headed refugee households were in a particularly vulnerable situation and were often victims of abuse, which created more fear and a reluctance to report cases of abuse and discrimination.

36. It had been reported that 70 per cent of Syrian refugee workers in Lebanon were employed in agriculture and domestic work and that legislation adopted recently prohibited Syrians from working in occupations other than agriculture, cleaning and construction. Inasmuch as such legislation was discriminatory because many people had skills that would enable them to work in other occupations, he wondered what steps were being taken to amend the discriminatory legislation.

37. **Ms. Mohamed**, noting that the periodic report referred to a bilateral agreement for the employment of domestic workers concluded between Lebanon and Egypt, asked whether it was standard practice to enter into such agreements with countries that were sources of domestic labour and, if so, with which other countries Lebanon had concluded them. She further enquired whether the agreement addressed ill-treatment and abuse and what the authorities did to monitor the activities of agencies that sent representatives overseas to recruit foreign workers; she had been concerned to learn that not all Lebanese employment agencies respected the relevant rules and regulations.

38. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** asked when the denominational system had first been established: was it a product of the conflict of the 1970s or did it predate the civil war? He said that, like Mr. Kemal, he believed that the system should be maintained, as the religious diversity and interdenominational coexistence it underpinned was commendable. However, since the lack of legal provision for civil marriage meant that, when persons of different faiths wished to marry, one of the spouses was obliged to change religions or the couple was forced to marry abroad, he asked whether the State party was considering remedying that situation by introducing a unified civil code. The State party was to be commended for having adopted a raft of measures to protect migrants, especially migrant children, and improve the situation of women, including bold measures to eradicate honour crimes and to introduce equal criminal responsibility for men and women who had engaged in adulterous relationships. He wished to highlight, however, that in western countries adultery was not a criminal offence.

39. **Ms. Hohoueto**, commending the State party's phoenix-like resilience and its unstinting commitment to finding solutions to the many problems thrown in its path, said that she was nonetheless concerned that its denominational system of legislation and governance could be an impediment to equality. She would like to know what was being done to advance elimination of that system and ensure that all Lebanese citizens were subject to the same statutes irrespective of their faith. She also had some concerns about the situation of domestic workers, despite the State party's efforts to enhance the conditions of their employment, which had included the establishment of a special court to deal with problems that might arise. She wondered, for example, how domestic workers could submit a complaint when they were often not allowed to leave their employer's home even for a short period of time. Statistics attesting to the number of complaints filed, investigations undertaken, prosecutions brought and the penalties and convictions, if any, handed down would be appreciated.

40. **The Chair** asked whether the State party had considered the possibility of having labour inspectors visit foreign domestic workers' place of employment to monitor the conditions in which they worked. Would such a system, which was already used in other countries, be feasible in Lebanon?

41. **Ms. Li Yanduan**, commending the State party's generosity in hosting such large numbers of refugees and noting that the efforts required to address the refugee challenge went far beyond the capacity of the Lebanese authorities alone, asked what assistance was

being provided by international organizations, civil society and other States. She would particularly like to know what part NGOs played in addressing the challenges; what working relationship had been established between them and the Government; and what assessment the delegation would make of their contribution to meeting the ongoing challenges.

42. **Mr. Bossuyt**, adding his voice to the expressions of support and admiration for the State party's resilience, said that he would appreciate an update on the current status of the memorandums of understanding on the employment of domestic workers that, according to the report, were being negotiated with Ethiopia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and the Sudan. He would also welcome the delegation's comments on the State party's continued requirement that foreign nationals deposit a litigation bond when filing a complaint before the courts, as well as on the extremely light 15-day prison sentence that had apparently been handed down in a recent case of torture. An explanation as to how the statement that Lebanon was a secular State squared with the multi-denominational nature of its society would likewise be useful. Lastly, he encouraged the State party to amend its legislation so that women had the right to pass on their nationality to their children and, referring to paragraph 63 of the periodic report concerning the admission of non-Lebanese children to public schools, urged it to continue to do all that it could to ensure that refugee children were not deprived of their rights.

The meeting was suspended at 5.25 p.m. and resumed at 5.35 p.m.

43. **Mr. Karam** (Lebanon), responding to Mr. Kemal's observation that the concept of discrimination was not clearly defined in Lebanese law, said he wished to clarify that the preamble of the Constitution clearly stipulated that, as a founding and active member of the United Nations, Lebanon abided by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that, pursuant to article 2 of its Code of Civil Procedure, the provisions of international treaties took precedence over those of national law. Thus, the definitions of discrimination contained in United Nations human rights treaties were firmly enshrined in Lebanese law.

44. **Ms. El-Kjatib** (Lebanon), responding to concerns raised in relation to the lack of provision for civil marriage, said that freedom of belief and the right to practise any religion or no religion at all were enshrined in article 9 of the Constitution. The judiciary took an active role in protecting that freedom and had issued numerous rulings that upheld the related constitutional principles. For example, in a ruling issued in September 2012, it had adopted a broad definition of freedom of belief that recognized an individual's right not to have any belief, while, in a ruling issued in 2014, it had recognized people's right to change their name should they consider it to be too closely tied to a specific religion. Furthermore, in 2008 the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities had responded positively to the requests of numerous citizens to have their religion removed from the civil registry and, in 2009, it had issued a circular reaffirming the right of every citizen to decline to register a religion in the civil registry.

45. That manifest respect for freedom of religion had inevitably led to controversy in relation to the issue of civil marriage. Even though a civil marriage contracted by Lebanese nationals abroad was recognized without obstacle, the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities had refused to register a civil marriage between two nationals who had had their religion removed from the civil registry and had contracted marriage before a notary public in Lebanon. The Ministry of Justice had subsequently issued an advisory opinion confirming the right of all citizens to contract marriage before a notary and to have their marriage registered.

46. **Ms. Assaker** (Lebanon) said that, after visiting Lebanon last year, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief had described Lebanon as a model in the field of religious protection.

47. **Mr. Karam** (Lebanon) said that he wished to clarify that the Constitution established no rules or restrictions on the holding of public office by individuals of any particular denomination. The current system of political denominationalism was the result of the post-civil war Taif Agreement, which stipulated that, on a temporary basis, representation of the country's different religious communities among holders of public office should reflect the demographics of the population as a whole. The Taif Agreement also provided for the formation of a committee to oversee the abolition of political sectarianism and establish a road map for ending the current temporary situation and ensuring that, even under customary law, there was no discrimination in public office.

48. With regard to the issue of mixed marriages, he wished to draw attention to the associated inheritance problems, which meant that the children of a marriage between a Christian and Muslim, for example, would be denied an inheritance. Dismantling the current system would have far-reaching ramifications and would take time; it was thus not surprising that past attempts to reform personal status law and establish a unified civil law had failed. However, although the most recent draft formulated had yet to be revived, it was hoped that the issue would eventually be resolved.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.