



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Sixty-fourth session**

Summary record of the 1421st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 18 July 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Hayashi

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Combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Trinidad and Tobago

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

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

*Combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Trinidad and Tobago
(CEDAW/C/TTO/4-7; CEDAW/C/TTO/Q/4-7 and Add.1)*

1. **The Chair** said that, at the invitation of the Committee, the members of the delegation would be speaking via video link from Port of Spain.
2. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, despite uncertain economic times caused by falling energy prices, gender-related issues remained a priority and were the subject of inter-agency cooperation and collaboration with NGOs. A gender affairs portfolio had been set up under the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Government was finalizing a national policy on gender and development. Although the adoption of that policy had been delayed, the revised draft had been submitted to Cabinet in early 2016. In the interim, efforts had been focused on building the legislative and institutional framework to support gender equality. While some laws that discriminated against women remained in force, the country had made tremendous strides in repealing discriminatory statutes.
3. The law on domestic violence had been reviewed in 2014-2015, leading to recommendations on substantive amendments and how to enforce the law more effectively. In addition, the Central Registry on Domestic Violence had been launched in April 2016 with a view to carrying out more targeted interventions. There were no State-run shelters for victims of domestic violence at present, but the Government was planning to set up three, along with a service and training centre to support the shelters. The National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence had been developed with the support of UN-Women and outlined actions to be rolled out over five years with the aim of fostering a zero-tolerance culture and providing redress to victims. It should be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration in the near future, and a plan to raise awareness of its content was being designed with technical assistance from the Pan American Health Organization.
4. Child marriage was a matter of concern, and the Government had initiated public consultations in June 2016 with a view to harmonizing the age of marriage across all relevant statutes with the age of sexual consent. The consensus achieved thus far was that the age of marriage should be raised to 18 for both girls and boys, and a bill was expected to be submitted to Parliament shortly.

Articles 1 and 2

5. **Ms. Pimentel** asked whether an inventory of discriminatory laws had been conducted; what steps had been taken to amend or repeal them; and what the expected time frame was for completion. She also asked what had been done to introduce a definition of discrimination into national law that encompassed both direct and indirect discrimination; whether the Convention had ever been invoked before the courts; and whether the failure to do so might be the result of a lack of awareness. Lastly, she asked how effective the Police Complaints Authority was, given its patent lack of independence; and whether the State party intended to make the institutional changes to the Ombudsman's Office needed to bring it into line with the Paris Principles.
6. **Ms. Bailey** said that, although she understood the circumstances, she was disappointed that the members of the delegation had been unable to attend the dialogue in person. She invited the delegation to comment on the fact that the draft national policy on gender and development had yet to be formally adopted but appeared to be partially implemented and to indicate whether the contentious issues responsible for the delay in its

adoption had been resolved and whether provision had been made for its evaluation and monitoring.

7. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the annual legislative agenda took into account issues of relevance to women. The draft national policy was before the Cabinet but there was no time frame for its adoption. The delay could be explained in part by the need to conduct consultations on additional issues that had not been included in the previous version of the policy, such as the definition of gender, the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons, and sexual and reproductive rights, in particular abortion. There was a plan for the implementation of the policy which had a built-in monitoring and evaluation component and a focus on improving data collection.

8. **Mr. Rampersad** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the rights under the Convention were covered in a number of laws, including those on domestic violence, child abuse and human trafficking, on the basis of which actions could be brought before the courts. There were various mechanisms responsible for protecting human rights, including the Equal Opportunity Commission, the Police Complaints Authority and the Ombudsman's Office, each with its own specific mandate. The establishment of a national human rights institution compliant with the Paris Principles was nonetheless under consideration.

9. **Ms. Bailey** said that further information was needed on the review of discriminatory laws, the introduction of a definition of discrimination into domestic law, and the partial implementation of the policy on gender and development.

10. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) replied that, although the policy was still before the Cabinet, some elements, such as gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, were already being rolled out. The legislative agenda was published yearly on the Government's website and its areas of priority focus evolved along with the national context.

11. **Ms. Pargass** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, while domestic law did not contain a definition of discrimination in line with the Convention, gender discrimination was prohibited under the Constitution and the Equal Opportunity Act provided for redress in case of gender discrimination. Only two discriminatory statutes remained, namely the Industrial Relations Act and the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions Act. The Government had recently stated that the former should be amended to cover domestic workers, but she did not have information on the time frame for doing so.

12. **Ms. Nwankwo**, noting that numerous agencies were involved in gender equality issues, asked which institution had ultimate overall responsibility. She wished to know how the draft national policy on gender and development could provide the framework for a gender-management system when it had not been formerly adopted; which of the bodies envisaged in the policy had already been established; which would be established once the policy had been adopted; what the mandate of each body would be; how those bodies would be coordinated; and how budgetary resources would be shared between them. She also asked how many persons had been trained in gender-related initiatives and what monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were in place to measure the impact of that training.

13. It was unclear whether the budget for gender-related activities mentioned in the periodic report (CEDAW/C/TTO/4-7) referred to the budget of the Gender Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister only, or to the total financial resources allocated to all agencies involved in such activities. Assuming the latter, she wished to know what percentage of the overall budget was allocated to the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and what percentage went to the Gender Affairs Division.

14. She would welcome the delegation's comments on the extent to which the loss of a fully fledged ministry of gender and the transfer of the gender affairs portfolio to the Office

of the Prime Minister had had a negative impact. She wondered whether the State party specifically addressed issues relating to men and masculinity, as the report suggested. Lastly, she asked whether a timeline had been set for resolving the problems encountered during the pilot phase of the gender-responsive budgeting programme and assessing its effectiveness, including, in particular, its impact on social security, reproductive health and adult literacy.

15. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that the use of temporary special measures in the State party, which had been a source of concern to the Committee in the past, had not been addressed in detail in either the periodic report or the replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/TTO/Q/4-7/Add.1), and that there seemed to be a lack of understanding about the nature of such measures. Certainly, the measures adopted by the State party to accelerate equality did not appear to comply with the definition established by the Committee. She wondered whether the State party had studied the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on article 4 of the Convention, and whether thought had been given to the specific areas in which temporary special measures might be used to benefit specific vulnerable groups.

16. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the Gender Affairs Division was responsible for all gender-related matters, including the application of relevant treaty provisions. It had been possible to roll out certain elements of the national policy on gender and development prior to its formal adoption because of the structure of the supporting implementation framework.

17. **Ms. Johnson** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, although the national policy had not yet been adopted, a gender management framework involving several ministries and departments had been established, along with a structured system for involving NGOs in decision-making. Consultations had been organized to consider the possibility of establishing a national gender equality commission and the resultant proposals would be submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

18. **Ms. Jack-Martin** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that a number of programmes had been established to address stereotypes. Some, such as the "Defining Masculinity" Excellence Programme, under which training and support had been provided to more than 2,000 individuals, had been specifically designed to help men cope with changing gender roles.

19. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the transfer of the gender affairs portfolio to the Office of the Prime Minister had not affected service provision or policy. She was not aware of any temporary special measures currently in place in the country and no specific areas had been identified as requiring such measures.

20. **Ms. Johnson** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that while the Gender Affairs Division took the lead in gender-related matters in many areas, it recognized that some aspects should be led by specific ministries or NGOs. Prior to its adoption, the national policy on gender and development would be implemented by gender focal points appointed within each ministry. Once the policy had been adopted, a national committee would be established to advise the Government on gender equality and oversee the policy's implementation. All ministries involved in gender issues would contribute to policy development.

21. **Mr. Barry** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the content of training programmes was monitored, as were programme recipients. Indicators were being established to track the level of the programmes' implementation across all ministries and thus determine their impact.

22. **Ms. Bailey** said that further clarification was needed regarding the composition of the State party's gender machinery. Since it appeared that the division responsible for gender affairs was also responsible for child affairs and that its full title was the Gender and Child Affairs Division, she wondered whether there were two divisional directors responsible for gender affairs and children's affairs respectively. She would also like to know whether there were gender focal points responsible for gender mainstreaming in all government ministries; if so, whether those focal points came together to form an interministerial gender committee, as was the practice in many other countries; and, if that was the case, whether that was the committee that Ms. Johnson had indicated would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of gender policy.

23. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) confirmed that the Gender and Child Affairs Division had two directors, one responsible for gender affairs and the other responsible for children's affairs.

24. **Ms. Johnson** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the interministerial committee she had referred to earlier would be responsible for ensuring that national gender policy was implemented across the board. The gender focal points, which were currently being trained in the implementation of the policy, represented another layer of accountability for gender issues within ministries and ministerial departments.

25. **Ms. Pimentel** said that the fact that the State party had responded to the Committee's recommendation that it should adopt urgent measures to combat traditional stereotypes by asserting that women in Trinidad and Tobago had always been economically active and were currently enjoying relatively high rates of participation in the public sphere suggested that it had misunderstood the intended aim of the Committee's comments. Furthermore, the veracity of the assertions could be challenged. Although the Gender Affairs Division ran masculinity programmes to help men to cope with their changing roles and responsibilities, the Government appeared to have no clear policy to modify social and cultural behaviour patterns while its national gender policy remained in draft form. She would therefore appreciate information on the timeline for implementing behaviour change initiatives and clarification as to how that change would occur in the light of apparent resistance from the authorities. She would also like information on the expected and actual outcomes of the "Defining Masculinity" Excellence Programme and the "Gender on Your Agenda: You've Got Male" series of television programmes.

26. The fact that the institution of marriage was regulated by four marriage acts, namely the Marriage Act, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, the Hindu Marriage Act and the Orisa Marriage Act, which provided that girls could marry at the ages of 12, 14 and 16 years respectively, served to legitimize child marriage. She recalled that the Committee's general recommendation No. 21 on equality in marriage and family relations provided that the minimum age for marriage should be 18 years for both men and women. Noting that the Gender and Child Affairs Division was well aware of the risks posed by child marriage, she said that it would be helpful to receive information on the obstacles preventing the State party from taking further measures to eradicate that phenomenon.

27. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that the State party was to be commended on the progress that it had made in combating violence against women, for example, by establishing the Central Registry on Domestic Violence, compiling an investigative and procedural manual on domestic violence for police officers, and strengthening the national domestic violence hotline. However, despite its robust legislative framework for combating the phenomenon, Trinidad and Tobago still had one of the highest rates of domestic and sexual violence in the Caribbean region. The Committee considered that situation to be chiefly attributable to inadequate enforcement of the laws making up that framework. She would therefore appreciate confirmation that the Central Registry on Domestic Violence, launched in March 2016, was now fully operational and had started the task of collecting sex-disaggregated

data on gender-based violence from the different regions of the country. She further enquired whether the State party had established a timeline for amending the Sexual Offences Act as needed to create a national registry of sex offenders.

28. The Committee was concerned that, despite being equipped with the new investigative and procedural manual on domestic violence, many police officers still viewed domestic violence as a private affair and were reluctant to intervene. She would therefore like to know what action the State party was taking to change attitudes towards domestic violence within the police force and ensure that police officers understood their obligations towards victims. Noting that the training dispensed to police officers was gender-neutral, she asked whether the State party planned to make the changes necessary to ensure that training was gender-specific, given that women and girls were disproportionately affected by domestic and gender-based violence. She also wished to know whether knowledge of the manner in which cases of domestic violence should be handled was a subject addressed in the examinations of police training academies and a prerequisite for retention and promotion.

29. Noting with interest that 16 per cent of the 30,000 calls made to the national domestic violence hotline each year were placed by men experiencing gender-based violence and abuse, she asked whether the perpetrators of that violence and abuse were exclusively female and what forms of gender-based violence and abuse were reported most frequently by those men.

30. She would also like to know whether there was a timeline for acting upon the recommendations arising from the review of the Domestic Violence Act, which had been initiated in an effort to eliminate the difficulties experienced by women in obtaining protection orders. She enquired as to why, when protection orders were violated, arrests were made in only 50 per cent of cases. Lastly, she asked what special measures the State party had adopted, or planned to adopt, to curb the extremely high rate of femicide attributable to domestic violence.

31. **Ms. Jack-Martin** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the Central Registry on Domestic Violence was a pilot project but was now fully operational and was collecting and compiling data from seven State agencies. That data included demographic information on victims, their family history, case notes and details of any referrals made. There were also plans to collect data on cases of domestic violence from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development and the police service. The Central Registry was overseen by a Cabinet-appointed committee comprising representatives of the police service and the Central Statistical Office.

32. **Ms. Pargass** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, although the Sexual Offences Act provided the relevant framework, it would not be possible to establish a national registry of sex offenders until the necessary regulations had been adopted. Work on drafting those regulations should begin in the near future.

33. **Ms. Johnson** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the Gender and Child Affairs Division had recently undertaken a review of existing legislation and programmes on gender-based violence and was in the process of finalizing an action plan to address the priorities identified, which included changing the behaviour and attitudes of police officers and justice officials towards victims, improving the training dispensed to them, and enhancing the delivery of services to both victims and perpetrators.

34. **Ms. Pimentel** asked whether the State party had considered launching a sustained, large-scale awareness-raising campaign, using the media and information and communication technology, to combat gender stereotypes in all spheres of society. She drew the delegation's attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice, which could provide useful guidance for that purpose.

35. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, for the most part, men called the national domestic violence hotline to report emotional and psychological abuse perpetrated by a female. The Government, with the assistance of civil society organizations, was engaged in a rigorous, ongoing awareness-raising campaign to combat gender stereotypes in all spheres of life and was making use of video-sharing and social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, as well as mobile applications such as WhatsApp, in that endeavour. It was aware that, in order to engineer a permanent change in mindset, its awareness-raising efforts must be sustained. It had also undertaken specific awareness-raising initiatives targeting boys and men and rural dwellers.

36. The Government remained committed to ending early marriage and the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs had organized several public consultations to address the issues, which would soon be placed on the legislative agenda.

37. **Ms. Gbedemah** asked whether there was a timeline for drafting the regulations needed to set up the national registry of sex offenders. She recalled that, even though legislation on domestic and gender-based violence was often couched in gender-neutral terms, it was critical for the training dispensed to police officers to be gender-specific, given that violence of that kind had a clear gender dimension. She drew the delegation's attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, which could provide relevant guidance.

38. **Ms. Bailey**, noting that there appeared to be a consensus on the need to amend the different marriage acts in order to raise and harmonize the minimum age for marriage, asked whether the different religious organizations concerned had expressed support for such an initiative. Without their support, no action could be taken. There was also a need to amend the Children's Act since, although the Act set the minimum age of consent for sexual relations at 18 years, it included marriage as one of the exceptional circumstances in which that age could be lowered.

39. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) confirmed that the country's organizations for Hindu, Muslim and Christian women had all expressed their support for the amendment of the different marriage acts.

40. **Ms. Pargass** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the issue of early marriage had been the subject of in-depth debate when the legislature had been considering the bill that had ultimately become the Children's Act. However, at that time, there had been no general societal consensus on raising or harmonizing the varying minimum age for marriage established in the different marriage acts. The Parliament had therefore had little alternative but to permit the derogation mentioned by Ms. Bailey. Once the relevant policy decision had been taken, however, work would commence on drafting a bill that raised the minimum age for marriage to 18 years, harmonized the age across the different marriage acts and removed the aforementioned exceptional circumstance from the Children's Act.

41. **Mr. Rampersad** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that there was no specific timeline for drafting the regulations needed to set up the national registry of sex offenders. Although the training dispensed to police officers was gender-neutral, trainers impressed upon officers the need to take account of the specific needs of women and girls and the fact that they were disproportionately affected by domestic violence. Measures taken to address the high rate of femicide attributable to domestic violence had included updating existing legislation and training police officers in how to investigate and deal effectively with cases of femicide and how to support victims throughout the prosecution process.

42. **Ms. Jahan**, noting that Trinidad and Tobago remained a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in human beings, said that, while she commended the State party on having ratified the Palermo Protocol, adopted a national action plan to facilitate its implementation, set up a multisectoral anti-trafficking task force and adopted

the 2011 Trafficking in Persons Act, she would like to know whether its various legislative measures to combat trafficking included a specific gender component. Since, according to alternative sources, official complicity continued to undermine efforts to combat trafficking on the ground, she asked how the Government envisaged tackling the issue and how many officials had been convicted under the Trafficking in Persons Act, including those complicit in trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

43. Noting that the number of cases of human trafficking had increased between 2013 and 2015 and that the victims were for the most part young women, she further enquired as to how many traffickers had been convicted; what penalties had been imposed on them; and whether a gender-sensitive protocol had been introduced to assist immigration officials, law enforcement officers and labour inspectors in identifying and referring potential victims of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour.

44. It was regrettable that there were no specialized protection services for female victims of trafficking, except for those provided by NGOs, and that victims of trafficking were placed in the same shelters as victims of domestic violence. Since the State party planned to open three new shelters for victims of domestic violence, she wondered whether it also intended to open similar shelters for victims of trafficking. She also wished to know how female victims of trafficking were guaranteed access to justice; whether the State party took responsibility for their safe return to their country of origin; whether the anti-trafficking unit was endowed with sufficient human and financial resources to execute its extensive mandate effectively; whether it collected data on cases of human trafficking for the purposes of informing policy and action in that area; whether any safeguards were in place to protect women who, having been trafficked and forced into prostitution, subsequently faced penalization under the Sexual Offences Act; and whether the participation of victims of trafficking was required in order to initiate investigations and prosecutions.

45. The Committee had received reports that, even though prostitution and the sale and purchase of sex services in brothels and elsewhere were outlawed under the Sexual Offences Act, prostitution remained widespread and police complicity allowed many brothels to continue operating. The Committee had been alarmed by reports that, in one police station, new recruits had been sent to purchase commercial sex at a local brothel and that brothel owners often intimidated prostitutes by claiming to be friends with police officers. She invited the delegation to comment on those reports and to describe the steps that it had taken to tackle police complicity in the commercial sex trade and to investigate and impose penalties in the specific case of the new police recruits. Lastly, she asked what measures the State party had taken to provide economic alternatives to prostitution and to introduce exit strategies and rehabilitation programmes for women wishing to leave prostitution.

46. **Ms. Pargass** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, although the Trafficking in Persons Act did not contain a specific gender component, it gave effect to the Palermo Protocol, which catered for the needs of women. The Act did, however, include a specific component on the protection of children and provided for the adoption of special measures, which could be used to protect girls.

47. **Mr. Rampersad** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, to date, just one police officer had been successfully prosecuted for complicity in human trafficking. The delegation would submit statistical data on the convictions secured and the penalties imposed in cases of trafficking within 48 hours.

48. **Ms. Seegobin** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that labour inspectors were provided with training in how to deal with cases in which foreign and migrant women were trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour.

49. **Ms. Johnson** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence were currently accommodated in the same NGO-run shelters. The Government intended to open three new shelters for all women in need by the end of 2016.

50. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that none of the new shelters for women would provide specifically for victims of trafficking.

51. **Mr. Rampersad** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, although prostitution was a criminal offence, the law safeguarded the rights of women identified during investigations as being victims of trafficking and forced prostitution and did not allow for prosecutions to be brought against women who had engaged in unlawful acts as a result of having been trafficked.

Articles 7 to 9

52. **Ms. Zou Xiaojiao** asked what specific measures had been adopted to remove the barriers to women's participation in political and public life, which included a lack of maternity leave for women parliamentarians and women's disproportionate share of household and family responsibilities; what had been done to increase funding for women candidates' political campaigns and thus enable them to compete more effectively against their male counterparts; whether the measures set out in the draft national policy on gender and development that were designed to bring significant increases in the number of women in public office and decision-making positions had already been implemented; and, if they had not, whether cabinet approval was necessary for their adoption. She wished to know whether the Government considered the attainment of the minimum 30 per cent threshold for women's representation in Parliament to be sufficient, and that was the reason for its lack of interest in introducing a quota system; whether the delegation could comment on civil society proposals to introduce a 50 per cent quota for women in decision-making processes; and whether any incentives were envisaged to encourage political parties to use special measures to promote gender parity in candidate lists at various government levels. She would also like data on women's representation in decision-making positions in the judiciary, diplomatic services, academia, and private sector.

53. **Ms. Bailey** said that, given that lack of birth registration could lead to problems claiming nationality, increase girls and women's vulnerability to trafficking and labour exploitation, and impede access to school, the Committee shared the concerns raised by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its concluding observations issued to the State party in 2006 (CRC/C/TTO/CO/2) regarding the significant numbers of children whose births were not registered despite the State party's decision to waive the birth certificate fee and the introduction of the Late Registration of Birth Programme in 2000, among other initiatives. She would like to know what was being done to ensure that all children were registered at birth and what progress had been made over the past decade.

54. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that all parliamentary candidates enjoyed equal opportunities during their political campaigns regardless of their constituency or gender. Many women received additional support from NGOs to help them to prepare for elections and enter political office. National legislation did not specify a minimum threshold for women's representation in Parliament, but the possibility of introducing one would be considered in due course.

55. **Ms. Boondoo** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, although parliamentarians were not currently included in the list of workers covered by the Maternity Protection Act, the Act was due to be reviewed as part of the ongoing legislative reform process.

56. **Ms. Pargass** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, although the births of many children were still not registered, the measures adopted had resulted in a substantial increase in the number of children that were.

Articles 10 to 14

57. **Ms. Bailey**, referring to reports that 30 per cent of girls were not enrolled in secondary school owing to factors such as inadequate infrastructure, overcrowding and fees, asked whether research had been carried out to determine the profile of those girls, such as whether they were from rural areas or ethnic communities, or had disabilities; what measures were in place, or envisaged, to reduce levels of non-enrolment; whether the high rate of teenage pregnancy, which was about 2,500 pregnancies a year among girls under 18 years old, was considered to be a contributing factor; and whether the Ministry of Education was working with families and law enforcement agencies to ensure that pregnant, underage, unmarried girls were treated as victims of sexual offences and that such offences were not met with impunity. She wondered in that connection whether the State party had assessed the efficacy of the Adolescent Mothers Programme in preventing second pregnancies among teenagers; what services were available for teenage mothers to help them continue their education; whether a policy was in place that allowed students to return to school after giving birth; and whether any assessment of the various measures' impact had been conducted.

58. According to reports, the Primary Health and Family Life Education Programme had not been implemented in all primary schools due to resistance from certain parents. She would like updated information on efforts to address that opposition and on the extent to which the programme was currently operational. She would also like to know whether the programme's effectiveness had been evaluated: simply hoping that pupils would deal constructively with problems and issues that arose, as the State party had indicated in its replies to the list of issues, was not an adequate basis for measuring outcomes. Noting lastly that gender segregation in education was also a cause for concern, she asked whether measures were envisaged to eliminate sex segregation in study areas and facilitate women's entry to non-traditional, higher paying jobs.

59. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, asked what measures were in place, or were envisaged, to eliminate indirect and direct discrimination against women in the labour market and employment, especially discrimination affecting female heads of household, and to rectify the gender imbalances that such discrimination created. Recalling the concern expressed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Committee of Experts on the Application of Standards during the 2011 universal period review regarding the discriminatory nature of the provisions of several government regulations, which provided for termination of employment for married female officers if family obligations affected their efficient performance of duties and the obligation for a female officer to report her marriage to the Public Service Commission, she asked whether the Committee of Experts' recommendation to amend the discriminatory provisions of the Civil Service Regulations to bring them into conformity with the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) had been acted upon. Noting that the Committee of Experts had also expressed concern about the widening pay gap, she asked what specific measures, beyond the general prohibition of gender-based discrimination, were in place to enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and close the gender pay gap.

60. She would also like to know whether the committee tasked with conducting a study into discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace had completed its work and, if it had not, what obstacles were preventing the study's completion and thus impeding the enactment of legislation on sexual harassment that would accelerate women's de facto equality with men. She invited the delegation to provide information on the time frame for adoption of the amendment to the Industrial Relations Act needed to bring domestic workers within its scope and on the complaints mechanisms available to domestic workers under current regulations.

61. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that education was compulsory under the Children's Act for all children between the ages of 5 and 16 years old. To facilitate school attendance, a number of services had been established for families in need, such as transport, school meals and, in certain circumstances, the provision of free textbooks.

62. **Ms. Henry-David** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that around 94 per cent of children progressed to secondary school after sitting the competitive exam for the first time. The remainder resat the exam in the following year. The school dropout rate was in fact higher for boys than girls, but information on the profile of students who dropped out was not available owing to challenges impeding data collection and the use of information and communications technology. With a view to keeping children in school, staff numbers in the Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education had been increased so that more students could benefit from individualized guidance and special education. The Division's social work programme included home visits to families and cooperation with the law enforcement agencies, including the community police, to resolve the issues responsible for children's non-attendance. Data illustrating the relationship between teenage pregnancies and the secondary school dropout rate were likewise unavailable but she could confirm that teenage mothers were allowed to return to school after giving birth. Lastly, she wished to highlight that statistics showed that, in tertiary-level education, men outnumbered women in engineering only and, from primary school onwards, girls generally outperformed boys.

63. **Ms. Webster-Roy** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that written information on counter-trafficking measures, the case brought against the police officers complicit in the operation of a brothel, and data on women's representation in decision-making positions would be provided in the following 48 hours.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.