



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

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

**Summary record of the 1449th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 4 November 2016, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Hayashi

**Contents**

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

*Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia*

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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 fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia (CEDAW/C/ARM/5-6; CEDAW/C/ARM/Q/5-6 and Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Armenia took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia), introducing the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia (CEDAW/C/ARM/5-6), said that the new Constitution, adopted in December 2015, guaranteed equality between women and men, set out the aims of State policy in the economic, social and cultural spheres, including gender equality, and explicitly prohibited discrimination on grounds such as race, gender and others with a view to guaranteeing equal rights. The law on the provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, adopted in 2013, aimed to ensure gender equality in all areas and protect men and women from discrimination by, among other things, guaranteeing men and women equal legal status and equal opportunities to enjoy that status and to use their skills to participate in public life.
3. The National Strategy on Human Rights Protection, adopted in 2012, was now being implemented by the associated Programme of Action for the period 2014-2016. That Programme had required a review of Armenian legislation to ascertain whether it complied with international standards, and a study had determined that a separate law on discrimination would be needed. Accordingly, the Ministry of Justice was already working with NGOs on a bill, for adoption in 2017.
4. The new Electoral Code, adopted in 2016, introduced a target of 30 per cent representation of women in elected State and local authorities, as compared with the current quota of 25 per cent. It also provided that, if a woman member of parliament resigned, she must be replaced by the next woman on the relevant list. Extensive awareness-raising campaigns were to be run in advance of the forthcoming elections in order to support women candidates.
5. Selective abortion of female fetuses had upset the sex ratio at birth in Armenia. Whereas the norm was 102-106 boys to 100 girls, more recently the ratio had reached 114 to 100. To address that problem, the law on human reproductive health and reproductive rights had been amended to ban abortions carried out for the purpose of selecting the sex of the child. Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences had recently been introduced with a view to penalizing medical staff who violated the law. Following an awareness-raising campaign on that issue, carried out in conjunction with NGOs, a positive trend was already visible, with the latest figures showing a ratio of 108 to 100.
6. As part of efforts to do away with gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices, the topic of gender equality had been introduced into the sociology syllabus for school years 8 to 12 and was also a component in elementary school studies.
7. In order to combat domestic violence, special provision had been made in the new Social Assistance Act to provide support for persons facing hardship. The new law included definitions of violence and domestic violence and a guide to identifying potential victims at an early stage and prescribed the length of time the victims might spend in shelters. In 2015 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had published guideline documents setting out the mechanism for referral of victims and indicators to help identify victims.
8. The Government had made improving legislation on the prevention of domestic violence a priority, as evidenced by the fact that, under the programme of action for the

protection of human rights, effective legal mechanisms had been introduced for determining liability and preventing domestic violence in accordance with international standards. As a practical measure leading to the adoption of a law on domestic violence, a drafting group of representatives of the Ministry of Justice and other ministries, the Office of the Procurator General and the police had been set up by virtue of a prime ministerial decision of 2016; the group consulted regularly with NGOs.

*Articles 1 to 6*

9. **Ms. Patten** said that she commended the State party on the constitutional amendments and the referendum that confirmed the constitutional guarantees on women's rights and the law on equal rights and opportunities. However, in view of the fierce opposition the law had provoked, she would like to know what measures were being taken to implement it and ensure the de facto equality of women. The opponents of the law had circulated materials misrepresenting the purpose of the law, which had created uncertainty and fear and had even led to personal attacks on those supporting the law. She would like to know what awareness-raising activities had been carried out subsequently to inform women about the Convention and the concept of gender equality in the context of the new legislation. It was reported that the judiciary, law enforcement officials and lawyers had limited awareness of the Convention, and she would like to know what training was available to those groups. Was the Convention part of the mandatory training for judiciary officials and lawyers? She welcomed the news that a separate law on discrimination was in the pipeline. She would like to know whether the definition of discrimination it would give would be broader than the one given in the Constitution, which was not fully in line with article 1 of the Convention. Would the new law include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination and address intersectional discrimination? In that regard, she said that, according to reports, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people frequently experienced violations of their rights and were subjected to physical and psychological violence and hate speech and discrimination in prisons and in the armed forces. Could the delegation provide data on any complaints of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation that might have come before the Human Rights Defender?

10. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh was weakening the entire country, and women in particular were finding it more difficult to support their families and gain access to basic services like health care, education and housing. Were there any specific projects to support women and girls affected by the conflict?

11. She would like to know whether the State party planned to adopt a comprehensive action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and whether technical assistance had been sought to that effect. Pending the drafting of an action plan, was there any mechanism in place to implement that resolution? In that context, it was reported that women were not very involved in the peace talks and were increasingly using the non-governmental sphere as an alternative space in which to voice their opinion. What priority was given to women's participation in the peace talks?

12. Lastly, she wondered to what extent the special needs of different groups of displaced women, such as rural women, elderly women, widows and women with disabilities, were being addressed by the Government.

13. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia) said that the law on gender equality had indeed been received with some ambivalence but the Government believed it must persevere with its implementation. The mechanisms that had been established were not yet working as well as one might wish but it was important to bear in mind the realities of the situation in Armenia: budget constraints made it difficult to provide the funds that were needed for women's rights programmes. The persistence of stereotyping hampered implementation, so

educational and awareness-raising measures were needed to change attitudes. A start had been made in schools, targeting the upcoming generations, and work was also being done with State officials and law enforcement and judicial agencies. Special courses and training programmes on women's rights were now part of the curriculum of the Academy of Justice.

14. He had not personally been aware of outbreaks of violence in connection with the adoption of the law, apart from one incident that had affected members of sexual minority communities, and, in that case, all those responsible had been punished and the law enforcement agencies had acted in accordance with the law.

15. As to the definition of discrimination, the wording in the Constitution appeared to be in line with widely accepted definitions. The new law would provide a more detailed definition that would also cover direct and indirect discrimination.

16. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs conducted education and information programmes on a continuous basis. It also held regular meetings with experts and members of the media with a view to increasing the dissemination of information. A gender policy was in place, and State officials received training every three years to ensure that they were up to date with the latest developments. Efforts were also being made to ensure that the content of relevant policies and legislation was reflected in the work being carried out on the ground.

17. **Ms. Sujayan** (Armenia) said that, even before the introduction of the law on the provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, the Government had adopted a gender policy outline and two programmes aimed at fostering gender equality and combating violence against women. National plans and programmes were formulated on the basis of key international instruments, including the Convention, and implemented through annual action plans. Various achievements had been made, including the introduction of gender-equality indicators for assessing parity in different spheres of life and measures to address gender-based violence and provide support to victims. The outcomes of those plans and programmes had helped to shape the Government's forthcoming strategic gender policy programme for the period 2017-2021.

18. The introduction of a national action plan for implementing the recommendations of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was currently under consideration. An interdepartmental working group had been established to analyse the situation and compile a report to enable a decision to be made.

19. Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenia had received hundreds of thousands of refugees in the late 1980s and early 1990s. More recently, in April 2016, a military offensive in Azerbaijan had given rise to another influx of refugees, which, in turn, had been intensified by the arrival of around 20,000 refugees fleeing the war in the Syrian Arab Republic. While Armenia had one of the highest ratios of refugees per 1,000 nationals in the world, the Government was committed to doing everything it could to provide them with protection, including access to employment and education, and facilitating their integration into Armenian society.

20. **Ms. Patten** said that her question regarding women's participation in ongoing peace talks remained unanswered. She also wished to know whether discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was to be expressly prohibited in the new anti-discrimination legislation. She wondered what legal status the Convention had in the event of a conflict between its provisions and the national legislation, whether the Convention could be directly invoked before the courts and, if so, whether examples of cases could be provided. Regarding access to justice, she was concerned that the fact that women filed complaints of discrimination anonymously to the Office of the Human Rights Defender meant that they feared reprisals if they came forward publicly. She would therefore welcome information

on the complaints that had been made and their outcomes and on women's access to the courts and to legal aid.

21. **Ms. Schulz** said that she would be interested to know whether efforts to tackle stereotypes through education and training included addressing stereotypes of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. In the same vein, she wondered whether the new anti-discrimination law would prohibit discrimination against those persons and outlaw the use of hate speech against them.

22. **Ms. Gabr** said she had noted that, while the delegation had been using gender-equality terminology, there seemed to be a general reluctance in Armenia to use the term "gender equality", with preference being shown instead for "equality between men and women". She wondered what reasons were underlying opposition to the use of such terminology and whether such an approach might ultimately hinder the realization of women's rights.

23. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia) said that, in view of the fact that the anti-discrimination bill was in the drafting phase and still open to discussion, it would be unwise to comment on its specific content, since it remained subject to change. It was hoped, however, that the substance of that legislation would meet the specific needs of Armenia in its fight against discrimination.

24. Regarding the Convention's status within the framework of the legal system of Armenia, the 2005 Constitution stipulated that, in the event of any conflict, international treaties had primacy. The new Constitution had made clear that human rights must be interpreted by legislators and the judiciary in the light of the approaches taken by international treaty bodies.

25. Long-standing social problems hindered access to justice and legal assistance not only for women, but for society in general. In spite of budgetary constraints, funding was allocated to legal aid and, insofar as was possible, persons who did not have the means to pay for a lawyer were provided with one. The Government had, however, identified legal aid reform as one of its strategic priorities and, over the next six months, it would be implementing measures to overhaul the system as part of efforts to improve access to justice.

26. The Government's position in respect of hate speech and hate crimes was clear: if a person had broken the law, that person should be punished. As to terminology, people did of course have the right to use different terms if they so wished. The Government's powers of influence were limited in that regard. To some extent, preferences for certain terminology were linked to stereotypes and entrenched attitudes, something that was being gradually addressed through education and awareness-raising. It was important to point out that change would not come overnight; in fact, hasty or overly radical measures might even make matters worse. A progressive approach was the most likely to succeed.

27. **Ms. Sujayan** (Armenia) said that civil society organizations had been involved in consultations on the law on the provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, and at no stage were there any disagreements on the terminology contained in it. References to the terms "gender" and "gender equality" were made in that law. There were currently no women involved in the ongoing high-level peace talks mediated by the Minsk Group.

28. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that the Government was committed to efforts to combat stereotypes. In that regard, a national plan of action for the period 2017-2021 was being formulated, taking into consideration past activities and the present and future needs of the country.

29. **Ms. Gabr** said that she welcomed the progress made by the State party towards the establishment of an effective national machinery for the advancement of women. In that regard, she would be interested to know more about the composition, mandate and human and financial resources allocated to the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its relationship with the parliament. Lastly, while the mandate of the national machinery was to be based on a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, she pointed out that a wealth of best practice and guidance was already available.

30. **Ms. Haidar** said that, despite the commendable efforts made by the Government to establish a comprehensive legal and policy framework to advance gender equality, inequalities persisted, particularly in the provinces. Noting that paragraphs 23 and 30 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/ARM/Q/5-6/Add.1) referred to measures taken to improve women's participation, she pointed out that general social policies were not temporary special measures. Drawing the delegation's attention to general recommendation No. 25 on temporary special measures, she said that temporary special measures were aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women. In that regard, she wondered whether there were any plans to conduct awareness-raising activities to help officials and other relevant stakeholders to understand the meaning and scope of temporary special measures. She also wished to know whether the use of temporary special measures was envisaged to address vertical segregation in education and employment and to tackle the multiple forms of discrimination faced by vulnerable groups of women.

31. **Ms. Mirzakhanyan** (Armenia) said that UNICEF had recommended three possible approaches for setting up a national mechanism for the advancement of women. Of those, in the light of the country's current economic situation, the creation of a high-level commission attached to the Office of the Prime Minister that would work directly with representatives from various relevant government ministries seemed most effective. Civil society organizations were not excluded from the decision-making process: ministries were required to cooperate with civil society to implement the decisions of the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. A working group, which had direct discussions with civil society and international organizations, had also been set up to assess specific gender-related issues — such as the use of gender quotas. It drafted reports that helped to shape parliamentary debates and decisions. In the long run, the mechanism would require improvements and a greater number of staff, but at the current time it was working satisfactorily.

32. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia) said that the country already had some experience of taking temporary special measures and efforts were being made towards intensifying and expanding women's participation in all spheres of life. A more long-term approach had been adopted regarding gender quotas for women's political representation, and there were plans to increase those quotas by 2025.

33. **Ms. Gabr** said that she would welcome information on the working group on gender equality, including its relationship with the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its mandate, staff and budget.

34. **Ms. Haidar** said that the State party should consider how temporary special measures could assist in addressing gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes, which posed a particular problem in Armenia.

35. **Ms. Mirzakhanyan** (Armenia) said that the department that she headed had been given two extra permanent staff members: a senior specialist on gender issues and a junior specialist who, among other tasks, organized meetings of the working group. It made good use of the Internet and maintained a web page which listed contact details for the relevant government officials at various levels, civil society organizations and members of

international organizations. The group's activities focused on facilitating discussion and did not, therefore, require a significant budget. The results of its discussions were put to the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and, if the Council was in agreement, relevant instructions were issued to the ministries on behalf of the Prime Minister. That process eliminated the need for intermediaries, whose involvement often hindered decision-making.

36. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that stereotypical views would continue to be challenged by means of the country's existing awareness-raising programmes and gender policy and gender-based violence programmes, which also contained awareness-raising components. Those would be supplemented by new measures planned by several ministries and by work with regional offices. The more modern attitudes held by younger generations meant that the problem would diminish over time.

37. **Ms. Patten** asked what specific measures had been adopted to combat the widely accepted subordination of women, particularly in rural areas, and to what extent had the Government involved women's rights organizations in the development of State policies intended to eliminate gender stereotypes. In the light of the vital role played by parents in shaping their children's views and attitudes, she asked whether they were targeted by awareness-raising campaigns. School teachers and administrators should also possess the skills necessary to ensure that children were taught in a gender-sensitive environment; she therefore asked what training was available for teachers and whether stereotypes had been eradicated from textbooks.

38. Although the State party's past programmes to address sexual and gender-based violence were commendable, the phenomenon remained a significant problem in the country. She asked whether those programmes had been evaluated since their conclusion and whether new ones were planned. Also commendable was the creation of a specialist police department for sexual, gender-based and domestic violence and the provision of training on those types of violence, although the Committee had been informed that negative stereotypes of women and their role in society persisted in the Government, judiciary and police, affecting women's access to justice. She would welcome information on whether law enforcement officers, lawyers, prosecutors and judges received training on gender sensitivity, ethnic and minority groups and mechanisms that ensured that legal proceedings were not influenced by gender stereotypes.

39. She wished to know the status of the bill on domestic violence, including a timetable for its adoption. She would be grateful if the delegation could provide information on whether women's rights organizations had been involved in meaningful consultation on the bill, what were the bill's provisions for civil and criminal remedies and penalties for the breach of protection orders, whether marital rape was made a criminal offence under the bill, whether the bill took a victim-centred approach to ensure that victims had effective means of redress and protection, whether there were any mechanisms to monitor its implementation and to what extent it complied with the Istanbul Convention.

40. There were reports that the few shelters for victims of gender-based violence in the State party were operated by NGOs without Government support. She asked how access to adequate shelters was guaranteed and whether data on their use were collected. Lastly, she asked whether the Government was planning a study that would help it to devise targeted measures to tackle gender-based violence and femicide, which often went unpunished.

41. **Ms. Nadaraia**, noting that sex work was illegal in the State party, said that the penalties imposed on sex workers served only to punish them rather than to regulate prostitution, and she wished to know whether the State party had taken any steps to reduce the demand for prostitution. Given that female sex workers were particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses, she asked whether the factors that drove women to turn to prostitution

would be addressed and whether women and girls who wished to leave prostitution had access to rehabilitation services and assistance to help them to reintegrate into society.

42. While the Government met the minimum standards for the eradication of trafficking in persons, particularly through its extensive efforts to support and protect victims, the number of prosecutions and convictions had fallen. She asked what steps the State party planned to take to better identify and protect victims and what training would be given to officials and the media.

43. **Ms. Mirzakhanyan** (Armenia) said that, in order to promote rural women's leadership and economic empowerment, campaigns to raise awareness of women's capacities had been conducted to ensure that they were elected to leadership positions at the local level. The 17 women who currently held such positions had expressed a need for greater financial resources so that they could improve conditions in their communities, prompting the Government to provide financial subsidies and new schools for communities led by women. The improvements that the women leaders had helped bring about encouraged other communities to elect women. Each year, the Prime Minister gave an award to the best female community leader, further encouraging women's participation in local government.

44. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that all issues relating to gender stereotypes raised by the local representatives of the municipal standing committees on gender were discussed and programmes amended if necessary. Male and female students in schools, the Police Academy and the Academy of Justice studied together, and female police officers went out on patrol.

45. While the law on domestic violence would be adopted in the near future, the law on social assistance referred to in paragraph 42 of the State party's report also provided for shelter and medical assistance for victims of domestic violence. Shelters were operated by NGOs with support from the Government. There were plans to build a shelter with public funds that would be operated by civil society organizations.

46. There were plans to develop criteria for the early identification of victims that would be disseminated to social workers and staff working in care facilities. Through an interdepartmental committee, the anti-trafficking departments of the Prosecutor's Office and the police worked in constant cooperation with a department under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that dealt with women's issues.

47. **Mr. Stepanyan** (Armenia) said that school textbooks, curricula and guidelines had undergone a gender-sensitive review, and a set of recommendations following the review had been communicated to education officials responsible for developing curricula. Pupils no longer studied different subjects according to gender.

48. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia) said that the bill on domestic violence had been drafted on the understanding that Armenia would ratify the Istanbul Convention and therefore complied with that instrument as fully as possible. The bill, which was victim-centred and addressed sexual violence, established specific protection mechanisms for those who suffered domestic violence. Consultation on the bill was held on a regular basis with NGOs, which could submit written proposals, although no such proposals had yet been received. The bill provided for all the mechanisms necessary to establish State- and NGO-operated shelters for victims, as well as the necessary public funding.

49. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that most victims of trafficking suffered labour exploitation, rather than sexual exploitation; only one or two cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation had been reported since the beginning of the year. Most Armenian victims of trafficking were taken to the Russian Federation, and countrywide awareness-raising campaigns and work with NGOs had led to an increase in the reporting of trafficking.



Although no resources had been allocated to assisting victims in returning to Armenia, many succeeded in resuming their normal lives. Funds had been allocated to the education, treatment and retraining of victims, and that approach would be modified to comply with the bill on support for victims of trafficking once it was adopted.

50. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia) said that although changes to the approach to prostitution were needed, perhaps based on the positive experience of the law on victims of trafficking, it should be noted that sex workers received administrative penalties only very rarely.

#### *Articles 7 to 9*

51. **Ms. Haidar** said that, although the Committee welcomed the amendments to the Electoral Code, it seemed that the quotas set under the Code had not had the desired effect, as the percentage increase in the number of women elected to the National Assembly had been smaller than the percentage increase in the quota. Women were also grossly underrepresented in local government, particularly in rural areas. She therefore wondered how the State party intended to ensure that the quotas were respected and that de facto equality between women and men was achieved. In addition, she wished to know whether the State party had plans to address the stereotypes and institutional biases that deprived women of opportunities for career advancement, take positive discrimination measures to increase the representation of women in local government and launch outreach campaigns featuring prominent female role models in politics, business and science.

52. She would welcome information about the percentage of female ambassadors in the Armenian foreign service. Details about the posts held by women, who accounted for around a quarter of judicial personnel, would also be welcome.

53. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia) said that the quotas had not had the expected result because political parties had complied only with the letter of the law. They had included the required number of women on their electoral lists, but in many cases those women had no interest in serving in the National Assembly, and they had resigned as soon as they had been elected, giving the seat they had won to the next person on the list, generally a man. Under a proposed amendment to the Electoral Code, the quotas for the representation of women had been increased, and any female member-elect of the National Assembly who did not take up the post must be replaced by another woman. Very few of the women in the judiciary served as court presidents. That problem would be addressed by a constitutional amendment that provided for rotating court presidencies.

54. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that there was no shortage of women filling mid-level posts in the executive branch but that there were many fewer women at higher levels. A study was planned to determine why women, despite the efforts made by the authorities, were not in positions of power in the Government.

55. **Ms. Sujayan** (Armenia) said that there were four female ambassadors in the country's foreign service. They accounted for about 10 per cent of all Armenian ambassadors. There were many female foreign service officers in mid-level posts, and women made up an increasingly large share of the applicants to the Diplomatic School of Armenia.

#### *Articles 10 to 14*

56. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that the "Healthy Lifestyle" course mentioned in the State party's report (CEDAW/C/ARM/5-6, para. 67) should be offered not only in general education schools but also in colleges and universities. It should also be taught by persons with qualifications in the field rather than by physical education teachers, and course delivery and content should be regularly evaluated by gender specialists. The course should

include age-appropriate sex education and modules on gender-based violence. Measures should be taken to enable women to have a greater influence on the formulation of educational policy, and the State party should consider instituting temporary special measures to compensate for the additional disadvantages faced by women when competing for senior administrative positions in the country's education sector.

57. She wished to know what the State party had done to act on the Committee's recommendations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1, para. 31) to review all school textbooks to eliminate gender-role stereotypes and encourage girls to enter non-traditional fields of study, whether there were awareness-raising initiatives to familiarize students and teachers with the consequences of gender stereotyping and whether the delegation could provide figures for the gender breakdown of the students in vocational fields of study. It would also be interesting to know whether data had been collected on the number of girls who had dropped out of school as a result of early marriage or pregnancy and whether steps had been taken to ensure that no one, in particular minorities, avoided compulsory education.

58. **Mr. Bruun** said that the State party should take temporary special measures to facilitate the access of women, who accounted for the overwhelming majority of the unemployed, to the labour market. He wished to know whether the Government intended to amend the Labour Code to enshrine the principle of equal pay for equal work and define sexual harassment in the workplace. In the latter connection, he wondered how labour inspectors dealt with complaints of such harassment. He also wished to know whether the State party intended to review the list of jobs not open to women, pregnant women or women with children less than 1 year old.

59. **Ms. Chalal** said that she wished to know what steps the State party planned to take, in addition to those mentioned in the report (CEDAW/C/ARM/5-6, paras. 85 and 86), to inform women and girls of the existence and availability of modern contraceptives and to ensure that women and girls had access to reproductive health services, in particular in rural areas. She wondered what measures had been planned to combat sex-selective abortion, which, according to at least one report, was more common in Armenia than in any other country but one, whether the root causes of such abortions had been studied, whether the authorities planned to ban the use of the abortion pill and whether the establishment of a mechanism for the control of sex-selective abortion in clinics was planned.

60. She would welcome information on the impact of the distribution of free contraceptives to certain population groups. In addition, she wished to know what plans had been made to facilitate access to pain management for women who were suffering from such illnesses as cervical or breast cancer, whether efforts had been made to ensure that women with disabilities had access to health care and whether there were any plans to enlist the media and other actors in outreach campaigns to combat the stigmatization of women living with HIV/AIDS. Lastly, she asked whether the State party intended to increase budgetary appropriations to the health sector and expedite the adoption of a law on health insurance.

61. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that the principle of equal pay for equal work was respected in the public sector, where a person's pay never depended on his or her gender. In the private sector, the problem was being addressed by the Labour Inspectorate, which had been made part of the Ministry of Health two years earlier. The adoption of a new law regulating the functions of the restructured Labour Inspectorate was pending.

62. Information on sexual harassment in the workplace would be provided in writing. The maintenance of any list of jobs not open to women would ordinarily be the responsibility of the Labour Inspectorate; however, as she had noted, the legislation governing the functions of the Inspectorate was currently under review.

63. **Ms. Mirzakhanyan** (Armenia) said that official figures showing that women accounted for more than 73 per cent of the unemployed were misleading, as unemployed women were far more likely than unemployed men to register as job seekers. The jobs available through the country's employment offices were few and often menial. Men generally preferred to seek work independently. Studies had shown that women accounted for more than half of those working in the informal sector.

64. **Ms. Virapyan** (Armenia) said that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs held regular job fairs, bringing together job seekers and employers.

65. **Ms. Sujayan** (Armenia) said that one of the Government's priorities in the wake of the transfer of authority over the Labour Inspectorate to the Ministry of Health was to develop mechanisms to combat sexual harassment in the workplace.

66. **Mr. Kocharyan** (Armenia) said that future amendments to the Criminal Code would address sexual harassment, which struck him as an issue to be dealt with less by labour inspectors than by the criminal justice system.

67. **Mr. Stepanyan** (Armenia) said that amendments to the education legislation adopted in 2014 had established certain eligibility requirements for teachers in public schools, which would take effect in 2017. A teacher certification system had also been established. An ongoing training programme for teachers included courses on gender issues. A new set of standards for the education system had been adopted in 2011. The curricula for some subjects, such as social studies, had been revised to promote gender-awareness.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*