



General Assembly

Seventieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
16 November 2015

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 11th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 October 2015, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Dempsey (Vice-Chair) (Canada)
later: Ms. Kupradze (Vice-Chair) (Georgia)
later: Mr. Dempsey (Vice-Chair) (Canada)

Contents

Agenda item 29: Advancement of women (*continued*)

- (a) Advancement of women (*continued*)
- (b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

15-17696 (E)



Please recycle A universal recycling symbol consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



In the absence of Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Mr. Dempsey (Canada), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 29: Advancement of women (continued)
(A/70/38 and A/70/124)

(a) Advancement of women (continued) (A/70/204, A/70/205, A/70/209 and A/C.3/70/3)

(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (continued) (A/70/180)

1. **Ms. Morton** (Australia) said that gender equality and women's empowerment were priorities of Australian foreign policy and overseas aid. Gender inequality was at the heart of the worldwide scourge of violence against women. Her Government had undertaken a broad range of activities to end such violence as part of its National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010-2022, including, most recently, a package of measures to provide a safety net for high-risk women and children.

2. To collect the accurate, comparable data needed to target future action, it had established a national research organization and a national data collection and reporting framework; it was also conducting national surveys on the prevalence of violence and attitudes towards it. In the Pacific, her country had supported 10 prevalence studies, which had revealed high levels of violence against women, and it was supporting studies under way in Indonesia, Cambodia and Timor-Leste. It also supported Partners for Prevention, a United Nations regional joint programme in Asia and the Pacific.

3. **Ms. Mohamed Didi** (Maldives) said that the Maldives Constitution of 2008 guaranteed equality for all, equal pay for equal work and the possibility of affirmative action. Legislation provided three months' maternity leave with full pay, defined and penalized sexual offences and prohibited sexual harassment.

4. Women in Maldives faced many challenges. Conservative Islamic and traditional social norms discouraged young women from leaving their islands to find work, and the Maldives' primary industries, tourism and fisheries, presented high barriers for women. With gender parity in education and girls outperforming boys at the secondary and tertiary

levels, there were more qualified women than employment opportunities. Again because of social norms, few women ran for political office, and fewer still were elected.

5. To meet those challenges, her Government had embarked on a programme to empower women economically through flexible working hours in formal employment, targeted microloans, single mother benefits, home-based employment opportunities and day-care facilities. It was finalizing a gender equality bill and gearing up gender-mainstreaming programmes and social awareness campaigns.

6. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka) said that women had fulfilled one of the great expectations of democratic government by becoming agents of change. Sri Lanka's Constitution guaranteed equal rights for women without discrimination, and as a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Sri Lanka had recently accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, on the duration of meetings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

7. In the preceding three decades, his country had made substantial progress in women's education, health and economic empowerment. Most girls completed primary school, and at the university level, women outnumbered men. Maternal mortality had fallen from 63 to 29 per 100,000 live births, and the unemployment rate for women, from 23 per cent to less than 8 per cent, while the number of women entrepreneurs had grown. Sri Lanka was one of the few Asian countries with more females than males.

8. However, Sri Lanka needed to address unwanted and teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions, women's low participation in politics and rural women's lack of economic opportunities. Diverse initiatives had been introduced to empower rural women economically, including microcredit schemes and measures to assist small- and medium-scale enterprises and women's collectives. In addition, the Government encouraged women migrant workers to channel part of their savings overseas for self-employment and other ventures and had launched similar initiatives for women working in the plantation sector. With almost a quarter of Sri Lankan households headed by women after three decades of war, steps had been taken to identify their vulnerabilities and address their needs, including the establishment of a national

committee to help women heads of households find employment or create sustainable livelihoods.

9. **Mr. Thinkeomeuangneua** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that women's rights were protected under his country's Constitution and laws. The Lao Women's Union and the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women ensured effective application of laws, policies and strategies for the advancement of women, including the second five-year national strategy for the advancement of women, which gave priority to gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

10. A quarter of the members of the National Assembly, including its speaker, were women, and more women were involved in government decision-making at all levels than ever before. The gender parity index had steadily improved at all three levels of education. His Government was making concerted efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and was preparing its eighth periodic report.

11. **Mr. Soilih** (Comoros) said that his country had a matrilineal and matrilineal society. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women and girls had made gains in education, health and employment. By providing free pregnancy, childbirth and post-partum care for women, the Comoros had been able to cut maternal mortality rates in half, and its ongoing efforts had increased the proportion of women in high-level civil service positions from 7 per cent to 21 per cent. In addition, programmes had been set up to strengthen women's capacities in business, science and technology.

12. The Comoros' poverty reduction and growth strategy affirmed its determination to give both urban and rural women their due place in development and decision-making. To combat extreme poverty, which increasingly affected women, it facilitated women's access to microcredit and had set up a fund for women and young people at a banking institution. The Comoros also had established a national policy on combating violence against women and girls. It would continue to work with its United Nations partners to meet its many challenges for the advancement of women as a least developed, small island developing country.

13. **Ms. Fofana** (Burkina Faso) said that her delegation remained particularly concerned about the difficulties of disabled women, as well as the many forms of

violence affecting women and girls, including human trafficking, genital mutilation and forced or early marriage. Burkina Faso was implementing a programme to combat violence against women, and counselling and temporary housing were available for victims. It had made progress on changing mentalities and behaviours with respect to female genital mutilation by introducing special curriculum modules and providing a hotline to the National Council for Combating the Practice of Cutting.

14. Burkina Faso had a national gender policy and laws that gave women equitable access to rural land, and it had conducted a programme to issue birth certificates to women. Girls' school enrolment rates had risen substantially and should continue to rise under the new national literacy-acceleration programme. Moreover, increasing numbers of women occupied positions of responsibility.

15. As a complement to existing programmes, her Government had adopted an emergency socioeconomic programme that took into account the concerns of young people and women about employment and entrepreneurship and dealt with education- and health-related issues. It planned to emphasize vocational training and access to decent work for women and girls, as well as the modernization of traditional women's occupations, and it would be implementing a comprehensive economic empowerment programme for women, a strategy to promote rural land rights and a national policy on the promotion and protection of girls.

16. **Mr. Zamora Rivas** (El Salvador) said that his Government considered women a priority population group and would give particular attention to the needs of subgroups exposed to multiple forms of discrimination, such as older, indigenous, disabled and migrant women. It was particularly concerned about violence against migrant women at the hands of recruiting agents, employers and public officials. Recalling that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized the positive contribution of migrants and set a goal of promoting safe and secure working environments for migrant workers, including women migrants, he urged the international community to coordinate its efforts to that end.

17. With respect to rural women, El Salvador's national policy and law on discrimination against women required the State to take adequate measures to

eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas. Thanks to plans, programmes and projects implemented since 2009, rural women had better access to employment and income opportunities, as well as to credit and tangible and intangible assets. However, they still lagged far behind rural men. His Government attached particular importance to addressing violence against women and women's access to justice.

18. **Mr. Fadl Mohamed** (Sudan) said that the Sudan had made significant progress in the advancement of women. Sudanese women made up 35 per cent of the National Legislature, thanks in part to a statutory quota. They had been entitled to equal pay for equal work since the 1970s, and since 2003 they had had the same age limits for employment as men.

19. Over the years, his Government had developed a number of policies and strategies to ensure women's advancement and empowerment, including the Quarter-Century Strategy for the Women's Sector 2003-2027, the National Population Policy 2012-3031, the National Strategy to Combat Female Genital Mutilation 2008-2018 and, last but not least, the National Women Empowerment Policy, which focused on health care, the environment, education, economic development, participation in decision-making processes, participation in conflict resolution and respect for rights.

20. The Sudan had enacted a national law to combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, and had hosted the 2014 African Union Regional Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa. The National Rural Women Empowerment Project sought to empower rural women throughout the Sudan, although it emphasized the Darfur region. Measures included microfinancing for income-generating projects, training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns on health, nutrition and peacebuilding.

21. To combat violence against women, his Government had launched a national action plan and had established a social police unit within the Interior Ministry. Its independent national human rights commission was headed by a woman, and the Advisory Council on Human Rights devoted particular attention to raising awareness about violence against women. Sudan also provided medical care and compensation to victims of rape. Lastly, a comprehensive approach to

the advancement of women should address each country's particular challenges and should therefore include debt relief for developing countries and the lifting of unilateral sanctions and embargos.

22. **Ms. Jakubonė** (Lithuania) said that her country was continuing to implement its National Programme and Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims. Its National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015-2021 focused on equal working conditions for women and men, equal representation in decision-making and government positions, access to justice and integration of a gender perspective in all spheres of public and private life. As a result of long-term, systematic implementation of gender equality policies, Lithuania had almost closed the employment gap and had shrunk the pay gap to 13 per cent.

23. Lithuania remained committed to playing an active role in the United Nations human rights system and, in that connection, had nominated the Lithuanian Dalia Leinarte for a second term on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Earlier that year, it had organized a regional conference in cooperation with UN-Women and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to discuss the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in OSCE States. In that connection, it welcomed the adoption earlier that day of Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) on women and peace and security.

24. **Ms. Quiel Murcia** (Panama) said that in 2013, in response to increasing domestic violence, her country had enacted a law providing for the prevention of violence against women and amending the Penal Code to include femicide and penalize violent acts against women. The National Institute for Women had responded to the growing phenomenon by ensuring a 'chain of custody' for women seeking services from institutions that provided protection against domestic violence, signing a national protocol of care for women victims of domestic violence and working with the national police to establish a police unit specializing in gender violence.

25. The Institute was also in the process of opening eight branch centres throughout the country, and it operated three urgent-care shelters for women victims of violence and their children. Its seed capital programme provided financial support for women

survivors of violence and was accompanied in 10 high-violence, high-poverty urban areas by life skills workshops and training for survivors. In addition, it had carried out a media campaign conveying a clear message that violence against women was unacceptable and shameful under any circumstances.

26. Her Government, many of whose members were women, was taking determined steps to mainstream gender issues, empower women and ensure that they participated fully in the development of Panama. Lastly, she reiterated its support for the appointment of a woman as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

27. **Ms. Swai** (Myanmar) said that developing countries needed enhanced support to address gaps in women's empowerment and participation in development. In Myanmar, women and men enjoyed equal rights by tradition and by law, including the rights to vote, stand for public office and receive equal pay for equal work.

28. In accordance with its responsibilities under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, her Government was implementing a 10-year strategic plan for the advancement of women and was working closely with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and non-governmental organizations to promote gender equality and reproductive rights and protect women against violence.

29. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that, since the end of the civil war, his Government had been working to improve the situation of women. It had the revised the Penal Code to severely penalize trafficking in women and girls and their sexual exploitation or prostitution. It had gender focal points in all police stations, public prosecutor's offices and lower courts, and it had established a national centre to coordinate State, civil society and United Nations efforts to combat violence against women.

30. Burundi had set up a comprehensive care centre for victims of sexual and gender-based violence and would soon be opening three more. Its National Gender Policy had been updated in 2012 to reflect the integration of gender issues in Burundi's long-term development strategies and gave the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender budget lines for women's policies and programmes, women's organization projects and combating violence against women and children.

31. With respect to women, peace and security, Burundi had developed gender-inclusive mechanisms as part of the 2011 national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and its armed forces could deploy senior women officers for peacekeeping missions. In terms of political representation, with women constituting 30 per cent of the Government, 36 per cent of the National Assembly and 50 per cent of the Senate, Burundi had more than met the 30 per cent quota established by its 2005 Constitution.

32. Having achieved near gender parity at the primary school level by eliminating school fees, his country was seeking ways to reduce the number of girls who dropped out because of family financial difficulties or early pregnancy. It had established a consultative national women's forum in 2013 and was implementing a women's empowerment project. Maternal mortality rates had declined, thanks to an expanded sanitation network and health-care subsidies for pregnant women.

33. **Mr. Mwinyi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, his Government had thus far focused on women's legal capacity, women's economic empowerment, women in power and decision-making, access to education, and violence against women. Girls had attained parity with boys at the primary and secondary school levels, and as a result of affirmative action, a third or more of the country's parliamentarians, Government ministers and judges were women.

34. Legal reforms had addressed inequalities in land ownership and inheritance rights, as well as discrimination against women and women's right to credit. His Government supported women economically through entrepreneurship training and credit facilities, including soft loans offered through the Tanzania Women's Bank and the Women's Economic Development Trust Fund. With respect to violence against women, the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act made rape punishable by imprisonment of 30 years. In addition, his Government had undertaken awareness-raising campaigns and had established gender and children's desks at all district police headquarters.

35. However, further action was required to increase women's representation in politics and decision-making, promote women's economic empowerment

and provide access to reproductive health facilities and capacity-building. His Government would continue in its efforts to ensure women's participation in economic development with the welcome support of its development partners.

36. **Ms. Al-Rumaihi** (Qatar) said that empowering women had long been a priority for her country, whose Constitution enshrined the principles of equality, justice and equal opportunity for all citizens, as well as their right to participate in political and public life. Qatar had ratified the various international social rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and had established the Qatar Foundation for Social Action to strengthen their implementation. It had enacted laws to ensure a balance between family and community, safeguard women's rights within the family and provide equal opportunities in education and employment, and it had strengthened organizations working on behalf of women.

37. Women's empowerment and equality were cross-cutting themes of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which called for enhancing women's capacities and empowering them to participate fully in the political and economic spheres, particularly in decision-making roles, as well as for strengthening the family to support women's independence.

38. Owing to Qatar's emphasis on the importance of education for girls, women were working in a growing range of fields, including aviation, engineering, medicine, law and technology, and many occupied high-level positions. Women had participated in the 2015 municipal elections as voters and candidates and held important government posts, including ministerial portfolios.

39. Qatar strongly condemned all forms of violence against women and urged the United Nations to give particular consideration in its reports to the plight of women in conflict situations, to find solutions and to ensure accountability, justice and redress. It would continue to support the activities of UN-Women.

40. *Ms. Kupradze (Georgia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

41. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia) said that, over the preceding 20 years, women in Cambodia had benefited from strong economic growth, poverty reduction and improvements in public services, and women's

participation in the economy had risen to among the highest in the region. Cambodia's third strategic plan for women provided greater opportunities to develop marketable skills and eased access to loans for small- and medium-scale women entrepreneurs. Its 2014-2018 education plan aimed to shrink the gender gap at the secondary and university level by, inter alia, increasing the number of needs-based scholarships for girls and women.

42. In the health sector, Cambodia had reduced maternal mortality by half since 2000, thanks to improved access to maternal health care and sexual and reproductive health services. In the political and public sphere, where the percentage of women legislators had been steadily increasing, it had set targets for promoting women to senior civil service positions.

43. To combat violence against women, his country had adopted laws protecting women from domestic violence, trafficking and sexual harassment, and under the recently developed second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women, it would provide integrated services and referral mechanisms and set minimum standards for addressing the legal, health and psychological needs of victims.

44. Regionally, Cambodia had updated a memorandum of understanding with Thailand on bilateral cooperation to eliminate trafficking in women and children and rescue victims as well as an agreement with Viet Nam on bilateral cooperation to eliminate trafficking in persons and rescue victims. In March 2015, it had hosted the Regional Conference on the Social Impact of Climate Change on Women and Children. Cambodia looked forward to working with United Nations agencies and Member States to advance the rights of women and girls at the national and international levels.

45. **Mr. Ibrahim** (Malaysia) said that his Government was keenly aware of the social and economic problems confronting single mothers, particularly in rural areas. It would be launching a national action plan to empower single mothers in Malaysia later that month, and during consultations in the Committee, his delegation would be seeking to include provisions on single mothers in the biennial text on improvement of the situation of women in rural areas. From Malaysia's experience, a successful approach to gender equality and women's empowerment incorporated three elements: it was a collaborative process among government, women, civil

society and the private sector; it aimed to give women access in all spheres; and it was based on valuing and respecting differences.

46. *Mr. Dempsey (Canada), Vice-Chair, resumed the Chair.*

47. **Mr. Taula** (New Zealand) said that his country's aid programme incorporated a focus on increasing the participation and leadership of women in the Pacific region. It had been clear from lessons shared during the Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit that women were disproportionately affected during the aftermath of disaster, and New Zealand would be looking to ensure due consideration of the gender dimension of humanitarian challenges at the Summit. Its national action plan on women, peace and security focused on increasing the international deployment rates of senior women members of the New Zealand Defence Force and the New Zealand Police in order to increase the number of women at decision-making levels in overseas peacekeeping and assistance missions.

48. Domestically, gender equality and women's empowerment remained important areas of focus. To ensure that the downward trend in sexual and intimate partner violence continued, his Government would be taking a multi-faceted approach that included leveraging the preventive role of the family and community and providing programmes for offenders.

49. **Mr. Mac-Donald** (Suriname) said that awareness campaigns in the run-up to the general elections in May had led to the placement of more women in prominent positions on ballot lists and the subsequent election of more women to national and local office. Moreover, the President had appointed four women ministers, up from one during his previous term.

50. The Barbershop Conference, held in January at the initiative of Iceland and Suriname, had led to healthy discussions about men's roles in ending violence against women and girls. His Government firmly believed that men must take responsibility for such violence and hold each other accountable. In that connection, it was important that indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 5.2, on ending violence against women and girls, should measure the involvement of men and boys. Relevant stakeholders in Suriname were preparing to organize an awareness campaign for men and boys within the context of UN-

Women's laudable HeForShe initiative, Orange Day and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence.

51. **Mr. Grima** (Malta) said that his Government considered gender equality a priority. The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality provided gender mainstreaming training and tools for entities and departments and monitored their implementation of gender equality practices and gender mainstreaming through a yearly reporting process. Malta had set up an employer-funded maternity leave trust to discourage hiring discrimination based on maternity leave costs; the maternity leave benefit had been increased for both employed and self-employed mothers, and discussions were under way to extend maternity leave to adopting parents. Free public childcare was provided for student and working parents, and tax credits were available for parents who preferred private childcare centres.

52. Malta had recently adopted a law providing for the recognition and registration of gender identity and recognizing and protecting a person's sex characteristics. In addition, its Equality for Men and Women Act had been amended to include protection against discrimination based on gender identity or sex characteristics.

53. In collaboration with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality had recently organized a conference on women's participation in politics, bringing together representatives of political parties, legislators, policymakers, academics, civil society organizations and the media. In June, the Commission had organized the first public conference to discuss the gender pay gap from different perspectives.

54. In addition to working on a set of awareness-raising initiatives addressing different forms of violence against women and the circumstances and needs of victims and professionals, the Commission was conducting research on female genital mutilation in Malta, elder abuse and violence against the elderly, and harassment and bullying in schools. To strengthen the Commission, his Government had published a white paper proposing a legal framework to ensure that it complied with the Paris Principles and European Union equality legislation.

55. While reaffirming its strong commitment to the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the subsequent international

instruments, including the Beijing Platform for Action, his delegation recalled its position that any reference, recommendation or commitment to rights and services in connection with reproductive health should not in any way create an obligation on the part of any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of reproductive health, rights or commodities.

56. **Mr. Mahmaminov** (Tajikistan) said that his Government had made equal rights and opportunities for women a priority since independence. It had developed and strengthened national laws, mechanisms, strategies and programmes to improve the status of women and expand the opportunities available to them. Working in cooperation with international organizations and civil society, it had taken steps to ensure effective implementation of gender legislation by, for example, bringing together the Committee on Women and the Family and a coalition of voluntary associations to monitor policy implementation.

57. In 2005, his country had enacted a law on equal rights and opportunities for men and women, introducing the concepts of gender, gender policy, gender equality and equal opportunities. To train and promote women leaders, it was implementing a programme for 2007-2016 on education, selection of executives and personnel administration in relation to gifted women and girls. Its National Strategy to Promote the Role of Women, 2011–2020, aimed to create the conditions for women to realize their potential in all spheres and to promote the training of experts in gender equity policy development.

58. **Mr. Al-Otoom** (Jordan) said that his Government had stepped up its efforts to encourage women's participation in decision-making and create equal opportunities. One of the more significant outcomes was the increase in women's participation in public life. In 2015, women represented 11 per cent of the members of the National Assembly and 18 per cent of the Cabinet. Jordan's 2013-2017 National Strategy for Women emphasized human security and social protection, political and economic empowerment, media and information technology and institutional development for organizations promoting women's empowerment.

59. In response to the new forms of violence and the waves of migrants, his Government had drafted an update of the National Framework for Family Protection, as well as an operational response plan for

domestic violence. In closing, he recalled Israel's many violations of Palestinian women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

60. **Ms. Klein** (Madagascar) said that her country had made women's full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms a national priority. It had improved the legislative framework with respect to women's ownership of land and the age of marriage, which was now 18 for both sexes. It had significantly enhanced women's access to health care, particularly for women giving birth, HIV-positive women and women with obstetric fistulas. To assist women victims of violence, legal counselling and advice centres had been established, as well as a national platform and regional platforms, and court fee waivers and free defence services were provided for poor victims.

61. In 2015, a national consultation had been held in preparation for updating the National Plan of Action on Gender and Development. A national strategy for inclusive financing had been adopted, and following the recent conclusion of a study on obstacles to the economic empowerment of women, national strategies for removing those obstacles would be finalized by the end of the month.

62. Her Government would spare no effort to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It hoped for the continued support of its bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and would like to strengthen its partnership with UN-Women.

63. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia) said that, in the preceding 20 years, Mongolia had undertaken extensive legal and judicial reforms to promote gender equality, including a 2013 law on victims and witness protection that established a marshal's office to protect women and girl victims of violence. However, some new legislation, such as the Family Law and the Labour Code, needed to be amended to provide for equal parenting responsibilities and balanced domestic roles. The Mid-Term Strategy and Action Plan on the Implementation of the Law of Mongolia on the Promotion of Gender Equality (2013-2016) had become a cornerstone for gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and programmes.

64. Mongolia had almost closed the wage gap and was steadily improving gender parity at the primary and secondary school levels. However, it had made no progress in increasing the number of women at

decision-making levels and in politics, for which purpose it would need to raise the 20 per cent quota for women parliamentary candidates and encourage all parties to take more robust action to promote gender equality at the decision-making level.

65. To break down prevailing gender biases and stereotypes, universities had just begun offering an optional course on gender issues, and the Government organized annual seven-day women's rights campaigns. In addition, the National Committee on Gender Equality had held a national forum on men in development. As it worked to close the gender gap, Mongolia would be increasing investment in that area, engaging men and boys and developing partnerships with all stakeholders.

66. **Ms. Nguele Makouelet** (Congo) said that had her Government had made improving the situation of women a central policy objective. Its poverty reduction strategy paper, the national plan for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the National Development Programme 2012-2016 all included a gender component. The President had directed the Ministry for the Promotion of Women to strengthen its legal and institutional framework, protect and improve the political, social and cultural status of women and support income-generating activities for women.

67. The Ministry's budget had doubled in 2014, and significant resources were being mobilized to combat the feminization of poverty, end violence against women and increase women's participation in decision-making. In addition to various measures in the areas of health and education, kits for starting income-generating activities were being distributed to poor women throughout the country. Although still only symbolically represented in the Congolese contingent of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, women had used Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security as the basis for several initiatives to participate in the political negotiations.

68. **Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique) said that men and women were equal before the law in Mozambique, and his Government was striving to make them equal in practice. As a result of its efforts, 94 out of 250 members of Parliament, 5 out of 21 Government ministers and 4 out of 11 provincial governors were women. To promote the advancement of women, it had

established the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action and the National Council for the Advancement of Women, an entity that brought together ministries, civil society organizations, trade unions, business groups, academia and religious institutions.

69. His country was implementing a national gender policy and gender strategy and preparing a wide variety of sectoral gender strategies and had also enacted laws on the family, domestic violence and human trafficking. Other efforts for the advancement of women included the promotion of education and literacy for women and girls, microcredit initiatives, and pilot programmes to encourage the use of information and communications technologies in rural areas. Yet enormous challenges remained, including poverty, unemployment, inequalities and violence. To tackle them, all Mozambicans must become active agents of change.

70. **Ms. Romulus** (Haiti) said that women played a vital role in the Haitian economy and home. More than half worked, and some held positions of high responsibility. Yet economic, legal, structural and sociocultural barriers, including negative stereotypes, prevented them from fully exercising their rights. Although a large majority of young Haitian women were literate, most were poorly educated. Most schools were private, and families took the girls out first when they could not afford to pay tuition for all of their children.

71. Her Government, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and civil society organizations were working to close the socioeconomic gap between women and men. For example, to move towards the 30 per cent quota for women in the civil service, as required under the Constitution, Haiti's public management support project included a gender component in all sectoral policies.

72. A programme launched by MINUSTAH in 2012 funded management training for 50 young women entrepreneurs, as well as training in fields such as sewing, plumbing, electrical work and masonry. Thanks to the unflagging efforts of her Government, Haitian women's organizations and Haiti's international and civil society partners, the situation of women was improving. In closing, in anticipation of the International Day of Rural Women on 15 October, she saluted the vital contribution of rural women to the economies of developing countries.

73. **Mr. Ndong Ella** (Gabon) said that improving the situation of women was a national priority. Thanks to its gender equality strategy, women occupied decision-making positions in public and private administration, the Government, Parliament and the armed forces. To boost the percentage of women and young people in elected office, Parliament had recently enacted a law setting a 30 per cent quota for each. Laws had been passed to penalize all forms of violence against women. To assist poor women, the Government provided family and back-to-school allowances and promoted income-generating activities. A recently launched agricultural initiative programme aimed to create employment for women and young people throughout the country.

74. As a member of the UN-Women Executive Board, Gabon was following the implementation of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, with interest and reaffirmed its determination to achieve Planet 50-50. For its part, it had just launched the Gabonese Decade on Women (2015-2025).

75. **Mr. Ferreira** (Cabo Verde) said that he could point to many achievements: gender equality within the Government, gender parity at all levels of education, the law against gender-based violence, women's access to family planning programmes or women's right to legal abortion. All of that notwithstanding, much remained to be done. As a small island State with major financial constraints and very modest natural resources, Cabo Verde needed to be able to count on the substantial, coherent support of the United Nations system and other partners. The empowerment of women was more than a matter of development. It was a question of morality and human rights.

76. **Ms. Ntaba** (Zimbabwe) said that while it was important to maintain a focus on legislative measures, more attention must be paid to enhancing their implementation and, in particular, to ensuring accountability for violence against women.

77. Education was at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Accordingly, more than half of the beneficiaries of Zimbabwe's Basic Education Assistance Module were girls, and a programme had been instituted to give women and girls who dropped out of school a second chance. Zimbabwe had made considerable progress in ensuring women's participation in decision-making and had taken steps to enhance women's economic participation, such as

instituting 30 per cent employment quotas in the tourism and mining sectors and a 30 per cent quota for small- and medium-sized enterprise loans.

78. In a largely rural country, empowering rural women was essential. Her Government had helped many rural women acquire land of their own as part of its Land Reform and Resettlement Programme, and almost half of agricultural extension employees were women. To address maternal mortality, her Government had waived primary health care fees for the poor and vulnerable and provided poor expectant mothers with blood vouchers to pay for blood in the event of postpartum haemorrhaging.

79. With respect to violence against women, her country had set up a domestic violence council to coordinate efforts to ensure zero tolerance for domestic violence. It had also partnered with various women's organisations to ensure the availability of legal aid, psychosocial services, safe shelters and essential health-care services for victims of violence. Victims of rape were given post-exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception. Zimbabwe would continue to do its utmost to address violence against women and related ills, including sexual harassment in the workplace.

80. **Ms. Jurcan** (Romania) said that her Government actively promoted gender equality and women's empowerment. Both the new Civil Code and the Criminal Code prohibited and punished discrimination against women. The Government's most recent achievement had been the strengthening of the national gender equality agency, an important step towards mainstreaming and integrating gender issues. To hasten slow, uneven progress, it was working to develop meaningful partnerships with civil society and other social actors.

81. The President of Romania had personally joined UN-Women's HeForShe movement and, in doing so, had made three commitments. First, Romania would create a new profession of gender experts and would take steps to ensure that 70 per cent of national and local public institutions had a qualified gender expert or technician by 2020. Second, it would launch a new integrated system to track, report and prevent all forms of violence. Third, it would develop and implement programmes to engage at least 100,000 girls and boys to participate in political, social and economic life by 2019.

82. **Mr. Barkam** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he regretted to hear Israel blamed once again for the status of Palestinian women. Palestinian social norms and a deep resentment of any change in the role of women in certain social strata were the main reasons for the not-so-simple situation of Palestinian women and continued domestic violence. It was easier to blame Israel for a problem than to try to fix it. The United Nations could play a positive role if it would demand that the Palestinians concentrate on changing the role of women and stop inciting them to violence against Israel.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.