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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 11th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 14 October 2014, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Davis (Vice-Chair) ..... (Jamaica)  
*later:* Ms. Mesquita Borges ..... (Timor-Leste)

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*In the absence of Ms. Mesquita Borges, Mr. Davis (Jamaica), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 28: Advancement of women (continued)**

**(a) Advancement of women (continued)** (A/69/38, A/69/211, A/69/222, A/69/224, A/69/256, A/69/368, A/69/369 and A/69/396)

**(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/69/182 and A/69/346)

1. **Mr. Scappini Ricciardi** (Paraguay) said that, despite the valuable contributions they had made throughout their country's history, Paraguayan women remained among the most vulnerable members of society. Paraguay's third Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which would cover the period up to 2017, addressed issues such as equal rights and political participation, education, access to economic resources and employment, health care, freedom from violence and environmental sustainability. In recent years, Paraguayan women had made gains in terms of access to education and employment and participation in social development programmes and projects, but they remained largely absent from elected and decision-making positions. Under the National Development Plan 2014-2030, Paraguay was working to assist families in extreme poverty by implementing social programmes to empower women and strengthen their role in the family and the community. In 2000 it had enacted a domestic violence law that required public institutions to provide preventive, social and protective services, with a special emphasis on domestic violence and trafficking in persons. His delegation supported the inclusion of the topic of gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda.

2. **Ms. Luna Tudela** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her country had signed the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development in 2003 and the Declaration of the Mechanisms for the Promotion of Women of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2014. The principles of gender equality were incorporated in 25 articles of the Constitution, and the new elections law provided for gender parity among candidates. In order to bring about true equality for women, it was necessary to change the patriarchal world system. Post-2015 indicators for women's

equality and empowerment should therefore measure women's participation in direct democracy, gender equality in decision-making, respect for women's sexual and reproductive rights, property rights, and training opportunities for women. Her Government had recently issued a decree implementing a 2013 law on violence against women, including a provision on shelters for women in violent situations. Gender equality and women's rights should remain a priority in the post-2015 development agenda; Bolivia would continue to promote women's empowerment and their contribution on equal terms to the more just and inclusive society required for truly sustainable development.

3. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia) said that gender equality and the empowerment of women were key national development objectives. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was the national mechanism for ensuring gender mainstreaming in the activities of all Government institutions. 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.

4. Under its third strategic plan for women, focused on economic empowerment, health, education, legal protection and governance, his Government was expanding opportunities for women to develop their skills in line with the requirements of the labour market and to gain access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises and had set up women's business development centres in 13 provinces. Under the strategic plan for education, 2014-2018, it was narrowing gender gaps at all levels by increasing the number of needs-based scholarships, particularly for women, opening local educational institutions and women's dormitories and providing safe transportation, and hiring more women teachers. It had adopted laws to protect women from domestic violence, trafficking and sexual harassment, and had implemented several programmes to reduce maternal, child and newborn mortality rates. His Government had introduced affirmative action measures in the civil service, and the percentage of women in the civil service and elected office had increased. It would strive to increase the proportion of women at all government levels, using advocacy at the village and commune levels throughout the country.

5. **Ms. Franceschi** (Panama) said that her country had made significant progress in the advancement of women. Almost three quarters of recent university graduates were women, and there had even been a woman president. Nevertheless, women continued to be paid less, on average, than men, and their levels of political participation were low. In 2012, Panama had instituted a national policy on equal opportunity for women and was preparing an accompanying plan of action. It had laws to prevent and punish violence against women, and in 2013 it had outlawed femicide and enacted a law recognizing women's rights with respect to sterilization. The national plan to combat domestic violence 2004-2014 sought to implement those laws and overcome sociocultural, institutional and legal obstacles. The National Institute for Women monitored implementation of the relevant national laws and regulations, and of international women's rights instruments.

6. Panama still faced challenges in ensuring that all women enjoyed equality in the areas of education, health and equal pay and working conditions, especially in isolated rural areas. Another major challenge was the lack of funds, staff and equipment to strengthen implementation and institutional capacity and promote greater coordination within and among the implementing institutions.

7. **Ms. Grignon** (Kenya) said that the recent adoption of the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals had underscored the recognition that there could be no sustainable development without the full integration of women and girls. Her Government had made gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment national priorities, and those priorities were highlighted in the second medium-term plan 2013-2017. It was working towards a 2015 deadline for compliance with a constitutional requirement that at least one third of legislators and Government appointees should be women. Women currently constituted 25 per cent of elected and appointed representatives in Parliament. With respect to women's health, free maternal health care had resulted in a 10 per cent increase in in-hospital births, and a combination of services and outreach campaigns had raised the number of women tested for HIV to almost 80 per cent. Labour laws provided for paternity leave to ease the burden of new mothers.

8. In 2014, Kenya had adopted a national policy on gender-based violence, which included the

establishment of a task force on the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act, as well as a board to implement the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act. Measures had been taken to improve access to justice, including the elimination of court fees for instituting proceedings claiming infringement of women's rights. Her Government had recently adopted comprehensive legislation to improve measures for the prevention of trafficking and protection of victims and their reintegration into their communities.

9. Women in rural areas and informal urban settlements experienced the highest levels of poverty. Development assistance for agriculture was decreasing, and the resultant decline in agricultural productivity was exacerbating the already dire lack of food security and causing increased poverty and inequality. Her Government had created programmes such as the award-winning Women Enterprise Fund under which it was disbursing capital to finance business opportunities for women in remote areas. It had also instituted an affirmative action policy in public procurement for businesses operated by women, young adults and persons with disabilities. It would continue to invest in the education of the girl child. Her delegation called for better inter-agency collaboration on women's issues both at Headquarters and in the field.

10. **Mr. Sarki** (Nigeria) said that his Government had made women's reproductive health, girls' education, the situation of rural women, violence against women, women's economic empowerment and women's participation in decision-making processes key priorities in its development agenda and its national gender policy. It recognized that women needed to be empowered to achieve greater political participation and that the best way to increase women's participation in decision-making was to train girls to excel and to lead. His Government had set a target of gender parity in the civil service by 2020, and it had already appointed many new women judges.

11. Nigeria had recently adopted a law criminalizing sexual harassment in workplaces and educational institutions, an equal opportunities law, and a national policy on protecting and assisting human trafficking victims. It had introduced an initiative to treat, counsel and rehabilitate women, particularly in rural areas, who were suffering from with obstetric fistulas. It had also dedicated additional resources for maternal, newborn

and child health interventions and was scaling up cost-effective interventions that could save at least one million women from death from preventable causes by 2015, in particular by reducing the cost barriers preventing women and children from accessing adequate health care services. His delegation urged the Committee to view the issue of the advancement of women not only from the prism of human rights, but also in terms of its social and economic dimensions.

12. **Mr. Osman** (Sudan) said that Sudan had made significant progress in the advancement of women. Sudanese women had been entitled to equal pay for equal work since the 1950s and, since 2003, they had had the same age limits for employment as men. They had had the right to vote and stand for election since the 1950s and 1960s, respectively, and under the National Elections Act of 2008, one quarter of the seats in Parliament were reserved for women. A law on combating gender-based violence and a gender equality law had been adopted in 2003, and social services were available for women victims of violence. A high-level mechanism had been created to implement those laws under the auspices of the Minister of Justice.

13. His Government had developed a women's empowerment policy based on six main pillars: health care, the environment, education, economic development, participation in decision-making processes, participation in conflict resolution and respect for rights. It had formulated a detailed work plan and had established departments within various ministries to develop plans and policies for promoting women's participation at the community level. It had also set up programmes to promote women's economic empowerment, including a fund for women in rural areas and a microcredit facility.

14. In 2005, his Government had established a unit within the Ministry of the Interior to combat violence against women and girls and, in 2008, it had introduced a national strategy to combat female genital mutilation. It had also undertaken an outreach campaign in Darfur in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and the human rights branch of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. In 2015, it would be hosting the African Union Regional Ministerial Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa. At the international level, Sudan advocated a comprehensive approach to the advancement of women that took into account the problems faced by the least developed countries,

including sanctions imposed on certain countries, as well as the impact of the economic crisis and of climate change.

15. **Ms. Vadiati** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that her delegation supported the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. Her Government consistently endeavoured to mainstream women's issues in the national development framework and strengthen the family with a view to creating a balance among the multiple roles played by women in the family as well as in society. Its achievements had been corroborated by the *2013 Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme, and that progress had been made despite the existence of severe and unprecedented unilateral sanctions against her country. Her Government had upgraded the level of the national machinery for women and brought it under the Vice-Presidency for Women and Family Affairs. In that connection, she noted that the United Nations itself had not even come close to achieving gender parity, particularly at the senior decision-making level; that situation was unacceptable, and must be remedied.

16. The international community needed to take a comprehensive look at the root causes of the incomplete fulfilment of the Beijing Platform for Action. Women and girls were disproportionately affected by economic crises, food insecurity, climate change, poverty, armed conflict and foreign occupation, unilateral sanctions, violence, terrorism and extremism. Unilateral sanctions were intrinsically unjust and inhumane, and undermined peace and security; it was the vulnerable, particularly women and children, who were the main victims of sanctions.

17. The outbreak of violent extremism presented an imminent threat to the life and rights of women and girls in the region and could extend to other parts of the world. It was particularly alarming that women and girls from the West were joining extremist groups. Her Government strongly condemned the explicit targeting of women and children of religious minorities, including Christians and Yazidi, and the barbaric acts of violent extremists, especially in kidnapping and killing thousands of women and girls, forcing them into slavery or marriage, and selling and giving them away to militants as spoils of war.

18. **Mr. Pedersen** (Norway) said that women and girls, all over the world, continued to suffer from

serious human rights violations; no country was exempt. The recent increase in violent extremism had devastating consequences for women and girls in the affected countries; it was more important than ever to combat those forces and uphold the universality of human rights. Action was needed to combat violence against women, which overwhelmingly occurred in the home, eliminate female genital mutilation and put an end to child, early and forced marriage. Education was a prerequisite in that regard and was key to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. Girls with disabilities suffered particular discrimination. His Government strongly supported comprehensive sex education and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

19. Women's full and equal participation in political and economic life would contribute to sustainable development and peace. Women human rights defenders could not be subjected to discrimination and violence. Norway would work for a strong focus on gender equality in the post-2015 development framework and for a gender perspective in the new climate agreement. In 2015, in the context of the many interrelated processes and events that would influence global and national policies on a wide range of issues, the international community must ensure that women's rights and gender equality received adequate consideration.

20. **Ms. Msemo** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her Government believed that gender equality and equal opportunities for women and girls constituted a basic human right as well as a socioeconomic imperative and a prerequisite for long-term sustainable development. Gender equality and the empowerment of women were mainstreamed in all Government policies and programmes, including poverty reduction strategies. A new Constitution had been endorsed by the Constituent Assembly and would be submitted to a national referendum for approval; it guaranteed gender equality in all aspects of life, including property ownership, inheritance and representation in Parliament and political and public decision-making, and included maternity protection and the prevention of gender-based violence.

21. Her Government had adopted new laws as well as a strategy and action plan for the prevention of violence against women in Zanzibar and, for the mainland, a national multisectoral committee on violence against women, children and albinos. It had

established a female police network to help the Tanzanian police deal properly with alleged victims of gender-based violence. It had also established legal literacy programmes, gender desks at police stations and workplaces, and women's legal aid centres, and had launched countrywide campaigns on sexual and gender-based violence. Its comprehensive approach to the eradication of female genital mutilation combined continuing enforcement of existing legislation with educational programmes and initiatives to promote the direct engagement of individuals, schools, communities, religious institutions and the media. Her Government remained firmly committed to mainstreaming the advancement of women, despite the many obstacles, which included inadequate capacity-building, insufficient gender disaggregated data to support policies and planning, and the challenge of changing people's mind-sets. Her delegation hoped that gender equality and women's empowerment would receive the attention they required in the post-2015 development agenda.

22. **Ms. Dagher** (Lebanon) said that her Government supported the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on women in the post-2015 development agenda and reiterated the importance of gender mainstreaming in all other goals. Discrimination and violence against women and girls continued unabated, which impeded the realization of all their basic rights, and, in the first place, the right to life. It was outrageous that women and girls were being subjected to abuse and sexual violence as a weapon of war in situations of armed conflict. Her Government reiterated its support for Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security and reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights for all women and girls. It understood the difficulty of reconciling cultural and religious beliefs with the realization of human rights for all in a diverse society and had therefore enshrined its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its Constitution, which provided that all Lebanese were equal before the law and enjoyed civil and political rights without any distinction.

23. The adoption of a law on the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence in April 2014 had represented a major advance, in that it had brought a previously taboo subject out into the open. The law provided for the establishment of temporary shelters for victims, the

assignment of a public prosecutor in each governorate to investigate complaints, and the establishment of specialized family units within the internal security forces. In close collaboration with civil society and numerous regional and international organizations, her Government was striving to engage men and boys, and religious and community leaders, in raising awareness and tackling the cultural roots of violence against women. It was also working with its regional and international partners to combat human trafficking.

24. Lebanon faced a humanitarian crisis which was undermining decades of development achievement; her Government, while a willing host, was finding it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of over 1.5 million Syrian refugees, most of whom were women and children. Her delegation appealed to the international community to shoulder its share of the burden.

25. **Ms. Romulus** (Haiti) said that her Government accorded priority to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Although gender parity in primary and secondary education had been achieved, women continued to have limited access to secure employment; they were concentrated in the informal sector, trade, the hotel sector, social services and agriculture, as well as assembly work in the electronics and garment industries, where they were a source of cheap labour. Better educated women held positions in financial and banking institutions and non-governmental organizations, particularly in the humanitarian sphere. Her Government had instituted ambitious social programmes for the most vulnerable members of society, providing assistance in such areas as education, health care, food and transportation. Under another programme, mothers living in extreme poverty received a monthly cash transfer for each child in school. The 2012 Constitution established a 30 per cent quota for women in public employment, including the civil service. Her Government had launched a project to incorporate the gender dimension in all sectoral policies, including policies on education, health and the economy.

26. The situation of Haitian women had improved in recent decades as a result of the constant efforts made by women's organizations at the national level and the support of international organizations and civil society groups. Her Government stressed the need to support the essential role of rural women in the economies of

developing countries, as a powerful force for sustainable development and a peaceful future.

27. **Mr. Zamora Rivas** (El Salvador) said that the high incidence of violence against women underscored the need for a human rights-based, comprehensive, coordinated approach to gender-based violence. Member States should also take specific steps to address the needs of women who suffered multiple forms of discrimination, including indigenous and older women. An international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons would complement the efforts to ensure the rights of older women.

28. As a country that had endured a 12-year war, El Salvador could attest to the important role played by women in preventing and resolving conflicts and consolidating peace. Her Government would shortly be establishing a national committee to monitor the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and looked forward to the global study to be coordinated by UN-Women in 2015.

29. El Salvador had adopted laws on eliminating violence and discrimination against women, and had established mechanisms for monitoring their enforcement. In 2011 it had combined various women's services in a single programme in order to address gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and, economic and social empowerment in a comprehensive manner. In its most recent five-year development plan, for the period 2009-2014, it took a cross-cutting approach to women's equality and empowerment and established specific guidelines. Her Government supported the inclusion of a goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the sustainable development goals, and the mainstreaming of those objectives in the other goals.

30. **Ms. Abdullah** (Yemen) said that her Government, recognizing the importance of gender equality and the advancement of women and drawing on its cultural and Islamic heritage, spared no effort to strengthen and guarantee the rights of Yemeni women. Yemen had ratified many of the major international instruments on women's rights, including the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, and established appropriate implementing mechanisms. It had prepared a national strategy for the advancement of women for the period 2006-2015 focusing on the advancement of women in the

educational, health, economic and political spheres and the elimination of violence and discrimination against women.

31. Women had played a pivotal role during the transition process, which had started in 2011; they had been well-represented in the National Dialogue Conference, as well on the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum and the constitutional drafting committee, and had emerged from the Conference with major gains. The outcome document stressed the importance of harmonizing national laws with international instruments and emphasized women's right to equal opportunities and effective participation in public and private life. It stipulated that 30 per cent of all electoral lists should be comprised of women candidates and set the same quota for competitive recruitment to the three branches of government and for the participation of women in supervisory mechanisms and political organizations. It also underlined the need to increase the participation of women in the security, military and intelligence agencies. It provided for the early adoption of legislation setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 and criminalized violence against women and the harassment, trafficking or degrading treatment of women.

32. She drew attention to the condition of Palestinian Arab women living under Israeli occupation, who were enduring blatant violations of their fundamental rights. Her Government called on the international community to shoulder its responsibility to put an end to the occupation and restore the fundamental rights of Palestinian women.

33. **Mr. Canay** (Turkey) said that no country was immune from violence against women, which could not be justified on any social, cultural or religious grounds. Comprehensive international efforts were needed, which must address social development issues and the full economic empowerment of women, while putting an end to the cycle of violence against women. As the first country to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Turkey had enacted a new law on the protection of the family and prevention of violence that broadened the scope of previous legislation to cover all women victims regardless of their marital status, as well as other family members. The law provided, inter alia, for the establishment of 24-hour support and monitoring

centres, and the number of women's shelters was increasing rapidly all around the country.

34. His Government had recently prepared a 2012-2015 national action plan on combating violence against women, with the participation of non-governmental organizations and research centres, covering legislative measures, awareness-raising, protective and health services, and cooperation between relevant institutions. At the Parliamentary level, the mandate of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men had been broadened to include issues such as early marriage and psychological violence against women. Turkey attached great importance to the rights of girls and had been an original sponsor of the celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child.

35. It was unfortunate that, once again, attempts had been made to divert attention from the enormous destruction and human suffering caused by the Syrian regime. Turkey was providing a safe refuge to more than 1.5 million Syrians who had had to flee for their lives and was also ensuring that cross-border humanitarian assistance reached millions of people in dire need on the Syrian side of the border, in conformity with its international obligations. To date, 33,000 Syrian children had been born inside the container and tent cities in Turkey, and over 68,000 children were enrolled in school.

36. **Mr. Al-Moumani** (Jordan) said that a woman who was socially, legally, politically and economically empowered, and was free from all forms of discrimination and violence, could participate effectively in policy- and decision-making, strengthen the family and society and help to achieve sustainable development. The National Strategy for Women in Jordan 2014-2017 provided a framework for partnership between governmental institutions and civil society organizations working on the advancement of women. It had led to a strengthening of women's participation in all areas of decision-making and an increase in the number of women members of Parliament to 18 out of 150, an all-time high. Women accounted for 48 per cent of all registered voters and 35 per cent of the voters in the most recent municipal council elections. Out of a total of 928 judges, 142 were women. A higher percentage of women and girls were now enrolled in school and university education; women's participation in the labour force had increased to 14.5 per cent, and women constituted 20 per cent of

the staff of non-governmental organizations. His Government was drafting new legislation to reinforce the protection of women's rights and address the challenges they faced and was developing national mechanisms to promote gender equality and ensure that women's priorities were incorporated in all public policies.

37. *Ms. Mesquita Borges (Timor-Leste) took the Chair.*

38. **Mr. Beyi** (Burkina Faso) said that the contribution of women to socioeconomic development was decisive when they had access to income-generating activities and had the same economic, political and civil rights as men. His delegation was therefore concerned about the persistence of various forms of violence against women and girls, particularly trafficking in women and girls, female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage, all of which were flagrant violations of human rights. At the national level, his Government had established a programme to combat violence against women; it was implementing the second phase, for the period 2014-2015, and had set up a centre to provide services to victims, including counselling and temporary shelter. Progress was being made in ending female genital mutilation; modules had been introduced in school syllabuses, and a hotline had been established. His delegation urged the Committee to work to achieve the consensus adoption of a draft resolution updating General Assembly resolution 67/146.

39. His Government was working to promote gender equality through the implementation of policies and strategies including its national gender policy and a programme to issue birth certificates for women and girls. It had established a special job creation programme for women that aimed to create 50,000 jobs by the end of 2014 and had set up a fund to support women entrepreneurs. In addition, two new land laws established a land tenure system providing equitable access to rural land. The percentage of girls in school had increased from 30 per cent in 2000 to 78 per cent in 2012, and a national literacy programme had been adopted. His delegation urged that the post-2015 development agenda should take into account the specific needs of women, so that they could become more active agents of development.

40. **Mr. Eriza** (Indonesia) said that persistent structural marginalization kept women poor, unequal

and at risk of violence in many parts of the world. Reversing discrimination required a comprehensive, coordinated and systematic approach. A solid legal and policy framework was needed, including law enforcement, monitoring mechanisms, preventive measures, and protection and support for victims of violence. Governments needed to mainstream gender perspectives into their policies and programmes.

41. Indonesia's National Action Plan on Human Rights 2011-2014 included strategies for the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of victims. The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, the National Commission on Violence against Women and a number of judicial and law enforcement bodies had signed a memorandum of understanding on access to justice for women victims of violence, and law enforcement personnel were receiving training in assisting such women. His Government worked very closely with civil society organizations, the media and women's organizations to raise awareness of gender issues among families and communities, and collaborated with gender experts and academicians to conduct surveys and research. It had taken practical steps to promote the inclusion of gender and human rights issues in school curriculums and the organization of awareness-raising campaigns, and it provided coordinated assistance to victims through numerous units in police stations and hospitals, integrated service centres and shelters and safe houses. It was also implementing an action plan to prevent trafficking in women and girls and had established a task force to monitor and evaluate the efforts being made.

42. He called on Member States to make gender equality and the empowerment of women not only a stand-alone goal but also a cross-cutting theme of the post-2015 development agenda. He also called for better coordination between Governments and United Nations bodies, particularly UN-Women and the United Nations Children's Fund, in order to align country programmes with the needs, priorities and capacities of each country.

43. **Ms. Nguele Makoulet** (Congo) said that the advancement of women must remain at the top of national and international agendas. Unfortunately, in her country, the vital role women played in development was not reflected in their economic, political or social status, a situation which limited Congo's ability to achieve inclusive development and



shared prosperity. Her Government was devoting increased attention to women, children and the family in its development programme. The critical issue of land tenure was being addressed through legal reforms to facilitate land ownership for women, women's access to financing, including microfinancing, accelerated literacy development and strengthening of women's managerial capacity through targeted training programmes.

44. Her Government had undertaken many women's empowerment initiatives in the context of its national plan for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the rehabilitation of rural roads, free primary education and school textbooks, free malaria treatment for children under the age of 5 and pregnant mothers, free Caesareans and free treatment for AIDS. It was providing direct support to women's associations and women were being appointed to posts in public, private and governmental organizations.

45. Her Government had drafted a law on gender violence, including sexual harassment and female genital mutilation, which, while practiced primarily by foreign communities, was prohibited by law and discouraged through outreach campaigns conducted in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies. In addition, it had set up victim support centres and established an observatory, and it was undertaking a review of its legislation. It was working with civil society organizations to encourage women to report hitherto taboo violence, and more and more women were taking advantage of legal clinics.

46. **Ms. Byaje** (Rwanda) recalled that a meeting to assess the implementation of commitments to the advancement of women and establish accountability mechanisms at the level of the African Union had taken place in Kigali from 6-7 October 2014. Twenty years earlier, genocide against the Tutsi had claimed more than one million lives in Rwanda; against all odds, the country had bounced back and started anew, thanks to the resilience of its people, and women in particular. The Millennium Development Goals had been launched at a time when Rwanda was still battling the devastating effects of genocide; in the immediate aftermath, women and girls had represented 70 per cent of the population and 57 per cent of the workforce, and they had had to assume roles of heads of household, community leaders and financial providers and to

develop new skills. Women now comprised 64 per cent of the members of Parliament, the highest level in the world. They were well-represented in the executive branch, as they made up 40 per cent of the Cabinet, and in the judiciary, as 50 per cent of the Supreme Court judges were women. Many women had started businesses and more than 40 per cent of businesses in the capital were now owned by women. Rural women were equally empowered and many of them had joined or led associations and self-help and credit schemes.

47. Her Government had made gender equality a cornerstone of national development and, had made significant progress in girls' education, maternal and child health and women's access to productive resources. Rwanda was on track to achieve universal primary education by 2015, and in terms of completion rates, girls already outnumbered boys. A legal framework had been put in place to secure women's rights to land ownership. With universal health coverage, maternal and infant mortality had declined, as had mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Her Government had also adopted a law on gender-based violence, and had established one-stop shelters for violence victims which would be scaled up throughout the country by 2017. It had recently launched a public awareness campaign on preventing and responding to gender-based violence and child abuse.

48. Her Government had invested heavily in a number of innovative pro-poor initiatives to boost socioeconomic livelihoods and encourage credit and savings for poor women. A programme for gender-responsive budgeting had been spearheaded by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Yet Rwanda was still battling structural challenges, including persistent patriarchal attitudes in society.

49. Real change for women and girls required Governments, donors and the private sector to back their commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment with sufficient and appropriate funding and an accountability framework to ensure that interventions could be properly implemented. International cooperation was essential to support national action in the prevention of violence against women and provision of assistance to victims and to strengthen national capacity to combat impunity..

50. **Mr. Ferreira** (Cabo Verde) said that gender equality was both a moral obligation and a practical choice; no State could achieve sustainable development

and peace unless men and women had the same opportunities for economic, social and political participation. Since gaining independence, Cabo Verde had made coordinated efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Constitution established the general principle of equal rights and non-discrimination on the basis of gender; it also included a number of provisions designed to enhance the status of women and ensure that they were able to enjoy all their rights on an equal footing with men. The Family Code gave women and men equal rights and equal responsibilities in household management and child-rearing, and the Labour Code included special measures to protect pregnant women and provide for maternity leave.

51. In 1977, Cabo Verde had adopted a maternal health programme that included free access to family planning, which had brought about a sharp reduction in maternal mortality; that programme had been expanded to cover abortion in 1987, and in 2007, his Government had launched a national reproductive health programme. It was working to increase women's political participation through measures such as a 30 per cent quota for women candidates on electoral lists, which had thus far been only somewhat effective. Public institutions, civil society and other stakeholders were working in partnership to combat violence against women. A 2011 law on gender-based violence provided not only for prevention and punishment, but also for assistance to victims, including protection of their labour rights, access to justice and social assistance, and career guidance and job search services.

52. **Ms. Andelić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) urged all countries that had not yet done so to ratify and fully implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Her delegation supported the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. Bosnia and Herzegovina took a proactive approach to gender equality through its gender action plan and a number of public policies, including an action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), a strategy to implement the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and action plans for the improvement of the status of rural women and for the establishment of a gender-responsible budget. Other strategies included a programme for victims of

sexual violence in conflict, and a strategy for combating trafficking in persons. Under its legislation, all women with disabilities enjoyed equal rights on an equal basis.

53. As a member of the Executive Board, her Government would continue to support the efforts of UN-Women to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security; women's empowerment, gender equality and the mobilization of men and boys in the effort to combat all forms of violence against women were essential to long-term efforts to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Involving women in conflict prevention and mediation and the deployment of women to United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions were crucial to building and reinforcing peace. Female police officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina had participated in a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Her Government welcomed the upcoming entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. It believed that women should play a greater role in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

54. Her delegation was deeply concerned about the level of humanitarian and refugee crises in the world, which had a painful impact on civilians, especially women and girls; that situation required a strengthening of gender-sensitive humanitarian assistance. The struggle for gender equality could not be treated only as a women's issue, but must be viewed as a human rights issue.

55. **Mr. Barros Melet** (Chile) said that his Government continued to attach great importance to the work of UN-Women and had tripled its contribution in 2014. It welcomed the inclusion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the sustainable development goals and joined in applauding Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai for her courage in denouncing violence against women and girls. Unfortunately, almost 70 years since the establishment of the United Nations, gender-based violence and discrimination against women continued to undermine the very foundations of the Organization. His delegation called for the review, strengthening, promulgation and enforcement of the relevant laws on discrimination against women, and for a strengthening of the prevention of violence, as well as the adoption of policies and laws for the prohibition and elimination of violence against women.

56. In Chile, a national plan on violence against women would be implemented from 2015, and was being developed to succeed a narrower domestic violence plan. In October 2014, a draft law had been approved on the establishment of a Ministry of Women and Gender Equality which would replace the lower-ranked National Office for Women's Affairs, and would formulate, coordinate and evaluate policies, plans and programmes to promote gender equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. It would also promote equality in family relations and the upbringing of children, the elimination of stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices and the implementation of international conventions. Chile was progressing with its second action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); it welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to commission an independent review on the implementation of that resolution, and hoped that there would be broad participation by Member States and civil society. The Chilean legislature was considering a bill to promote the political participation of women by instituting gender quotas for electoral lists, and his Government was drafting a bill on sexual and reproductive rights with a view to preventing maternal mortality associated with lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services.

57. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) said that women must be enabled to contribute their full potential, and to do so they must be equal not only before the law but also in practice. A gender perspective, and in particular public policies on sexual and reproductive health, were key to achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. If the international community really wanted to succeed in empowering the world's women, it could not continue to hold the same debates year after year. The Committee should focus on the problems women were currently facing and build a vision for the future. The consensus achieved in the Latin American and Caribbean region, including the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the Santo Domingo Consensus, could provide guidance in the search for solutions, and the agreed conclusions of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women could also serve as a foundation for attacking the underlying causes of gender-based violence. Argentina supported the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11) that Member States

should make combatting violence against older women an integral part of their gender-based violence agenda. At the regional and international levels, his Government was working with other countries to ensure that the advancement of women was a priority in development cooperation, both at the regional and the international levels. Argentina supported the outcome document of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals in its entirety as the cornerstone for the definition of the post-2015 development agenda and opposed its renegotiation.

58. Argentina had taken a number of actions on behalf of women and various ministries were according priority to gender-based violence in their programmes. School enrolment was almost universal both for girls and for boys, and the literacy rate for young people was 99 per cent. Enrolment and retention rates for girls were higher than or similar to those of boys, and at higher education levels, there were significantly more women than men.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

59. **Mr. Barkan** (Israel) said that it was unfortunate that the Palestinians, instead of trying to present ways in which they might meet the challenges of the problematic status of women in Palestinian society, preferred to ignore the real reason for that situation and attack Israel. It was religious extremism which was the main reason for the low status of women and children in Palestinian society. For 50 days, women and children in Israel had been under an indiscriminate rocket barrage from Gaza against Israeli towns and communities, and it was only because Israel had developed modern defence mechanisms against rockets that mass destruction in Israeli cities, which would have led to a huge humanitarian disaster, had been averted. It was unfortunate that the Palestinian Authority, which refused to enter into peace negotiations with Israel, sided with Hamas and supported the terrorist attack of Hamas against Israel, thereby conveying the message that it had abandoned a two-State solution in favour of the destruction of the State of Israel.

60. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that everyone was aware that the statement by the representative of Israel consisted of lies and distortions and did not require rebuttal. She drew attention to a press release by the Secretary-General, issued on 14 October, after he had visited

Gaza and seen the destruction caused by Israeli bombardment and visited some schools, in which he stated that the enormous destruction in Gaza was a source of pain to him personally and a shame to the international community; and that no amount of Security Council sessions, reports or briefings could have prepared him for what he had witnessed that day. She urged delegations to read the rest of the Secretary-General's very moving and very sad account of the reality that was being faced in Gaza. Israel was not innocent of its crimes and gross violations of Palestinian rights; it was an occupying Power and, as such, had obligations and responsibilities under international law.

*The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.*