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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 9th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 7 October 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Farngalo (Vice-Chair) ..... (Liberia)  
*later:* Ms. Eyheralde (Vice-Chair) ..... (Uruguay)  
*Chair:* Ms. Farngalo (Vice-Chair) ..... (Liberia)

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*In the absence of Mr. Braun (Luxembourg), Ms. Farnagalo (Liberia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 26: Advancement of women (continued)**

**(a) Advancement of women (continued)** (A/74/38, A/74/137, A/74/224 and A/74/235)

**(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/74/220 and A/74/222)

1. **Ms. Nyi** (Myanmar) said that ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women was essential for inclusive and sustainable economic growth and social development. Her country had adopted a national strategic plan for the advancement of women to effectively promote and protect the rights of women, based on the 12 priority areas presented in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The plan included equal access for women to resources, opportunities and services, as well as their representation and participation in decision-making and policymaking at all levels.

2. Myanmar had adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards violence against women and the Government was drafting a bill to enhance their legal protection from all forms of violence. The Government had been cooperating with national women's organizations, United Nations agencies, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other development partners for the advancement and empowerment of women. The adopted sustainable development plan was a comprehensive social, economic and environmental policy reform agenda that enhanced the rights of individuals, especially of women and girls. The lower house of parliament had approved the creation of a new committee to pursue equal rights and opportunities for women in politics, the economy, and social and cultural affairs and to assist women in gaining access to professional training and jobs. Her country reaffirmed its commitment to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

3. **Ms. Tesfamariam** (Eritrea) said that her country had long been convinced of the need to recognize women's equal participation, not only as a human right, but also for the construction of a prosperous society. Promoting gender equality and harnessing the productive potential of women was a necessity and prerequisite without which adequate and sustainable socioeconomic development could not be obtained. Her Government had adopted a national policy on gender which would provide policy guidance to uphold the

principles of gender parity and equality. Eritrea had adopted programmes and policies that progressively safeguarded women's participation in and contributions to the development of the country.

4. **Ms. Elmansouri** (Tunisia) said that gender equality had always been a priority for her country and that the introduction of gender parity in the first democratic municipal elections had resulted in women accounting for 47 per cent of those elected. Tunisia was implementing programmes for the socioeconomic empowerment of women and girls in rural areas, allocating 19.5 million dollars to provide social protection for approximately 1.3 million rural women. Her country had recently adopted a national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and had organized a forum on gender equality in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Agency, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Ministry for Women, Family, Children and the Elderly had published a national report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the report covered seven cross-cutting areas, focusing on past accomplishments, challenges and obstacles and future priorities and commitments.

5. **Monsignor Hansen** (Observer for the Holy See) said that migrant women deserved to be welcomed, protected and integrated into communities and that they deserved full and equal recognition before the law, including access to the justice system. His delegation believed that the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration offered an important framework to address violence and discrimination against women migrant workers and called attention to human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the context of international migration. The Holy See reiterated the importance of the promotion of women's rights so that they might realize their full potential and contribute to the common good of society.

6. **Mr. Dinh Nho Hung** (Viet Nam) said that the issue of gender in the context of climate change was increasingly gaining recognition and attention and that women should be acknowledged as dynamic actors in climate change adaptation. Since 2008, Viet Nam had included and promoted gender equality in its domestic policies related to climate change and disaster risk reduction, and had also taken action under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Viet Nam had also been working with United Nations agencies on projects to strengthen the capacity of women to respond to and cope with climate change, and

those projects had improved the status of women within their families and communities. In 2020, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of UN-Women would provide renewed impetus for the advancement of women's rights.

7. **Ms. Fareena** (Maldives) said that the empowerment of women and girls was vital for the sustainable future of any country and that ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls was the cornerstone of policies for greater economic empowerment and gender mainstreaming. Her country had gradually promoted women's empowerment by increasing economic and educational opportunities. The Maldives had achieved gender parity in education, with an equal number of boys and girls in secondary education, and women graduates outnumbered men in higher education. Improved health services had reduced maternal and child mortality. The Maldives had adopted legislation on violence against women, but challenges remained in its implementation. Raising awareness and moving away from stigmatization and the natural tendency to assign traditional roles must be part of a wider effort to promote women's empowerment.

8. Her Government placed great importance on increasing the number of women in executive positions, emphasising the central role of women in national development. Currently, 35 per cent of ministerial posts in the cabinet were occupied by women, two female supreme court justices had recently been appointed and approximately 50 per cent of all ambassadors were women. However, the participation of women in formal employment was low, unpaid care and domestic work remained largely unrecognized, and an unfair share of household responsibilities and lack of childcare services made it difficult for women to be employed or to assume leadership positions. In order to support working mothers, the Government had introduced flexible working schemes to alleviate the disparities, as well as six months of paid maternity leave for working mothers. It was also expanding the financial inclusion of women, especially those in remote islands, by giving them easy access to loans and mobile banking, and was planning to introduce special lending schemes for women working in agriculture. Only 4 of the 85 members of parliament were women, and the economic, social and cultural barriers that prevent women from running and winning elections needed to be removed. The Government would continue its efforts until every woman and girl in the Maldives achieved equal opportunities, choices, acceptance and access.

9. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that his country reaffirmed its commitment to its obligations

under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and that it had made women's empowerment part of State policy, with over 200 commitments to close the gender gap by involving various government agencies. As part of its national action plan to eliminate violence against women, Argentina was preparing to implement a law to prevent, punish and eliminate violence against women, and it had recently approved a law on gender parity in political representation and a law for mandatory training on gender and violence against women for all public employees in the executive, legislative and judicial powers. His Government was concerned about the situation of elderly women, women with disabilities indigenous women and lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex women and, as a result, the country's gender policies were aimed at empowering all women, and specifically those who suffered multiple types of discrimination. Argentina had recently hosted a forum for women mediators that incorporated a gender perspective, so that trained women mediators could participate in peace processes and have access to decision-making positions.

10. **Mr. Baror** (Israel) said that women had always held central roles in his country, not by virtue of laws or affirmative action, but because they were qualified. The mandatory military service in Israel served as a major social integrator and a cultural unifying force as people learned to judge others based on their abilities and not on their gender or sexual orientation. Israel supported the efforts to ensure gender balance at United Nations events and hoped that one day such measures would no longer be necessary. Israel recognized the advances made regarding women's rights over the past 24 years, but there was still a lot of work ahead.

11. **Ms. Gargard** (Netherlands) said that the need for women's equality was an established fact and that it was time to change the system that did not allow equality. Those who suffered most under poverty, capitalism, climate crisis and inequality were women and other minorities, and the system that allowed that type of suffering must be changed; improving the lives of those who suffered the most would make life better for everyone.

12. **Ms. Diedricks** (South Africa) said that mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes and allocating adequate resources should be part of national, regional and global efforts to champion the rights of women and girls. South Africa had implemented legislation and policies to empower women and promote gender equality, but additional resources were needed to achieve equality by 2030. Her Government had given priority to empowering women

and girls and ending violence against them and was working to achieve the commitments made at the national gender summit. Likewise, African programmes for women's empowerment and equality had been given high priority and their measures of success would include, among others, the inclusion of women in peace processes, their increased representation in public life, their economic empowerment and financial inclusion, and action taken to address their access to land, technology, markets, infrastructure and capital. South Africa concurred with the reports of the Secretary-General on women migrant workers and women in rural areas and supported the principles of safe, orderly and regular migration, as well as ensuring that women in rural areas had access to productive assets, including land, credit and financial services.

13. **Mr. de Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his Government was firmly committed to the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls and it had reaffirmed its determination to fight violence against women, in particular femicide. The Government had launched a national pact to review the current normative framework, to propose concrete measures to protect women from aggression and to develop prevention initiatives, including education programmes to combat violence against women. The national pact initiatives included an amendment to the law on the protection of women against domestic violence. The policies that had been implemented through the national ministries to strengthen women's rights underpinned the international action conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

14. His country condemned the practice of abortion as a contraceptive method, and the Government was implementing policies for sexual and reproductive health within the framework set out in national legislation. Families played a fundamental role in promoting and protecting human rights, including women's rights, and it was important to support families, especially those that faced situations of socioeconomic vulnerability. As recently confirmed by the Brazilian Supreme Court, the family unit, including those composed of same-sex couples, was the basic element of society and enjoyed the special protection of the State. A significant number of Brazilian families were headed by one parent, often a woman, and it was necessary to protect a healthy family environment in order to ensure a safe place for women and children and to combat and prevent violence and discrimination.

15. Brazil had supported two resolutions of the Human Rights Council on the strengthening of women's rights and considered the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence

Against Women an instrument of the utmost importance. Women of African descent, rural women, indigenous women, elderly women and women with disabilities could suffer multiple forms of discrimination and required special attention and protection from the Government. Specific programmes for women entrepreneurs assisted them with access to credit and agricultural land. Ways to recognize unpaid care and housework, which fell mostly on women, were under discussion by the Government.

16. **Ms. Kamal** (Egypt) said that significant progress had been made with respect to women's empowerment and gender equality in her country. At the political level, women's representation had reached unprecedented levels: there were now 90 women members of parliament and 8 women ministers. The national security adviser to the President was also a woman. The unemployment rate among women had decreased from 24 per cent in 2014 to 19 per cent in the first quarter of 2019. Women now made up 44 per cent of government employees. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency had been awarded the UNDP "gender equality seal" for public institutions in recognition of its progress in achieving gender equality, making Egypt the first country in the Arab region to earn that distinction. The gender equality seal programme would also be implemented in the tourism sector.

17. At the legislative level, a new investment law included specific provisions to ensure equal investment opportunities for both men and women. The law on the civil service had been updated to extend the period of paid maternity leave from three to four months. The Criminal Code had been amended to introduce penalties for verbal, physical and sexual harassment, including by telephone or the Internet, which included prison terms ranging from 6 months to 5 years in addition to fines. A package of measures adopted to eliminate violence against women included the publication of a training manual for judges. A special unit had also been set up in the National Council for Women to implement and follow up on the national strategy to combat violence against women, and three specialized clinics and a psychological support service had been established within the Forensic Medicine Authority. The Egyptian Government was committed to cooperating with all relevant United Nations entities in the fulfilment of its international obligations in the field of women's rights.

18. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that his Government was committed to ensuring the equal status of women in all areas, politically, socially and economically. As chair of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network, Namibia had hosted the capital-level meeting of focal points in Windhoek, becoming the first African

country to chair the network and host such a meeting. At that meeting, the Focal Points had adopted a communiqué recommending impact-driven national plans on women and peace and security, strengthening the nexus between disarmament, small arms and light weapons and women and peace and security, integrating the agenda in regional organizations and policies and the role of youth in implementing the agenda. Namibia would be launching a women's peace centre and welcomed commitments from other Member States on concrete deliverables, such as Commitment 2025, the initiative on women's inclusion in peace processes led by Finland and Spain. According to the International Peace Institute, when women participated in peace processes, the resulting agreement was 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years.

19. The achievements of Namibia had been significant in terms of women in politics and in decision-making positions, education and the girl-child, eliminating HIV and AIDS and preventing mother-to-child transmission, access to commercial farmland and the implementation of a social safety net, among others. The persistent challenges included the increasing number of cases of gender-based violence, in particular in the context of domestic relationships; and climate change, which was having devastating effects on women, as Namibia was experiencing the worst drought in three decades. The effects on female-headed households, particularly those in rural areas engaged in subsistence farming, were a cause of concern. The Government had set out five priority areas for the advancement of women over the next five years, in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: poverty eradication and food security; elimination of violence against women; access to productive resources such as land, sexual reproductive health and rights for women and men, with a special focus on maternal health and the elimination of HIV/AIDS; and gender and climate change.

20. **Ms. Ndaw Dieng** (Senegal) said that her country deplored the feminization of poverty around the world and the enormous disparities between women and men, in particular in rural areas and among women migrant workers. Senegal called on other Governments and the international community to take appropriate measures to ensure the empowerment and protection and full exercise of the human rights of rural women and women migrant workers. In Senegal, women outnumbered men, especially in rural areas, and they accounted for approximately 60 per cent of the agricultural workforce and produced around 80 per cent of food. The Government had taken measures to promote the empowerment of women and girls as part of its national action plan. The national strategy for gender equality

and parity reaffirmed the commitment of the Government to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Among the initiatives taken to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were the inclusion of a gender dimension in the State budget, the establishment of a delegation to promote the economic empowerment of women, a project to reduce migration by providing rural employment and a literacy programme and a vocational training programme to combat poverty.

21. There had also been considerable progress in the implementation of the emergency community development programme, which had facilitated access to drinking water in over 300 villages, provided post-harvesting equipment for women, and improved mobility by opening 255 km of rural roads that provided access to over 200 villages. The school attendance rate was 87.5 per cent, and combating school dropout of young girls was a national priority. Senegal had created regional committees, chaired by the regional governors, to combat gender-based violence. To improve data-collection, follow-up and review procedures to take into account the disparities between men and women, Senegal had set up an annual assessment of the gender dimension in public policies. It was clear that despite efforts for the advancement of women, challenges persisted, especially in relation to poverty, sexist stereotypes, gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices.

22. **Ms. Yayi** (Cameroon) said that her country had been paying particular attention to the situation faced by Cameroonian women migrants and domestic workers who had become victims of criminal networks in countries where Cameroon had no diplomatic representation; without consular protection many women migrants found themselves living in quasi-slavery in countries where they did not speak the language, their passports had been confiscated and they were victims of violence. The Government had taken steps to repatriate women in that situation, implemented awareness-raising campaigns and called for vigilance. At the institutional level, an interministerial committee had been set up in order to coordinate humanitarian actions on the ground and examine the humanitarian, socioeconomic, health and security challenges, as well as the legitimate concerns of the host communities in order to support migrants in general, and women migrants in particular. In certain countries where the situation of migrants was of particular concern as a result of the systemic, structural and political conditions that portrayed migrants in a negative way, the situation of migrant domestic workers was even worse, as their

lack of education increased their vulnerability to all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation.

23. In the area of combating violence against women, Cameroon had made considerable progress with programmes to promote gender equality that promoted and protected the rights of women, prevented violence against women and improved the conditions for their participation in political life, their access to justice and their social and legal status. A national strategy to eliminate gender-based violence had been prepared, and assistance and help was provided to women and widows who were victims of family and conjugal violence. To that end, centres had been set up to provide legal and psychosocial support to vulnerable women and women victims of violence. All of those achievements were proof of the political will of the Cameroonian authorities to build a harmonious society.

24. **Dame Karen Pierce** (United Kingdom) said that it was a moral and economic imperative to advance gender equality and women's rights, and her country remained committed to the empowerment of women and girls and their protection across all areas of action. Rape and other forms of violence continued to be used as weapons of war, and the United Kingdom aimed to secure justice and shatter the culture of impunity and provide aid to support prevention strategies and a combination of physical and psychological support for survivors, including efforts to tackle the stigma that they faced. In November, the United Kingdom would host an international conference to mark the five years since the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict.

25. As the pen holder on women and peace and security, the United Kingdom would continue to ensure that the agenda was front and centre in the run-up to the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). The priority would be to support women peacebuilders working at the community level and ensuring their meaningful participation in peace processes. The United Kingdom was proud of its long-standing support for sexual and reproductive health and rights and recognized that those issues were central to peace and security, as well as the prevention of, and response to, conflict-related sexual violence. Countries must ensure that all women and girls had access to sexual and reproductive health services. Globally, over 130 million girls were out of school, and only 39 per cent of rural girls attended secondary school. The United Kingdom was supporting girls' education through its global campaign "Leave No Girl Behind".

26. **Ms. Pobee** (Ghana) said that her Government had enacted progressive legislation and instituted policy measures and strategies to promote the empowerment of

women in all spheres of national life, including equal pay for equal work and three months of paid maternity leave. The important role of rural women in food crop production and in the fishing sector, as well as in food preservation and distribution, had been recognized in the policy measures adopted by the Government to protect their rights regarding land acquisition and inheritance. Rural women were being educated in their civil and political rights, and all girls had access to free education.

27. Ghana had implemented a microfinance system that had disbursed 126 loans in 2018, including 76 received by women, and financial institutions had been encouraged to ensure gender parity in their provision of financial services. Commitment to enhancing women's entrepreneurship was based on the conviction that it would advance inclusive economic growth, improve nutrition and education, help build human capital and make households more resilient to shocks. Efforts to address gender-based violence included provision for mediation through alternative dispute resolution methods and the creation of an office that provided a main entry point into the justice system. The office worked in close collaboration with the relevant sector ministries and non-governmental organizations, and the outcomes had included culturally-sensitive workshop curriculums designed to counter victim-blaming stigmas, education for children on the warning signs of gender-based violence and resources for counselling.

28. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that the progress achieved since the first women's conference included the increase in the number of girls in school, higher numbers of women in paid jobs and in elected positions and leadership roles, and improved property and inheritance rights for married and divorced women. Those achievements showed that gender inequality could be reduced through government action. However, despite that significant progress, women and men did not enjoy the same rights. Approximately 70 per cent of those living in poverty and two thirds of illiterate adults were women. Over 300 thousand women died each year of preventable childbirth complications, 99 per cent of them in the global South. Approximately 90 per cent of war victims were civilians, and most of them were women, children and older persons. Yet the representation of women in legislative bodies around the world was only 24.3 per cent.

29. Cuba was proud to show tangible results in the progress and empowerment of women and girls. The country's new Constitution maintained and reaffirmed the principle of equality and non-discrimination, women's reproductive and sexual rights, protection from violence against women and established

institutional and legal mechanisms to that end. In the Cuban National Assembly, 53.22 per cent of representatives were women, which was the second-highest level of women's representation in parliament worldwide. Sexual and reproductive rights, including the right to abortion, were protected as part of the provision of health care services.

30. To end violence against women and girls, all unilateral coercive measures must be lifted, including the economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba for almost 60 years. The embargo was an obstacle to the full development of the country and to women's progress, and also constituted a form of direct and indirect violence that affected Cuban women's right to development.

31. **Mr. Kvalheim** (Norway) said that gender equality was the most valuable investment that could be made and had been decisive for his country's development. Failing to promote women's participation in paid work would result in wasting half of a country's skills and capacity. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality would contribute to achieving the other Goals as, for example, increased education for future mothers would result in lower child mortality rates. Investment in quality education, in particular for girls, was the single most effective way of promoting sustainable development. In 2019, Norway was allocating approximately 448 million dollars to global education and increasing its support for girls' education by nearly 5.5 million dollars. Between 2017 and 2020, it would increase its investments in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights by approximately 85 million dollars. Gender equality was not a policy option but the only way forward towards a more just world where men and women had the same economic opportunities and were equal before the law.

32. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that despite the achievements in the advancement of women and girls, it was still an unfinished task. In Iran, the number of women executives at all levels had increased by 5 per cent over the past two years and by 2021, at least 30 per cent of all managerial positions would be occupied by women. In May 2019, a revision of the Civil Rights Law had resulted in a bill that would provide Iranian citizenship to children born to Iranian mothers who had married foreign citizens. With regard to admission to universities and higher education institutions in the current academic year, girls had once again outnumbered boys. As part of the national development plan, the Government would evaluate Ministries and

public agencies with regard to the advancement of women.

33. The indiscriminate and unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on developing countries had a disproportionate impact on women and girls. Their access to basic health-care services and medicine and their right to food and food security were particularly affected by the imposition of such illegal measures.

34. **Mr. Bastida Peydro** (Spain) said that significant progress had been made over the past year as countries that were committed to gender equality had adopted laws to protect the human rights of women and girls, abolished norms restricting those rights and had taken active measures to combat violence against women and girls. There had also been positive signs regarding the participation of women in parliaments and in public institutions. Spain was at the forefront of the commitment to gender equality, convinced that a fair world could not exist without gender equality. In addition to a solid normative framework, his country's policy priorities included a reduction in the gender salary gap, promotion of women's participation in decision-making processes in all areas and support for the teaching and training of women for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

35. Member States must move forward and address the obstacles to the participation of women in the decision-making processes in the areas of peace processes and efforts to combat climate change. Any retreat regarding women's rights was unacceptable. There could be no retreat from the defence of sexual and reproductive rights, and no failure to use all the available resources to combat violence against women and girls. His country would continue to promote the women and peace and security agenda, and had presented, together with Finland, the initiative known as Commitment 2025 to promote the participation of women in peace processes and to keep women at the negotiating table.

36. **Mr. Sisa** (Botswana) said that his country had incorporated the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action into its national laws, thereby ensuring equal access to ownership and control over productive resources such as land, property, finance and inheritance. Legal practitioners, law enforcement officers, and health and social workers had been trained in gender-sensitive case management. Gender equality and mainstreaming had been incorporated into the national development plan and other specific national policies. Botswana had achieved gender parity at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels and

women's representation had increased in leadership and decision-making positions. His country had encountered challenges in increasing the representation of women in parliament, which at 6.3 per cent was low by regional and international standards. His Government continued to undertake public-awareness campaigns to address gender-based violence. He appealed for international assistance to build the capacity of the country's national gender institutions.

37. **Ms. Kipiani** (Georgia) said that her country had implemented successful reforms and introduced legislative amendments aimed at improving the legislative framework on gender equality, combating domestic violence and violence against women and increasing the role of women in decision-making. In 2018, an action plan had been adopted to combat violence against women and domestic violence and to protect victims and survivors. As a result of the legislative changes, the forthcoming periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been subjected, for the first time, to parliamentary review. To achieve gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals, her Government was promoting the economic empowerment of women and had created two thematic inquiry groups to study the barriers that resulted in women's low level of participation in economic programmes and to develop recommendations for overcoming those obstacles. In 2019, the Government had amended the Labour Code to include a definition of sexual harassment in the workplace and had adopted a law against discrimination that covered labour and pre-contractual relations, education, social protection and health care.

38. The Government was prevented from sharing the human rights protection framework with women and girls in the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions who were suffering grave violations of their fundamental rights and freedoms as a result of the occupation by Russia. The absence of international monitoring mechanisms had resulted in further deterioration of the humanitarian and human rights situation on the ground.

39. **Mr. Fernandez De Soto Valderrama** (Colombia) said that for the first time, his Government had included gender equality in a national development plan and would create a national system for women in order to group the policies, strategies and instruments related to the human rights of women and encourage gender mainstreaming in State policy actions. Colombia had strengthened institutional mechanisms that addressed gender issues, had included a gender focus in budget planning and creation and had taken important steps in the production of official disaggregated statistics. With

regard to the rights of girls, a recent significant achievement had been the launching of a model for a differential and comprehensive approach to the protection of children's rights.

40. UN-Women had recently recognized Colombia as one of the 10 countries with the most gender-balanced cabinets in the world, and the Government's goal was to have women in 50 per cent of management positions by 2022. The proportion of women among elected officials had also increased, and in the 2018 legislative elections 35.5 per cent of the candidates had been women.

41. **Ms. Quiel Murcia** (Panama) said that her country had successfully integrated women into various important spheres of national life, including election to public office. The Government's commitment to gender policy was reflected in the fact that women accounted for 37 per cent of Cabinet members. For the empowerment of women and girls, it was also necessary to increase efforts to achieve a quality education, which was a tool that benefited their families, their communities and, as a result, their country. Panama had followed a policy that focused on offering leadership spaces for women and giving public institutions the resources to implement policies to eliminate gender-based violence, reduce femicide at the national level and create the conditions for rural women to have access to employment. Although there were still challenges to the full integration of women in the academic and employment spaces, one positive sign was that more women were finishing their university studies and achieving better grades than men.

42. The high rate of teenage pregnancy continued to be a challenge and had a negative effect on the access of those young girls to high-quality education and decent work. Panama had recognized the imperative of providing women with access to modern family planning methods and to sexual and reproductive health care as a decisive factor in promoting the sustainable, social and economic development of the population. A recent campaign had drawn attention to the impact of the crime of trafficking in persons. Her delegation acknowledged that men could and should be the main allies of women in efforts to achieve gender equality and to educate future generations to eliminate all violent and discriminatory practices in the medium and long term.

43. **Mr. Panayotov** (Bulgaria) said that his country had amended its legislation to include provisions for gender equality and non-discrimination, and to criminalize domestic violence in cases when the offence was committed by a current or former spouse or partner. Bulgaria was in the process of drafting its first national action plan on women and peace and security and was



committed to supporting the meaningful participation of women in peace processes. His country's efforts were aimed at improving the participation of women in the labour market. Women were represented in high-ranking public positions, including the Vice-President, the Chairwomen of the National Assembly and two of the three Deputy Prime Ministers, while women occupied 49 per cent of managerial positions and accounted for half of the country's scientists. Bulgaria had joined a number of international initiatives in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment.

44. **Ms. Taradai** (Ukraine) said that her country attached great importance to the equal and inclusive participation of women. According to the results of the first national survey on gender equality, 77 per cent of Ukrainians believed that gender equality was important for the promotion of democracy and for securing sustainable peace and development. The women and peace and security agenda had been integrated into the ongoing security and defence reform. According to the Ministry of Defence, there were currently 27,000 uniformed women, an increase that was the result of Government actions to repeal discriminatory legal provisions that had impeded women from joining the military. For the first time, the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) included the introduction of gender advisers and gender mainstreaming in higher education institutions and the security and defence sector. Women could now occupy military positions and ranks, including those of officers.

45. Critical steps had been taken to ensure equal opportunities for men and women in the fields of employment, education and training, economic and social activities, and decision-making processes, while women held a third of ministerial positions in the newly appointed Government. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, together with the Ministry of Social Policy, had been among the first to launch the gender equality audit. The progress achieved was an encouragement to promote gender equality across different areas of social life, by overcoming stereotypes and introducing gender statistics and gender-responsive audits.

46. **Ms. Sánchez-Pimentel** (Dominican Republic) said that the Ministry of Women was leading the implementation of several plans and programmes to contribute to gender equality in the public and private sectors, as well as the creation of an office to track indicators to help to make policy decisions to contribute to gender equality and a helpline for women who were subject to gender-based violence. The Dominican Republic was successfully implementing programmes to

create efficient macroeconomic policies to reduce poverty and inequality.

47. **Ms. Vives Balmaña** (Andorra) said that in 2017 her Government had passed a law on the rights and responsibilities of patients and professionals in the health system and on their medical history, which guaranteed the right to information, autonomy, confidentiality and fair treatment. Andorra wanted to be an active participant in the debate on actions for a real and universal improvement for the situation of women. A law on equality and non-discrimination had been approved so that all government activities and plans must make provision for equal treatment and opportunities. She recognized the commitment of the Secretary-General to achieving gender parity throughout the Organization.

48. **Ms. Henry** (Jamaica) said that her country was committed to achieving gender equality, which it deemed to be an essential component of inclusive socioeconomic growth and development. Legislation against sexual harassment was under discussion and the national action plan to eliminate gender-based violence was being actively implemented. Her Government had increased the budgetary allocation to provide services and assistance to women in abusive environments. An initiative had been launched to promote equality, encourage women to follow non-traditional careers, and to address gender-based violence, and gender parity in decision-making and leadership positions in educational institutions. Jamaica was pursuing policy initiatives to address discrimination against women in the labour market.

49. **Mr. Margaryan** (Armenia) said that women's empowerment and gender equality were fundamental pre-requisites for tackling global challenges – from peace and security to sustainable development and climate change. His Government supported the meaningful participation of women in public affairs and political life and acknowledged the importance of the participation of women in the Velvet Revolution. The representation of women in elective bodies was expected to increase to 30 per cent in 2021. The recently adopted action plan for gender policy gave priority to the improvement of national mechanisms for the advancement of women, the prevention and eradication of gender discrimination and the expansion of economic opportunities for women.

50. Armenia had pledged to enhance and strengthen the mechanisms and partnerships that supported the political, social and economic empowerment of women, in particular in order to promote the participation of women and girls in community-building and decision-

making processes and in leadership roles across society. Women had an important role in conflict prevention, confidence-building and reconciliation efforts, and the national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security prioritized gender mainstreaming in the security sector, including peacekeeping and peace-building activities. The inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions was among the priorities of security sector reform in Armenia.

51. **Mr. Valtýsson** (Iceland) said that his country had ranked at the top of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index for 10 consecutive years, and yet challenges remained to fully closing the gender gap. In order to achieve gender equality, targeted social infrastructure investments and innovative policy tools were needed. An example of such tools was the recently approved law on equal pay, which required employers to obtain certification on the basis of an equal pay standard that served to analyse their pay structures, identify potential discrimination and make corrections. Iceland had pledged to eliminate the gender pay gap by 2022. His country was concerned about the increased politicisation of women's human rights and the increased efforts to roll back advances that had been made with regards to bodily autonomy, comprehensive sexuality education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence. Iceland reaffirmed its commitment to the advancement of the rights of all women and girls, as addressing the challenges that prevented progress on gender equality and the fulfilment of women's and girls' human rights was a shared responsibility.

52. **Mr. Zavala Porras** (Costa Rica) said that as a result of incorporating the principle of parity in legislation and public policies, his country had reached historically high numbers of women representatives in Congress in 2018, as well as the first Cabinet with gender parity. Parity was also reflected in the high participation of women in decision-making positions and in equal salaries in the public sector, and Costa Rica had advocated increasing the presence of women in international organizations.

53. His country had two national policies that served as the basis for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5. The first was a national policy on equality, which served as the foundation for financial autonomy. It included provisions for the prohibition of discrimination on the basis on gender, social insurance for part-time domestic workers, labour inspections that incorporated a gender perspective and the creation of a household satellite account for unremunerated domestic labour. It also provided for support programmes for

women-owned companies. The second national policy addressed the prevention of violence against women, and was implemented through 77 local networks across eight regions.

54. Costa Rica considered women to be disproportionately vulnerable to climate change, and also to be fundamental agents for mitigation and adaptation, which was why a gender perspective had been integrated into national policies on biodiversity and forests, disaster risk management and the national decarbonization plan. Work was being carried out on projects related to climate change adaptation and mitigation with women in indigenous communities. Costa Rica reaffirmed its commitment to equality between men and women and underlined the importance of a State structure centred on the rights of women and their autonomy in all fields.

55. *Ms. Eyheralde (Uruguay), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

56. **Ms. Bajracharya** (Nepal) said that although her country had reduced the number of people living below the poverty line, including women, reduced the maternal mortality rates, enrolled more girls in school, made family planning services more accessible, criminalized violence against women, and adopted legal provisions to empower women, it had fallen short in fulfilling its commitments to mainstream gender equality and empower women and girls. The Constitution guaranteed the rights of women and girls, including by criminalizing all forms of violence against them, by guaranteeing lineage rights, reproductive rights and property rights, and by requiring the State to provide women with special opportunities for education, health care, employment and social security. As a result of constitutional provisions for representation, women accounted for 41 per cent of all representatives elected at the federal, provincial and local levels in recent elections. National development plans were gender-sensitive, which had resulted in more women participating in politics, civil service and the security forces. Legal provisions would pave the way to support women's rights, mainstream gender equality and empower women and girls.

57. **Ms. Mohammed** (Nigeria) said that her country remained committed to the full and effective implementation of the declarations and goals on gender equality and women's advancement, and that there could be no road to women's empowerment and gender equality without social integration and inclusion, poverty eradication and the implementation of concrete economic measures. Nigeria had implemented various social investment programmes and an economic

recovery and growth plan that had lifted many women out of poverty and was encouraging the involvement of women in various activities through the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Bank of Industry and the Bank of Agriculture, as well as commercial banks.

58. Sexual and gender-based violence constituted one of the most brutal manifestations of human rights violations and yet it was often underrecognized and underreported. To counter that phenomenon, a gender-based violence electronic dashboard had been launched to improve documentation and to support a mechanism to monitor and respond to gender-based violence across the country. Her country called upon other Member States to address the effects of armed conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls, as well as the challenges faced by refugee women and girls.

59. *Ms. Farngalo (Liberia), Vice-Chair, resumed the Chair.*

60. **Ms. Elgibreen** (Saudi Arabia) said that her country welcomed the efforts by the United Nations to promote women's rights in terms of economic capacity-building. Her country had amended laws that prevented women from enjoying their rights in order to help them meet the economic challenges they faced. Her Government was seeking to ensure equality for women in education and in all sectors, by establishing education programmes in rural schools, such as literacy schools and professional training programmes, which provided capacity-building for women so that they could join the labour market. Saudi Arabia had an agricultural rural development programme that supported small farmers, both men and women, and sought to establish job opportunities to prevent an exodus to the towns. There was also a programme to improve the situation of farming families. National laws and regulations had been revised and a number of amendments had been introduced to laws on the male guardianship of women and in order to provide women with equality in terms of marriage and divorce and civil rights, education, employment, housing and travel. Saudi Arabia was committed to implementing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and would strive to ensure achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

61. **Mr. Moussa** (Djibouti) said that 2020 would be a milestone for the promotion of women's rights. He encouraged other States to implement policies to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Ministry for Women and the Family had launched a number of initiatives on the promotion and empowerment of women, which sought to provide capacity-building for vulnerable women and support

economic empowerment through revenue-generating activities. On International Women's Day the delegation of Djibouti, together with those of Canada, Morocco, Guinea and Singapore, had organized a workshop in New York on ways and means of increasing the participation of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, to ensure equitable and sustainable development.

62. **Mr. Mutua** (Kenya) said that his Government was reviewing its policies, including those on prevention and response to gender-based violence and on social protection, to ensure that they were addressing emerging issues in the promotion and protection of the rights of women. New policies had also been presented on gender and development and on the eradication of female genital mutilation, with the latter including a declaration with neighbouring countries to address the cross-border dimensions of that issue. Other policies that were being developed included one on women's economic empowerment and on family protection and succession, which recognized the legitimacy of both genders in property inheritance and land rights. Partnerships had been established at the national and country levels to establish gender-based violence recovery centres in major public hospitals where survivors had access to justice and received integrated medical and psychosocial support services that enabled them to resume their normal productive life.

63. A bill had been submitted to parliament to increase the representation of women and of other special interest groups. The Government, together with non-State actors, had developed a training curriculum on women's leadership that had been introduced in all State training institutions. He called on other delegations to join Kenya as it addressed critical issues for the empowerment of women and girls, including financing to sustain the achievements to date and complete the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as envisaged in the "three zeros" to be reached by 2030: zero unmet need for family planning; zero preventable maternal deaths and zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls.

64. **Ms. Cartwright** (Bahamas) said that the geographical and archipelagic landscape of her country posed a challenge to the implementation of national programmes. Since the Bahamas believed in a holistic, inclusive approach to gender equality and empowerment that took into account national development needs, it was important to draw from, strengthen and tailor existing mechanisms, as the Government sought to incorporate gender mainstreaming into wider public

policy. Her country had established a compliance unit within the Ministry of Social Services to accurately assess access to public services and resources using information and communications technology. The Government would continue to guarantee the rights of women regarding health care and in the workplace, and to ensure that there were no gender-based pay gaps in the public sector. Once the national gender equality policy had been implemented, the pay differences in the private sector should also disappear. In the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, the Department of Gender and Family Affairs was working with the United Nations Population Fund to minimize instances of gender-based violence and respond to cases of such violence in shelters.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*