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Chair: Mr. Salvioli

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(continued)

Initial report of Ghana (CCPR/C/GHA/1; CCPR/C/GHA/Q/1 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ghana took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chair** congratulated Mr. Shany, Ms. Seibert-Fohr and Mr. Fathalla on their re-election for another term of office on the Committee.
3. **Mr. Ayine** (Ghana) said that his Government looked forward to the Committee's review of the country's initial report and regretted the delay in the submission of the State party's replies to the list of issues.
4. The rights and freedoms set forth in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were also enshrined in the Constitution of Ghana. The Constitution provided for the establishment of a human rights court and an independent commission on human rights and administrative justice and set out directive principles of State policy which upheld the rights of the people of Ghana. Furthermore, it guaranteed the independence of the judiciary and the media so that the Ghanaian people could hold the Government to account for its action. The Government's commitment to ensuring freedom of the press was reflected in the country's high ranking on the World Press Freedom Index, while the people's commitment to a constitutional democracy was demonstrated by the fact that they had overwhelmingly voted for that system of government in the referendum held some 25 years ago following decades of military rule.
5. In the context of the obligations which the State party had assumed upon becoming a member of the United Nations, during its third term on the Human Rights Council his country had played an active role in championing causes that would expand the frontiers of democracy and human rights. It had extended standing invitations to all special procedures mandate holders and was participating in numerous international initiatives concerning issues, ranging from the plight of children in armed conflict to business and human rights. It had also been one of the five countries that had launched the Convention against Torture Initiative. In an age of interdependence, no country should use the sovereign principle of non-interference as a shield behind which to undermine human rights. Indeed, if the world had turned a blind eye in the name of non-interference, the international community could not have defeated apartheid. Criticism and contributions from the Committee would assist the Government in improving the human rights situation in the country and fulfilling its international obligations under the Covenant.
6. **Mr. de Frouville**, noting that the initial report had been submitted 14 years late, said that the Committee hoped that there would not be such a delay in the presentation of the next report so that the continuity of the dialogue could be maintained in the future. The fact that the State party had welcomed the visits of several special procedures mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, demonstrated its high level of commitment to the fulfilment of its international obligations, and it was his hope that the State party would continue to ratify new instruments, such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. It was to be noted that the country had undertaken a large number of reforms since the 1990s relating to, for example, HIV/AIDS and persons with disabilities. However, while there was no lack of political will, it appeared that difficulties often arose because legislative plans were not always given effect. Ghana was certainly a developing country but it had many economic advantages and a wealth of natural resources on which it could draw in order to overcome the challenges that it faced.

7. In reference to paragraph 1 of the list of issues (CCPR/C/GHA/Q/1), it should be pointed out that the rights set out in the Covenant were formulated differently in the Constitution and, consequently, guaranteeing the rights protected under the Constitution did not systematically ensure the enforcement of the Covenant rights. It also appeared that, in cases where the Covenant had been invoked in the courts, the decisions which had been handed down had in fact rested on the provisions of the Constitution, rather than those of the Covenant. Furthermore, it was his understanding that no procedure was in place for the implementation of the Views of the Committee. He therefore would like to know whether the State party envisaged transposing the Covenant into national legislation in order to enable the courts to have recourse to international law and establishing a specific procedure for the implementation of the Committee's Views.

8. With regard to communication No. 2177/2012, *Johnson v. Ghana*, he noted that the process of amending the law in order to abolish the death penalty had been initiated in 2011 but had only been approved by the Cabinet in April 2014 and had yet to be put to a referendum. When did the Government envisage concluding the reform process? Did it plan to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty?

9. With regard to paragraph 2 of the list of issues, although the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice had been accredited with A status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC), that body had nonetheless expressed some reservations concerning certain aspects of the Commission. He would therefore like to know whether the State party planned to alter the procedure for appointing members of the Commission in order to strengthen its pluralism and independence and to empower the Commission to act on its own initiative. Had it taken any measures to comply with the Commission's recommendation to establish a "democracy fund" for all independent constitutional bodies? He would also like information on the mechanism established by the Commission in 2013 for lodging complaints of discrimination on the basis of HIV/AIDS status or sexual orientation, including details on any complaints submitted by means of that mechanism and any measures adopted in order to follow-up on those claims.

10. **Mr. Iwasawa** said that, with regard to paragraph 3 of the list of issues, further information would be welcome concerning the situation of persons with mental disabilities in the light of reports by the Special Rapporteur on torture which indicated that the Mental Health Act was not being properly enforced, that he had observed extremely disturbing practices involving such persons in the prayer camps that he had visited and that such persons were unable to challenge their detention before a judge owing to the fact that the camps were privately owned. There were also reports of widespread abuse of female sex workers by police, including instances in which they obliged those women to engage in sexual activities with them. He would appreciate the delegation's comments in that regard, as well as on reports that non-Ghanaians faced discrimination on the basis of national origin, nationality and ethnicity. Further information would also be welcome on measures taken to put an end to the stigmatization of persons with albinism.

11. With respect to the questions posed in paragraph 4 of the list of issues, he would appreciate it if the delegation would clarify whether sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex were criminalized by virtue of section 104 of the Criminal Offences Act of 1960. He would also like to have more information on the follow-up to complaints of discrimination submitted by means of the reporting system of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice. The Committee would be interested in hearing the delegation's comments on the reports that had been received concerning discrimination, stigmatization, hate speech and homophobic discourse, including by State officials and the

media, and reports of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons, as well as the measures taken to protect the victims.

12. **Ms. Waterval**, noting that her questions would concern paragraphs 5 to 8 of the list of issues, said that she would like to know when the Intestate Succession Bill and the Property Rights of Spouses Bill were to be adopted by the Parliament and what measures would be taken to ensure their effective implementation once enacted. What difference was there between those bills and the existing legislation on those same subjects? She would appreciate an explanation of the six-month rule that was established in the Intestate Succession Bill and how it would affect the surviving spouse.

13. With regard to the participation of women in political life, she would appreciate it if the delegation could elaborate on the outcome of the State party's 1998 affirmative action policy and its efforts in 2002 to increase women's representation in district assemblies. She would like to know whether the Cabinet had approved the Affirmative Action Bill, whether that bill had been submitted to Parliament and, if so, what the time frame for its adoption was. Had the Government begun preparations for the implementation of the 40 per cent quota for women's representation which would be introduced once that bill had passed?

14. She welcomed the involvement of the traditional women leaders known as Queen Mothers in the daily deliberations and key decision-making processes of the National and Regional Houses of Chiefs and would like to know whether the promotion of the participation of women in the Land Administration Project related exclusively to Queen Mothers or also to other women. Were the allowances paid to Queen Mothers equal to those paid to their male counterparts?

15. With regard to domestic violence and gender-based violence, she wished to know whether persons who practised female genital mutilation were prosecuted and whether victims had recourse to compensation. What measures were taken to put an end to the harmful practice of *trokosi*, or ritual servitude? She would be interested to hear the delegation's views regarding the fact that, although polygamy was illegal in Ghana, it appeared to be permitted under customary and sharia law. The Committee would also welcome the delegation's comments on the findings set out in paragraph 69 of the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery on her mission to Ghana (A/HRC/27/53/Add.3). That report discussed the abuses that occurred within polygamous unions and the fact that the different ranks of the different wives rendered some vulnerable to mistreatment. Given reports that 27 per cent of all girls were married before their eighteenth birthday and that, according to paragraph 171 of the State party's report, anyone who compelled a person below 18 years to marry was committing an offence, she wished to know how many persons had been prosecuted on that charge and what happened to the girls concerned. She also wished to know what measures the State party was taking to do away with the so-called "witch camps" to which some poor and elderly persons accused of witchcraft were banished.

16. In the light of the fact that, according to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service, 10.3 per cent of reported cases of gender-based violence had resulted in successful convictions of the perpetrators, she would like to know what the outcome of the rest of the cases had been. Had shelters been set up for women victims of domestic violence and had they been provided with redress?

17. It would be helpful for the delegation to elaborate upon the State party's reply to the questions raised in paragraph 8 of the list of issues. How many cases had been fast-tracked by the Family Tribunal and Gender-based Violence Courts? Further information would be welcome on the activities of the response centres that had been set up to receive reports of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. The Committee would also like to know

whether the Government had evaluated the work of those centres and whether their funding was sufficient.

18. **Mr. Bouzid**, noting that his questions would refer to paragraphs 11 to 15 of the list of issues, said that he wished to know whether the State party intended to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant. He would appreciate it if the delegation could explain the Government's position with regard to the recommendation issued by the Constitutional Review Committee concerning the abolishment of the death penalty. He would like to know what progress the State party had made towards the abolition of the mandatory imposition of the death penalty for certain offences, whether it intended to revise the Constitution to prohibit capital punishment altogether and, if that was the case, when such action would be taken. He wished to know whether the State party intended to commute all existing death sentences to sentences of life imprisonment.

19. With regard to paragraph 10 of the list of issues, he would be interested to hear about specific examples of cases in which police officers who had been involved in unlawful killings had been prosecuted for that crime. What kinds of reparation had been provided to the victims' families and in how many cases?

20. In the light of reports that there was no independent mechanism for investigating allegations of police brutality, he would like to know whether the Government intended to establish such a mechanism. Did the State party intend to review its laws and regulations governing the use of force by the police in order to bring them into conformity with its international obligations and with article 213 of its Constitution?

21. In relation to the questions posed in paragraph 11 of the list of issues, the Committee was concerned by reports that three out of five regions in the State party did not have enough ambulances to transport women to the hospital in the event of childbirth complications and that the number of unsafe abortions had risen sharply between 2010 and 2011. Were there plans to amend the abortion law in order to decriminalize all types of abortion? He would like to invite the delegation to comment on the Government's efforts to reduce the maternal mortality rate.

22. With regard to the understaffing of prisons and the use of selected prisoners, known as "black coats", to exercise authority over other prisoners, as discussed in paragraph 15 of the list of issues, he would be interested to learn of specific cases in which "black coats" had assaulted other prisoners and to know whether the aggressors had been prosecuted or subject to disciplinary proceedings. Did the Government intend to review prison regulations that allowed whipping to be used as a form of punishment and did it intend to discontinue the use of "black coats" and to have trained employees take their place?

23. **Mr. Muhumuza** said that he wished to know what steps the State party had taken, other than its campaign to restore public confidence in the Ghana Police Service, to put a stop to police brutality directed against journalists. He wished to know whether any of the offending officers had been prosecuted, and if so, how many had been prosecuted and how many convicted. In view of the fact that in its replies to the list of issues the State party had said clashes between journalists and security personnel were isolated events, he would like the delegation to comment on statistics reported by the Media Foundation for West Africa that showed Ghana to be the country with the highest number of assaults on journalists in 2014 in that region.

24. He would be interested to hear the delegation's views on the effectiveness of the Government's efforts to uphold the Covenant rights in view of the fact that treaties could be invoked in court only after their incorporation into the national legal order and that not all of the Covenant rights might be protected under national laws. What measures had been taken to ensure that judges, lawyers and members of security forces were aware of the rights protected by the Covenant and upheld them?

25. **Mr. Shany**, noting that his questions would deal with paragraphs 12 and 13 of the list of issues, said that he welcomed the State party's acceptance of the recommendations made in the most recent concluding observations of the Committee against Torture (CAT/C/GHA/CO/1) to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to establish torture as a specific offence in its domestic legal order and to adopt a definition of torture that included all the elements contained in article 1 of the Convention. Since five years had passed since the publication of those concluding observations, however, he wished to know the reasons for the delay in acting upon those recommendations and when the State party expected to do so. He had taken note of the State party's position that a temporal linkage existed between the aforementioned legislation and ratification of the Optional Protocol; in his own view, however, such a linkage did not exist, since a State's ability to adopt a law that specifically prohibited torture was not dependent on its ratification of the Optional Protocol.

26. He would appreciate clarification concerning the safeguards that had been instituted to ensure the independence of the Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Bureau, which was tasked with investigating reports that persons had been tortured while in police custody. He would like to know how many complaints of torture or ill-treatment had been received by the Bureau, whether investigations into those complaints had been carried out and, if so, what their outcome had been. He was also concerned at reports that no official had ever been charged with extracting confessions by torture, inasmuch as that could point to the existence of a certain degree of impunity. Could the delegation provide information concerning complaints of ill-treatment in prisons and indicate whether independent mechanisms had been established to investigate them? According to the Special Rapporteur on torture, the majority of the inmates whom he had interviewed had had no complaints about their treatment by prison officials, although some had alleged ill-treatment by the police. On the other hand, a total of three complaints of ill-treatment at the hands of prison staff for a total prison population of 15,000 seemed to be a surprisingly low figure. The State party might wish to consider re-evaluating the mechanisms in place for the receipt and investigation of such complaints.

27. He had received reports which indicated that a large number of roadblocks had been set up throughout the country and that they were sometimes used by police officers in order to extract bribes. He would appreciate it if the delegation could explain why there were so many roadblocks and could tell the Committee what was being done to address allegations of police misconduct in that regard.

28. **Sir Nigel Rodley** said that he would like to commend the State party on its respect for fundamental freedoms, its return to democratic rule and the positive role that it played as an advocate for human rights in international bodies such as the Human Rights Council. In the report of the Special Rapporteur on torture on a visit to Ghana in November 2013 (A/HRC/25/60/Add.1), reference was made to isolated incidents of torture and ill-treatment by police officers during the initial stages of interrogations. In paragraph 12 of his follow-up report concerning a visit made in October 2015 (A/HRC/31/57/Add.2), the Special Rapporteur had expressed particular concern about reports that acts of torture and ill-treatment were committed with some frequency by the police during the apprehension, arrest and interrogation of suspects, often as a means of extracting confessions. He would be interested to learn what measures were being taken by the State party to implement the Special Rapporteur's recommendations.

29. **Mr. Muhumuza** said that it was his understanding that prayer camps for the treatment of people with mental disabilities were authorized to hold patients for not more than 48 hours. Was that time limit enforced? He would welcome information about the procedures in place for ensuring safe and easy access to the camps for relatives of the patients and others. He would like to know whether it was required that all camps should be

registered so that the authorities could monitor the treatment they provided, prevent the abuse of patients and enforce existing standards. He also wished to know whether public awareness campaigns concerning mental health had been organized to fight the stigmatization of people with mental disabilities, since negative attitudes towards mental disabilities reportedly prompted relatives to opt for prayer camps rather than to seek professional assistance. Were persons of all religious beliefs admitted to the camps?

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at noon.

30. **Mr. Ayine** (Ghana) said that the Constitution of Ghana was the supreme law of the land. Any other law found to be inconsistent with the Constitution was null and void. Article 11 established the hierarchy of laws. Chapter V of the Constitution established the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons living in Ghana, irrespective of whether they were Ghanaian citizens. That chapter covered virtually all the provisions of the Covenant, although the scope of the latter was broader in some cases. However, article 33 (5) of the Constitution clearly stated that the list of rights set out in chapter V should not be regarded as exhaustive. It should therefore be possible to incorporate all the rights protected under the Covenant into the country's human rights jurisprudence. He had personally cited the Covenant and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in an eviction case before the High Court in conjunction with article 33 (5) of the Constitution. He had lost the case because the judge had rejected his argument. He was convinced, however, that the provisions of the Covenant would gradually be incorporated into Ghanaian case law.

31. It was true that there was no need to ratify a treaty before incorporating its provisions into domestic law. However, the executive usually preferred to give priority to ratification because judges were unlikely to accept the provisions of a treaty as binding unless they were also reflected in national legislation.

32. With respect to the question posed earlier regarding the case of *Johnson v. Ghana*, Mr. Johnson had lost his appeal against the death penalty in the Supreme Court. He had then submitted a communication to the Committee alleging that his right to life would be violated if the sentence were to be carried out. His lawyers had also argued that fair trial procedures had been violated because the death sentence was mandatory and the judge could therefore not exercise his discretion and commute the death sentence. In fact, article 33 of the Constitution stipulated that any person whose fundamental human rights and freedoms had been contravened could apply to the High Court for redress. The Constitution recognized the right to life in article 13, but other provisions rendered the death penalty mandatory, for instance, for the crime of treason. A constitutional amendment was therefore a prerequisite for abolition of the death penalty, but a referendum must be held prior to any such amendment and a 75 per cent affirmative vote was required. The Constitutional Review Committee had recommended abolition, the Government had expressed its support for the recommendation and bills had been drafted for the purpose. Issues of timing and the availability of resources basically precluded the organization of such a referendum until after the general elections in November 2016.

33. The Constitution guaranteed the independence of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice. The status of the Commissioner was equivalent to that of a justice of the Appeal Court, and a complicated constitutional procedure was required for his or her removal. The status of the other members was equivalent to that of High Court judges. As Ghana was a developing country subject to resource constraints, the Commission occasionally relied on donor support. No attempts had been made to compromise its financial independence or to make it answerable to the executive branch.

34. **Mr. Quayson** (Ghana) said that the Commission's independence was non-negotiable. When he had been appointed to the office of Deputy Commissioner, his first

assignment had been to conduct an investigation into the actions of the President who had appointed him. He had done so without encountering any interference. Funding challenges, however, tended to undermine the effectiveness and independence of the Commission's work. The Constitutional Review Commission had recommended the establishment of a "democracy fund" for all independent constitutional bodies. As for the Commission's ability to take up cases on its own initiative, the Supreme Court had ruled in the *Anane* case that the Commission could not open an investigation unless an identifiable party filed an official complaint. However, no specific complaint was required in order to initiate an investigation into possible cases of corruption, bribery or misappropriation of public funds.

35. **Mr. Ayine** (Ghana) said that article 17 of the Constitution prohibited all forms of discrimination on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, or social or economic status. As chapter V was applicable to all persons, without distinction, discrimination against persons with mental disabilities, female sex workers, gay, lesbian, transgender persons and non-Ghanaians was prohibited by law. The 2012 Mental Health Act had been adopted with a view to streamlining procedures designed to eliminate discrimination against persons with mental disabilities and to prevent their confinement without due process of law. The staff of facilities for patients with mental disabilities were required to treat them with dignity and in accordance with the law. Mental health facilities were also regularly monitored.

36. While it was still illegal under Ghanaian law to engage in solicitation or prostitution, female sex workers were not discriminated against. Measures were being put in place to ensure that they were protected against abuse by the police and other persons and that they were treated with dignity.

37. **Ms. Baffoe-Bonnie** (Ghana) said that, pursuant to section 104 of the Criminal Code, whoever had unnatural carnal knowledge of any person aged 16 years or over without that person's consent was guilty of a first-degree felony. Unnatural carnal knowledge was defined as sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal, which presupposed that sexual intercourse between a man and a woman was natural. Until the Criminal Code was amended, same-sex sexual activity was therefore banned.

38. **Mr. Quayson** (Ghana) said that Ghana took a human rights-based approach towards the protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons, seeking to change negative attitudes towards such persons through public education campaigns rather than to prosecute those who held such attitudes. Three years previously, the Government had established an online system allowing LGBT persons to report incidents of discrimination based on sexual orientation, and that system had proved successful. It was hoped that, until the law was amended, that system would continue to improve LGBT persons' access to justice. Although prostitution was illegal, the Government trained law enforcement officers to treat female sex workers in a manner that was respectful of their rights.

39. **Mr. Appreku** (Ghana) said that a number of prominent public figures in Ghana were persons with albinism, which showed that they were accepted in society. Persons with albinism were entitled to equal treatment. As had recently been discussed with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, LGBT persons were not subject to discrimination in Ghana. Unlike most other African States, which were prepared to oppose the resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity that would be tabled for adoption at the current session of the Human Rights Council, Ghana would abstain. While the Constitution made no provision for same-sex marriage, and a referendum would probably be required before it could be amended, Ghana had no fundamental objection to upholding LGBT rights. His Government had sponsored resolutions on the protection of human rights defenders, whereas many other States opposed such resolutions on the grounds that the term "human rights defender" was a euphemism for a defender of

LGBT rights. No one would be arrested in Ghana for campaigning in support of LGBT rights, but it was not likely that the legislation governing marriage would be changed in the short term.

40. **Mr. Adadevoh** (Ghana) said that the Government did not have any policy that stigmatized LGBT persons; in all matters having to do with sexual relations, consent was the key issue. It was only when there was a lack of consent that the criminal laws applied. It was possible that rejected job applicants could abuse the right to non-discrimination by falsely claiming that they had suffered discrimination based on sexual orientation.

41. **Mr. Amoatey** (Ghana) said that, since few people openly declared their sexual orientation and employers did not ask candidates to do so on application forms, discrimination based on sexual orientation was rare.

42. **Mr. Ayine** (Ghana) said that, under the Constitution, the Government had been required to enact legislation regulating the property rights of spouses within a reasonable period after its entry into force. The 1985 Intestate Succession Act had been introduced to harmonize the succession regimes of the various ethnic groups in Ghana, some of which had been discriminatory towards women, but it had not dealt with the issue comprehensively. The Intestate Succession Bill and the Property Rights of Spouses Bill, which were currently under consideration, would clarify the distribution formula. The progress of the Property Rights of Spouses Bill had been hampered by the need to debate a number of controversial provisions, in particular the conferral of succession rights on unmarried couples who had cohabited for a period of at least five years, which, it had been claimed, risked allowing the cohabiting girlfriend of a married man to benefit at the expense of his wife in the event of his death intestate. Although Paramount Chiefs received larger allowances than Paramount Queen Mothers, whose allowances had recently increased from 150 cedis to 300 cedis, they also had greater responsibilities. The Committee could nevertheless be assured that its concerns on that score would be communicated to the relevant authorities in Ghana. There were three categories of marriage: Christian marriage, which was monogamous; Islamic marriage, which allowed a man to marry up to four wives; and customary marriages, which could also be polygamous. Child marriage was banned.

43. **Mr. Osei-Owusu** (Ghana) said that, although the Property Rights of Spouses Bill had not yet been adopted, the courts relied on the Constitution to make judgments on property rights and, in recent years, had repeatedly ruled in favour of spouses, in particular female spouses.

44. **Mr. Ayine** (Ghana) said that the delegation would supply the Committee with information on the landmark *Mensah v. Mensah case*, which had established the equality of property rights between spouses.

45. **Ms. Baffoe-Bonnie** (Ghana) said that persons who practised female genital mutilation were prosecuted, and that the delegation would supply the Committee with the relevant statistics.

46. **Mr. Ayine** (Ghana) said that the Government condemned the ill-treatment of persons living in so-called “witch camps” and was working alongside a number of NGOs to put an end to that problem. For cultural reasons, it had proved difficult to disband the witch camps and reintegrate their inhabitants. The inhabitants of the Gambaga witch camp, for instance, had refused to be reintegrated into mainstream society for fear of being stigmatized. The Government was instead focusing its efforts on providing the camps with social amenities and teaching their leaders how to treat their inhabitants with dignity. The delegation would endeavour to keep the issue high up on the Government’s agenda.

47. **Ms. Baffoe-Bonnie** (Ghana) said that the prosecution rate for domestic violence cases was only around 10 or 20 per cent. More victims now came forward than before because the Ghana Police Service and the Ministry of the Interior had set up a domestic and gender-based violence unit to support victims, and law enforcement officials had received training on how to gather evidence more effectively. The Chief Justice had set up courts with specially trained judges in almost all regions. The relatively low prosecution rate was due to the reluctance of many victims to testify against their partners.

48. **Mr. Appreku** (Ghana) said that *trokosi* was a cultural practice whereby a person, usually a woman, was sent to serve at a shrine in penance for the actions of a family member or ancestor. Although a representative of the social protection sector had unfortunately not been able to attend the present meeting, the issue of *trokosi* shrines had recently been discussed with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The practice was difficult to eradicate because it was so ingrained. Indeed, in some areas, the local *trokosi* shrine was just opposite the police station. The authorities were often powerless to intervene because there was often no coercion on the part of the creditor, since families feared being cursed if they did not send a member to serve the shrine. The delegation could provide the Committee with statistics on the prevalence of the practice if it desired.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.