



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Fifty-fifth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 1141st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 16 July 2013, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ameline

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

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

Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Cape Verde (continued)
(CEDAW/C/CPV/7-8; CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/7-8 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Cape Verde took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 10 to 14

2. **Ms. Fortes** (Cape Verde) said that the secondary school curriculum covered a variety of social issues including sexual and reproductive health. In schools, counselling psychologists were on hand to give guidance to pupils on such issues and to ensure their general well-being. Sexual abuse in schools was a punishable offence. There was a government-run institute for adolescents and children that specifically dealt with issues related to child abuse and child labour. A hotline had been set up for registering complaints concerning violence against children. Data on the number of complaints of sexual abuse filed and convictions obtained could be provided at a later date. Her Government was working to increase the enrolment of girls in vocational training for jobs usually performed by men. The number of girls choosing to undertake such training was growing steadily.

3. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that Cape Verdean legislation provided for equal pay for equal work in both urban and rural areas.

4. **Ms. Schulz** said that that guarantee of equal pay for equal work was not in conformity with the Convention or with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), as both instruments provided for equal pay for work of equal value.

5. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde), noting the distinction between the concept of equal pay for equal work and that of equal pay for work of equal value, said that her Government would provide additional information on that subject at a later date. An assessment of the National Programme for Reproductive Health had been carried out and recommendations on the subject of sexual and reproductive health had been made. The Programme also covered issues such as cervical and prostrate cancer screening. Her Government was aware of the need to take a more holistic approach to sexual and reproductive health. While homosexuality was not a criminal offence and the Constitution prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, in practice discrimination did exist. However, a number of organizations actively promoted the rights of sexual minorities, including through demonstrations.

6. Her Government had recently passed a law setting a minimum wage, which would help to provide migrant workers with decent work. Now that a minimum wage had been set, the relevant authorities could ensure that migrant workers were earning the national minimum wage and were not being exploited. Furthermore, domestic workers were now covered by the Cape Verdean social security scheme. Her Government was also working to extend social security to small and medium sized enterprises.

7. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that economic autonomy was essential for the advancement of women. Noting that the majority of pension holders were women, she asked what percentage of women pensioners lived in rural areas; whether there were specific pension schemes for rural women; and how disadvantaged rural women were guaranteed a minimum level of benefits.

8. **Ms. Zou Xiaqiao** said that rural women still faced more difficulties than their urban counterparts in having access to health care and justice. Furthermore, they were underrepresented in community development initiatives. Noting with satisfaction that the State party's efforts to alleviate poverty focused on the plight of rural women, she asked what specific measures had been adopted to improve the literacy level of rural women and to increase their participation in decision-making processes. The State party also needed to do more to assist households headed by a woman, as many of them were living in poverty. She also wished to know whether there was a mechanism in place to monitor the implementation of the programmes aimed at empowering women heads of households.

9. While Cape Verdean legislation provided for gender equality as a general principle, that principle was seldom applied land to related matters. Noting that Cape Verde had a large number of rural women, she asked what the State party was doing to address the legislative shortcomings that prevented them from exercising their land rights. She also requested additional information on vulnerable groups of women, including older immigrants and women. She asked what measures the State party had adopted to protect their rights and to improve their situation.

10. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that there were two social security schemes in Cape Verde. The first scheme was funded by contributions and covered, inter alia, wage earners, civil servants and domestic workers. The second scheme was non-contributory and covered the remainder of the population. All persons aged over 65, persons with disabilities and persons who had no other resources received a social pension under the second scheme, which guaranteed a minimum level of benefits to all eligible persons, including a large number of women. In addition, certain women could benefit from a survivor's pension. Other benefits under that scheme included low-cost medication for elderly men and women with chronic diseases. Her Government also recognized the need to devise specific measures to address the problems facing groups such as elderly women, women with disabilities, female migrants and women living with HIV/AIDS.

11. **Ms. Fortes** (Cape Verde) said that her Government had lifted many families out of poverty by providing them with access to microcredit. A second programme to combat poverty was being rolled out. The programme awarded grants to households headed by women and to poor women in general. A second programme to encourage the efforts of female entrepreneurs was also being launched.

12. **Ms. Pimentel** enquired as to the measures adopted by the State party to assist widows of all ages.

13. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that informal landownership was a problem in Cape Verde, and the Government was therefore using resources from the Millennium Challenge Account, which was funded by the United States, to carry out a major land registration project. A gender specialist was involved to ensure that the needs of women, in particular, would be addressed since they made up a substantial portion of the rural population.

14. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that survivors of a legal or de facto union, regardless of their age, were entitled by law to claim the property accumulated during the union, as well as a survivor's pension.

Articles 15 and 16

15. **Ms. Pires**, said that, since cohabitation and divorce were reportedly on the rise, information on the legal protection afforded to women upon the dissolution of a union, whether legal or de facto, would be appreciated. She requested more details about the regime for the division of property and the provisions for alimony, child support and child custody. She wished to know whether the law established a waiting period during which a

divorced person was not allowed to remarry and whether that period was the same for men and women. With regard to cohabitation, she wished to know if the union had to be registered for the woman to avail herself of the protection provided by the law.

16. According to the State party's replies to the Committee's list of issues (CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/7-8/Add.1), although polygamy was not allowed under the Civil Code, de facto polygamy was a reality. She wished to know about the impact that the activities of the White Ribbon Network had had on polygamy and the legal protection afforded to women who had been in polygamous unions. She asked whether polygamous families were taken into consideration in the National Plan for the Family.

17. The Committee wished to learn about the measures taken to counter the stigmatization of single-parent families, particularly those headed by women, and whether they were afforded the same rights as other families, including single-parent families headed by men. In its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/CPV/CO/6), the Committee had recommended the full implementation of the minimum age for marriage. Updated information on the matter would be appreciated since reports had been received that children under the age of 18 could obtain permission to marry.

18. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that polygamy was punishable by law. However, there continued to be a number of men with several partners. The White Ribbon Network had been working with the Institute of Gender Equality and Equity to change the mindsets of men and shift society away from patriarchal paradigms. Work was done in schools, colleges and communities to promote new attitudes about what it meant to be a man, especially among young people. With regard to the family, a special family day had been celebrated with various activities, including ones aimed at increasing the social acceptance of non-traditional families and single mothers. The Institute had also entered into partnerships with academic establishments to conduct research into the net types of families that existed in Cape Verde, with a view to framing an appropriate response.

19. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that a union could be registered after the death of one of the partners provided that it could be certified that the union had been stable and lasted several years. Such registration would confer inheritance rights and other entitlements on the surviving partner. All heads of household and heads of single-parent families enjoyed the same rights before the law irrespective of their gender. There were both men and women in the country in multiple partner families. The children in such families enjoyed the same rights and were entitled to the same benefits as other children. The minimum age for marriage without consent was 18. A waiting period for remarriage had been established in the law to ensure a clear break between the two relationships in case the woman was pregnant at the time of the divorce and the paternity of the child might otherwise be in doubt. Since DNA testing could be used to establish paternity nowadays, it might make sense to update the provision in question.

20. **Ms. Pereira Silva** (Cape Verde) said that government measures to support women who wished to extricate themselves from relationships with men with several partners focused on removing their economic dependency on men. They were put in touch with microcredit services and NGOs that specialized in the economic empowerment of women and in raising their self-esteem. The country's first gender observatory had just been set up to monitor the physical, economic and political autonomy of women on the basis of multiple indicators, and the findings would be used to design more programmes for women.

21. **Ms. Fontes Lima** (Cape Verde) said that the Government was convinced that the involvement of men and women, the promotion of gender equality and the implementation of gender policies could contribute greatly towards achieving sustainable development, poverty reduction and economic growth in Cape Verde. The political will to further the advancement of women was clearly there, and specific measures had resulted in real

improvements in some areas, such as in female literacy. The country was also on course to achieve its targets in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. The empowerment and education of women played a key role given their direct impact on the effectiveness of preventive health programmes, for example. The constructive dialogue had been highly useful in identifying outstanding issues, and the Government looked forward to providing more information in its next report on the situation of women with disabilities, rural women, prostitution and trafficking in persons, as well as the other matters highlighted by the Committee, which would be addressed in the country's forthcoming gender equality plan.

22. **The Chairperson**, commending the State party for its efforts to protect the rights of women and girls in Cape Verde, encouraged it to implement the recommendations that the Committee had made in the past, as well as those that would be issued in due course.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.