



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Sixty-fifth session**

Summary record of the 1435th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 26 October 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Hayashi

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Burundi (CEDAW/C/BDI/5-6; CEDAW/C/BDI/Q/5-6 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Burundi took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that significant progress had been made in the enjoyment of women's rights in Burundi, despite economic and financial difficulties, as illustrated by the high levels of compliance with the requirement for 30 per cent female representation in government decision-making bodies. Training sessions had been used to disseminate the Convention to a range of actors, including judges, teachers and civil society actors, and defence and security forces had received training on gender-based violence. The measures adopted to improve women's access to justice included the holding of special sessions and setting up of special chambers to deal with cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

3. Despite the Government's promotion of women's access to credit, obstacles persisted in that regard, and she urged the international community to assist Burundi in bringing about the economic empowerment of rural women. Her Government had enacted an employment policy that respected women who worked in the informal sector, drawn up a national charter for social dialogue and established a national committee for dialogue on employment issues, in which men and women were equally represented.

4. While contributory social security schemes had existed in the country for several decades, they covered only the very small proportion of the population that could afford to make contributions. Given the need to improve those schemes and create a sustainable social protection framework, the Government had implemented a national social security strategy. However, priority had been given to developing and strengthening non-contributory social assistance programmes in order to assist the most vulnerable, who benefited least from social protection.

5. Women in urban and rural areas were able to participate in sporting, recreational and cultural activities. A range of activities were carried out by different police forces to eradicate trafficking in persons, and specialist services helped to reunite victims with their families. Police officers received training in human trafficking.

6. The recently enacted law on the protection of victims and prevention and punishment of gender-based violence broadened the definition of such violence to include harmful traditional practices and domestic violence. The Government had reported on the national gender policy to the parliament, and comprehensive care facilities had been opened in Cibitoke, Makamba and Muyinga under the emergency plan on sexual and gender-based violence and women's health in the Great Lakes region. Lastly, strategies to combat all forms of violence against women had been implemented in cooperation with civil society and local communities.

Articles 1 to 6

7. **Ms. Schulz**, noting the State party's discriminatory laws and lack of legislation that would ensure full respect for the Convention, asked when the Optional Protocol to the Convention and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and People's Rights would be ratified and when the process to adopt the reforms to the Personal and Family Code and the bill on

inheritance, matrimonial property and gifts would resume. When was the deadline for their adoption?

8. In the light of the reported restrictions on civil society organizations since April 2015 and financial controls imposed on NGOs, which had had to place their hard currency accounts with the national bank, she wished to know to what extent they were able to advocate in favour of the aforementioned laws and whether the restrictions would be lifted. She asked whether a general law on discrimination would be adopted, and, if so, when.

9. Noting that the courts did not invoke the Convention and that judges often made rulings that were at variance with the principle of non-discrimination, she asked: whether there were plans to reform the country's legal system so that women could enjoy their rights fully; whether there were any plans to implement the reforms proposed at the justice forum held in Gitega in 2013; what procedural guarantees were in place, including the right to a fair hearing and to free legal aid; how judges were trained on women's rights, the Convention, direct and indirect discrimination and gender stereotypes; and what training on non-discrimination was given to justice officials and police officers.

10. The Committee was concerned by reports of threats to lawyers defending persons accused of offences against the Government. She asked what measures had been adopted to ensure their safety and how women's rights were defended under such conditions. She asked what was being done to remedy the many reported problems with the country's legal system, in particular the slow speed at which it operated, and whether there were plans to release women accused of minor crimes from prison given that almost half of all women inmates were in pretrial detention.

11. **Ms. Patten** asked whether the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) would be extended or reviewed and whether resources would be allocated to it in future budgets. She urged the State party to provide information on the implementation of the resolution in its next periodic report.

12. There were reports that violence in the State party had created a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, and she wished to know whether measures had been adopted to prevent forced displacement and to protect the human rights of displaced women and girls. She would appreciate data on the number of internally displaced persons, disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity, and information on their living conditions. She wished to know how the Government addressed the particular needs of different groups of displaced women, including those subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. She wished to know what steps had been taken to resolve the current conflict and the extent to which women had been involved in conflict resolution processes.

13. The Committee had been informed that the parliament had voted to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and she wished to know whether the Government would engage in a dialogue with the Court at the next Assembly of States parties to the Statute, as suggested by the President of the Assembly. She would welcome further information on the Government's intention to withdraw, including the time frame and whether the decision had been taken in consultation with the judiciary, the public and civil society.

14. Noting the current preliminary examination of the situation in Burundi by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, she wished to know whether the State party would continue to cooperate with the Office during the year-long withdrawal process, particularly given that the decision to withdraw had been condemned as an attempt to shield the country's human rights record from international scrutiny. She asked how crimes under the Court's jurisdiction would be prosecuted domestically after its withdrawal, whether war crimes had been made a separate offence under domestic legislation, whether the judiciary

had received training in trying such cases and how the independence of domestic trials would be guaranteed.

15. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that a review of the Personal and Family Code was already under way; however, it was not known when that process would conclude. A study on the impact of a law on inheritance, matrimonial property and gifts had been completed and a committee established to evaluate the study and submit proposals to the Government.

16. Of the more than 4,000 civil society organizations in Burundi, just 5 had been suspended; they were not operating as non-profit organizations but as political affiliates of the country's radical opposition, organizing uprisings against the President and even claiming responsibility for grenade attacks in the capital. The Government had invited those groups to become official political organizations.

17. There was no need for a general law on discrimination because equality between women and men was enshrined in the Constitution, which took precedence over all other legislation. The judicial system did not place women at a disadvantage; rather, their lower levels of education meant that they were often unaware of their right of access to justice. To remedy that shortcoming, the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender had a department that handled legal aid, and there was a separate line item to cover women's legal fees. Judges, police officers and members of the defence forces received regular training on international instruments and human rights.

18. Women were imprisoned mainly for infanticide, witchcraft and minor offences. In an effort to reduce the prison population, women who had committed the minor offences often received presidential pardons.

19. **Ms. Girukwishaka** (Burundi) said that the process of renewing the action plan for the national gender policy had been launched with the support of UN-Women. Every year, the Government had appropriated a small amount for the implementation of the action plan.

20. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that, if any lawyers had been threatened for doing their work, they could turn to the justice system for protection. Anyone who had been displaced as a result of the ongoing crisis in Burundi was very likely to have been a resident of the four neighbourhoods of Bujumbura that had risen up against the Government. The persons displaced as a result of the killings that had occurred in the country in 1993 and earlier had been resettled long before or had returned to their native villages.

21. She did not know whether the Government intended to continue cooperating with the International Criminal Court. However, the parliament's vote to remove the country from the jurisdiction of the Court was an expression of the will of the Burundian people. Crimes against humanity and war crimes had been defined in Burundian law. Statutory limitations did not apply to such crimes.

22. Although the country's judicial officials were not well paid, the judiciary was independent. Judges were not beholden to the Government. The international community could help the country address the shortcomings in its justice system, but it seemed instead as if it preferred to turn its back on Burundi, which had never failed to send a delegation to appear before the Committee.

23. **Ms. Schulz** said that, session after session, Burundi appeared before the human rights treaty bodies to reiterate its plans to introduce necessary new laws. Little progress had been made, however, and, in the meantime, human rights, including women's rights, had not been defended as they should have been. She would welcome an answer to her earlier question as to whether the Government had acted on the recommendations made at the national conference on the justice system in 2013.

24. She asked what the Government was doing to ensure respect for the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). She wondered whether it intended to review the situation of the many women who had been imprisoned for having had abortions and whether it was prepared to make every effort to ensure that the Independent National Human Rights Commission maintained its A status.

25. **Ms. Patten** asked whether the Government intended to continue cooperating with the International Criminal Court on the recently opened preliminary investigation into the alleged crimes, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, that had been committed in Burundi since the emergence of the protest movement in April 2015. She also wished to know whether victims of serious gender-based crime were entitled to compensation under domestic law.

26. **Ms. Niyongere** (Burundi) said that the Ministry of Justice had begun work on the recommendations contained in the report on the proceedings of the conference on the justice system, an event that had been organized to bring about improvements to the administration of justice. Corruption in the justice system was not all-pervading. The isolated cases of corruption that arose were dealt with by a special court. Rape used as a means of warfare was defined as a crime against humanity under the Criminal Code.

27. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that the Personal and Family Code, which contained a number of discriminatory provisions, had been adopted in 1993, well before the current Constitution. It was not possible for the Government to bring the many laws that discriminated against women at once into line with the Constitutional provision enshrining the equality of men and women. Rome had not been built in a day.

28. She herself chaired the committee responsible for analysing the impact assessment of the law on inheritance, matrimonial regimes and gifts and submitting recommendations to the Government in that regard. She had never been told by the President of the country not to proceed with that work, but the Committee had been set up in early 2015, shortly before the outbreak of the uprisings of the same year. Little ordinary work had been done in Burundi in 2015. Only recently, with order largely restored, had work begun anew.

29. The Ministry of Health was involved in programmes for the distribution of contraceptives to women and girls. Interministerial outreach initiatives had been taken in a necessary attempt to change attitudes towards and raise awareness about the use of contraceptives. Many women had been imprisoned for having had abortions, which were illegal in Burundi. Although overcrowding was a problem in the country's prisons, Bujumbura Central Prison had a wing for women only, and there was a women's prison in the city of Ngozi in the north.

30. The reports of the Independent National Human Rights Commission, which she had seen presented to the parliament, did not appear to be the work of a body whose members had been intimidated by or were dependent on the Government. Before criticizing the Commission for perceived shortcomings, it would be better to allow the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to decide whether it still deserved its current status.

31. It was not clear who had been involved in the 13 cases of alleged sexual violence during the crisis that were referred to in an alternative report submitted to the Committee or why the victims had not sought justice in Burundi. The Humura Centre, which provided care to victims of gender-based violence, had no records of the cases in question. Until the victims filed complaints, accounts of alleged sexual violence were little more than rumours. In any event, rape victims were entitled to compensation under the law.

32. **Ms. Pomeranzi** said that she would welcome additional information on the extent to which the action plan for the national gender policy had been realized. It would be interesting to know, for example, how many local actors and bodies had been involved in implementing the policy.

33. **Ms. Chalal** asked whether the delegation could provide more information about the contents of the Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in the National Programme for Public Administration Reform, which the State party had mentioned in reply to the Committee's recommendation that it should take temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of de facto equality between men and women. She wondered how long the Guide was valid for and what the expected outcome of its publication was. She also wished to know what resources had been earmarked for the achievement of the goals set in connection with the Guide and whether there was a mechanism for ensuring that it was properly used to achieve equality in education, the judicial system and decision-making processes. The delegation should keep in mind that temporary special measures were taken for the achievement of specific objectives.

34. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that before any other steps could be taken, there had to be an expression of the will to achieve equality between men and women. In the case of Burundi, such an expression appeared in the Constitution of 2005, which had established quotas for the participation of women in the country's governing institutions. Before 2005, her delegation would have been composed otherwise.

35. **Ms. Girukwishaka** (Burundi) said that local and national implementation of the National Gender Policy for the period up until 2025 and its five-year action plans involved a number of ministries and civil society organizations. Each ministry had a task force responsible for mainstreaming gender issues, and mechanisms to ensure the advancement of women had an impact even in the *collines* (hillside settlements), the country's smallest administrative division. Development assistance initiatives were coordinated by a working group. Funding from international partners for specific initiatives related to the action plan made it possible to supplement the yearly appropriations made by the Government. A separate but complementary national strategy had been developed to combat sexual and gender-based violence. Its results, like those of the action plans for the national gender policy and for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), were being reviewed. If, as expected, the two plans and the strategy were renewed, they would be valid from 2017 to 2021.

36. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that information on temporary special measures would be provided in writing within 48 hours.

37. **Ms. Pomeranzi** said that the Committee still had no evidence showing to what extent the first five-year action plan for the period 2012-2016 in implementation of the national gender policy had been realized. More importantly, she wondered why there was still no political mechanism in place enabling women's NGOs to provide input to the design of the national strategy. How were women's NGOs involved in the plan at the national and local levels?

38. **Ms. Girukwishaka** (Burundi) said that implementation of the national gender policy involved various ministries and NGOs. Owing to budget constraints, it had not been possible to evaluate the first plan of action at the halfway stage, but an evaluation would now be carried out in order to make it possible to define new objectives. The process had been launched at an evaluation workshop at which each ministry and civil society organization involved had been asked to give its views on what had been accomplished. The next phases of implementation would be based on the outcome of the evaluation. As to the coordinating mechanism, it was true that provision had been made for a National

Gender Council, and that that had not yet been set up. However, coordination was carried out by the sectoral gender unit through its four thematic subunits.

39. **Ms. Acar** said that she wished to congratulate the State party on its efforts to combat gender-based violence against women and to create an egalitarian culture. Much of the work had involved training and improvements in access to justice. However, Burundi had now completed its sixth periodic report on implementation of the Convention and the Committee was interested in facts and figures.

40. The State party's replies to the list of issues provided no information on the outcomes of measures taken to eliminate harmful practices and stereotypes. She would like to know whether those measures had improved the perception of women in Burundi and society, whether the State party had conducted any studies investigating such cultural change and, if so, what results they had yielded. The prevalence of stereotypes that helped perpetuate women's image as inferior to men was intrinsically related to violence against women and was a major cause of society's inability or unwillingness to respond to violent acts against women; in other words, impunity for crimes against women was underpinned by negative stereotyping. It was for that reason that the Committee needed to know to what extent mindsets had changed — information that could be provided by studies of the kind she had mentioned.

41. There were reports of extreme cases of intersectional discrimination against albinos. She found it hard to believe that, in the twenty-first century, grown men should kidnap, mutilate or kill four-year-old girls or rape albino women in the name of extremely harmful traditions and beliefs. She would like some facts and figures showing what the State party was doing to eliminate such practices. She would also like to know why witchcraft was such a serious offence in Burundi and how many women were in prison for witchcraft.

42. The Committee's observations showed that, where there was rampant sexual violence, it was often accompanied by domestic violence and that, where violence against women was prevalent in the public sphere, it was almost always commonplace in the family. Could the State party provide statistics on the prevalence of domestic violence against women and the extent to which it was routinized and accepted in society? The information provided in the Government's replies was mixed and general and did not specify the numbers of women who were victims of domestic abuse. Did the State party have statistics on the reporting of domestic violence and on the prosecution and punishment of offenders in such cases? She would also like to know what was being done to determine the extent of violence against women in the home and to combat such violence in families.

43. **Ms. Patten** said that Burundi had a long history of sexual violence in periods of conflict, but it also occurred during peacetime and periods of stability: one Burundian organization had reported that, in 2015, between 120 and 130 victims of sexual violence had sought help each month. There were reports that, since the most recent wave of unrest had begun, members of the ruling party's youth league had repeatedly gang-raped opponents of the regime. She would like to know whether there were any plans to end impunity for such offences and bring suspects to trial. Noting that the State party report referred to a "zero tolerance" policy, she asked in what way that policy was implemented and how many cases had been investigated since 2015. She said that few women felt safe reporting abuse or sexual violence because of the close relationship between the police and the ruling party's youth league, whose members had been accused of such offences. She therefore wondered what efforts were being made to provide police, lawyers, the judiciary and prosecutors with gender-sensitive training in dealing with such crimes, to adopt codes of conduct for the police and to build capacity among the judiciary in order to ensure independence and impartiality. What investment was being made in resources to make it possible to address female victims' specific needs, including the impact of sexual violence on their reproductive health?

44. She asked whether the State party was developing standard operating procedures and procedures for referring victims to medical, legal and psychosocial services. What measures of protection were in place to minimize the further victimization of those reporting or giving evidence in court, prevent reprisals and protect them against threats to their safety?

45. **Ms. Gabr** said that Burundi was a source country for human trafficking. Its economic, political and security problems pushed women and children into sex tourism, mine and plantation work and domestic labour. In many cases, they were displaced into neighbouring countries, and she would like to know whether the State party had any figures for the numbers of refugees and displaced persons. What was it doing to protect them and prevent their exploitation? She welcomed the adoption of the law on the prevention and punishment of trafficking in persons and on the protection of trafficking victims and the associated 2014-2017 action plan, and she would like to know how many judgments had been handed down under the law, what protective measures were in place for victims and how traffickers were prosecuted. She would also appreciate more detail on the action plan and the implementation of the law and would welcome information on the composition, budget and role of the interministerial commission on trafficking in persons.

46. Prostitution in Burundi was not legal and women could be prosecuted under the law; girls under the age of 18, however, could not, and she wondered which law it was that protected them from prosecution if they were in fact working as prostitutes. Information received appeared to indicate a degree of corruption inasmuch as certain officials with responsibility for passport and visa issuance were facilitating women's and girls' passage to other countries where they would then work as prostitutes. She wondered whether the State party had any documented cases where such officials had been punished. She would also like to know what measures were in place for health protection for women working in prostitution and for their rehabilitation and social reintegration.

47. **Ms. Girukwishaka** (Burundi) said that there was no central database on gender issues but monthly figures for cases of gender-based violence, against both women and men, were provided by the Family and Community Development Centre in each province. The figures for 2014 showed nearly 14,000 cases; in 2015, there had been around 17,500 cases; and, in the first half of 2016, there had been nearly 3,500 cases; women were the victims in around 80 per cent of all cases.

48. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that the scope of the new law on gender-based violence was broader than the previous provisions of the Criminal Code. Whereas the Criminal Code had limited the definition of sexual violence to specifically sexual acts, the new law addressed numerous forms of discriminatory behaviour against women, extending its scope to cover even acts taking place in the household, previously untouchable by law, and addressing not only physical but also psychological and economic violence. Moreover, it placed a legal obligation on witnesses to report any such violence they were aware of, and on authorities to act on such reports.

49. The law would provide valuable support in educating men in what behaviour was unacceptable, but also in educating women to understand that they were not obliged to submit to men in their marriage. It would also prove a valuable tool for the judiciary in evaluating women's complaints. Her delegation would provide a written reply with figures on cases of sexual violence.

50. Attempts to demonize the youth league of the governing party had started in 2013. Many members of the youth league had themselves suffered immolation. The youth league was being stigmatized: one of her colleagues on the delegation was herself a member — was she to be regarded as a rapist or murderer? Any member of the youth league who committed a crime was punished like any other person, not protected by the police.

51. As to displaced persons, she said that 85,000 of those who had fled to neighbouring countries, either out of fear or for economic reasons, had returned to Burundi voluntarily. The Government helped by providing them with a resettlement kit.

52. The Trafficking in Persons Act of 2014 had been introduced to tackle the relatively new economically motivated phenomenon of young women leaving Burundi for countries like Oman, where they believed they would be employed as domestic workers. In reality, they were victims of trafficking for the purposes of exploitation. The Government was, however, taking steps to dismantle trafficking networks and prosecute perpetrators of that offence. By way of example, in 2015, four traffickers had been jailed, while three other cases from 2015 and five from 2016 were currently with the public prosecutor. Although the police had recently prevented 15 girls from leaving the country, it was difficult to know what else could be done to prevent their departure once they had reached the age of majority. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was nonetheless trying to establish processes to facilitate the return to Burundi of trafficked girls. The interministerial commission on human trafficking, which was supported by the International Organization for Migration, had only recently been established and comprised representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

53. **Ms. Girukwishaka** (Burundi) said that two care facilities — one public, one private — offered holistic support for victims of domestic and gender-based violence, while two other centres provided specific services, such as medical and psychological care or legal advice. As part of a World Bank project, another three centres providing comprehensive health and counselling services would soon be opened in the north, south and east of the country. Those services would continue even after that project had been completed since the services had been integrated into the health-care system. Referring to the figures provided in paragraph 37 of the replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/BDI/Q/5-6/Add.1), she said it was clear that although support was available to both women and men victims of gender-based violence, the vast majority of service users were women. Moreover, in most cases, the offences of sexual and gender-based violence occurred in the home, which meant that, by and large, most gender-based violence was in fact domestic violence.

54. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that, while prostitution was a criminal offence in Burundi, women prostitutes who had been victims of an offence faced no obstacles to seeking assistance from health-care facilities or from the police. All persons had equal entitlement to health care and access to justice.

55. **Ms. Gabr** said that she would appreciate answers to her questions regarding the interministerial commission on human trafficking, in particular concerning its mandate and budget. She also asked what measures had been taken or were envisaged as part of the related action plan for the period 2014-2017, whether the Government was working in cooperation with NGOs and international organizations to combat trafficking of persons and whether any shelters for victims had been established.

56. **Ms. Acar** pointed out that she had received no answer to her questions regarding the prevalence of domestic violence and discrimination against albinos.

57. **Ms. Patten** said that it was difficult to understand how the allegations of offences committed by the Imbonerakure youth league could be considered as being politically motivated in view of the volume of evidence against it. With that in mind, she would be interested to hear the delegation's views on the report of the United Nations Independent Investigation on Burundi, which had found abundant evidence of gross human rights violations, including sexual violence. The involvement of the Imbonerakure in such offences had been corroborated through witness and victim testimonies.

58. **Ms. Schulz** said that, in the Committee's experience, women working in prostitution in countries where it had been legalized still faced stigmatization and discrimination that hindered their access to health-care and other public services. Moreover, in countries where the practice was a criminal offence, police extortion, corruption and violence towards sex workers was rife. She was surprised to hear, then, that the situation in Burundi could be so vastly different from any other country in that regard.

59. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that information on the interministerial commission on human trafficking and on the multisectoral action plan for the period 2014-2017 would be provided in writing at a later date. There were shelters to protect victims, including the Humura shelter, and further shelters were provided for under the new legislation.

60. Albino persons received a great deal of protection in Burundi as part of efforts to prevent them from becoming victims of murder, a crime that was motivated by superstitions in neighbouring countries. Government-subsidized centres had been set up to provide accommodation, health-care and other related services to albino persons, thereby keeping them safe from harm.

61. She would welcome any suggestions or recommendations from the members of the Committee on how to improve the situation of women in prostitution. As things stood, no complaints of police violence or extortion had been received. If, however, such cases existed, prostitutes were entitled to the same rights to access to health, protection and legal redress as everyone else.

62. As to the United Nations Independent Investigation on Burundi, it was clear to the Government of Burundi that the report was, frankly, politically motivated. The Burundian authorities had fully cooperated with the experts and provided them with all the access they had requested, and yet they had produced a final report that was based entirely on rumours. They had even gone so far as to allege that the home of the President was being used as a place of detention and torture. The Government completely rejected the report and found it regrettable that the experts had shown such complete disrespect for it and for the Burundian people.

63. **Ms. Schulz** said that she wondered whether the Government would consider conducting a study to find out how women in prostitution were being treated by the police. Doing so would enable the State party to catalogue the experiences of prostitutes, record any offences against them, determine the prevalence of mistreatment or extortion at the hands of the police and develop appropriate mechanisms. In her experience, even in countries where prostitution had been legalized, guidelines were necessary to regulate the conduct of police officers when dealing with women prostitutes.

64. **Ms. Gabr** pointed out that no answer had been received regarding allegations of corruption among public officials in relation to trafficking in persons.

65. **Ms. Nkerabirori** (Burundi) said that, in addition to the International Organization for Migration, the Government worked closely with the Terre des Hommes International Federation. The recommendation to conduct a survey on the treatment of prostitutes by the police was a very interesting one and would be conveyed to the Government for its consideration.

Articles 7 to 9

66. **Ms. Jahan** said that the adoption of the 2005 Constitution had brought about positive changes in Burundi in the promotion of women's participation in public and political life. In particular, the introduction of a gender quota with a view to increasing women's political representation was commendable. The quota had largely been achieved in the National Assembly, the Senate, the Government and community councils; however,

women's representation on community councils of the *collines* remained very low. The State party should step up its efforts in that area by addressing the underlying obstacles to their participation, such as discriminatory attitudes, gender stereotypes and women's lack of economic independence and training. In that connection, she wished to know what capacity-building programmes were available to empower women and provide leadership training and technical advice.

67. Women's representation in political parties was also low and, in that connection, she wondered how many parties were headed by women, how many women from ethnic minorities and indigenous groups served in the different spheres of public and political life, how many women occupied positions of leadership in government ministries and what percentage of women had registered to vote.

68. In a similar vein, she asked: what role women played in supporting and encouraging other women to participate in public and political life, not only as candidates but also as voters; whether any measures had been taken within the framework of the National Programme for Public Administration Reform to ensure gender equality and review the criteria for certain positions to remove barriers to women's representation in decision-making roles; how many women occupied high-ranking roles in the judiciary and in the private sector; why women's representation in the diplomatic service had fallen; and whether any temporary special measures were in place to increase the proportion of women who represented their country at the international level.

69. Regarding article 9 of the Convention, she reiterated the Committee's recommendation in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/BDI/CO/4) that the State party should amend article 4 of the Nationality Code to bring it into line with article 9 of the Convention, in particular to allow a Burundian woman married to a foreigner to transmit her nationality to her husband or children on the same basis as a Burundian man married to a foreigner. She wondered whether there were any plans to amend the Persons and Family Code to ensure that women and men were treated equally in respect of transmitting their nationality and sharing parental responsibility. Moreover, since any change to the Nationality Code was considered to be a highly sensitive matter that required gradual changes in societal attitudes, she asked whether any targeted measures had been taken to bring about the required attitudinal shifts. While incremental changes were understandable in certain cases, she wondered whether the issue of nationality presented such a challenge in view of the positive progress already being made in the country.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.