



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

Thirty-second session

Summary record of the 668th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 January 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Manalo

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05-20422 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

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

Second periodic report of Algeria (CEDAW/C/DZA/2, CEDAW/PSWG/2005/I/CRP.2) (*continued*)

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

2. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), responding to a query about the number of women who were members of the Algerian Government and about women who worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that Algeria had four women ministers, responsible for culture, scientific research, status of women and the family and the Algerian community abroad, respectively. Four of the country's 90 ambassadors were women; two of them were on posting abroad while the other two had just returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after completion of their tours of duty. There was absolutely no discrimination with respect to recruitment to the diplomatic service. Staff were selected through competitive examinations, therefore on the basis of personal merit. As of 15 September 2004, 28.65 per cent of the staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were female, while the corresponding figure for embassies and consulates was 16.64 per cent, bringing the total percentage of female staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to 24.11 per cent. Responding to another question, he noted that the Committee on Human Rights was the body within the National Assembly which was responsible for all treaties. As a rule, such treaties were subsequently ratified by Parliament.

3. **Ms. Benabdallah** (Algeria), referring to the issue of nationality, said that the main modifications introduced in the 2004 preliminary draft code of Algerian nationality had been intended to enshrine gender equality, guarantee children's rights to nationality by allowing Algerian mothers to pass on their nationality to their children and take into account the new developments in society. She noted that the reform of the system of justice also dealt with the prison administration, including the protection of the rights of detainees, especially female detainees. All the preliminary draft laws had been finalized and the majority of them had already been approved at various levels of government, including at the Council of

Ministers level, as well as by the two chambers of Parliament.

4. **Ms. Alouani** (Algeria) said that there were no obstacles preventing women from participating in the electoral process as candidates or as the electorate. Indeed, thanks to the measures taken by the authorities in 1991 to eliminate proxy voting and heighten women's awareness of their right to elect the candidate of their choice, there had been a considerable increase in the number of women who had participated in the most recent elections held in 1997 and 2002. Thus, the number of women elected in the 2002 legislative elections to the National Assembly, 25, was double the number of those elected in 1997, 13. Furthermore, 149 women had been elected in 2002 to the Communal People's Assemblies compared to 80 in the 1997 elections. Concerning the elections to the Departmental People's Assemblies, 115 women had been elected in 2002 compared to 67 in 1997. With regard to the 2004 presidential elections, women's participation had been particularly high, with 46.49 per cent of them registering and 58.08 per cent voting. There had been a particularly high degree of participation of women in the 18-to-20-year age bracket, 77.33 per cent, demonstrating their keen interest in political affairs. All those figures notwithstanding, and although women were interested in political affairs, their level of participation was still lower than that of men and the Government was aware that there were still obstacles to be addressed. In particular, political affairs were still seen as men's business, but changes were under way and it was hoped that the electoral process in Algeria, which was proportional, would actually encourage new women candidates to stand for political office. Indeed, a woman had even run as a candidate in the most recent presidential elections.

5. **Ms. Tan** welcomed the decline in acts of terrorism in Algeria, but expressed concern about the safety and security of rural women. She wished to know what specific measures had been taken by the Government to stop terrorism, violence against women and children, rape and molestation and abductions in rural areas. She would also welcome information on any specific assistance given to the victims of such acts and on the breakdown of the rural population by gender.

6. **Ms. Khan** asked whether married women needed their husbands' permission to seek employment. Noting that the rapid rise in the female unemployment rate was

affecting young women, she wondered whether the Government had envisaged temporary special measures such as job quotas to address the matter. She would also welcome information on any macroeconomic reforms being carried out to address the critical issue of women's unemployment, how part-time work was organized under existing labour laws and whether part-time female workers were entitled to benefits, including maternity benefits. Referring to the Local Initiative Employees programme (ESIL), she wondered whether it was targeted to rural women in particular or to educated women, and whether there were any specific programmes available to rural women.

7. **Ms. Gabr**, referring to Algeria's external debt problems and its imminent membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), wondered whether the Government had any plans to mitigate the negative impact of trade liberalization on all categories of society, especially women, who would be the hardest hit. Noting that many rural women had remained in rural areas whereas rural men had moved to urban centres, she wondered whether the Government had envisaged any measures to promote the participation of rural women in the labour force. She would welcome further information on any awareness-raising campaigns targeting rural women, including information on any literacy campaigns.

8. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** asked whether the proposed reforms of the Family Code and Code of Algerian Nationality were meant to do away with all discrimination. Noting that the number of female-headed households had increased dramatically and that a large part of the population lived in rural areas, she said that the Committee would welcome information on the results of any research that the Algerian Government had undertaken on the situation of rural women, since more specific statistical information would enable it to better evaluate the success achieved by Algeria with regard to its gender approach to rural development.

9. **Ms. Patten** sought clarification on Algeria's labour laws. The delegation had stressed in its oral introduction that there were no discriminatory labour laws, yet according to the National Statistical Office, the percentage of women in the labour force had stood at 15.2 per cent in September 2001. If there was de jure equality, then there was a problem with regard to equality of results. In that regard, she wondered what steps were being taken by the relevant Ministry to

address that discrepancy and whether the Government was envisaging the adoption of temporary special measures to address the situation. Referring to the plan of action to mainstream gender into development, she sought information on the specific measures taken with respect to the programme for land development, including data concerning the number of rural women who had benefited from that programme. She would also welcome information on the property rights of women, including on any impediments in the current legislation or in the family code with regard to women's access to land. She wondered what government solidarity programmes had been put in place to assist rural women, given their extremely precarious situation, and what steps had been taken to meet the acute housing shortages facing the rural population in general and women in particular in view of the increase in the number of female-headed households. She also wanted to know the percentage of rural women that had actually benefited from the microcredit scheme set up in 1999.

10. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** suggested that, given the pressure that the International Monetary Fund would exert on Algeria to make concessions during the negotiations on its external debt, it would be a good idea to conduct a study on the impact of trade liberalization, especially on the situation of women. She further suggested that Algeria should carry out a study to gather data on work in the informal sector, given that it was a sector that was particularly active in poor and underdeveloped countries, and on the increasing involvement of women in the informal economy. Provision of such information in the next report would enable the Committee to accurately evaluate the role that women played and the extent to which their rights were being protected.

11. **Ms. Dairiam** asked what was being done to address all the factors hindering women's participation in the labour force, both material and ideological. The Family Code, for instance, enshrined legal subordination to the husband, and patriarchal values placed women as secondary wage-earners. She noted the report's statement that labour rights, especially in the private sector, were exercised through collective bargaining, with discriminatory provisions prohibited, but wondered what definition of "discrimination" was applied in that context, and whether women were adequately represented on the bargaining teams, both on the side of the trade unions and of the employers.

What steps were being taken to create an environment conducive to eliminating attitudes and practices that placed women as subordinate in marriage and within the family, since there was such a close link between rights in the private sphere and those in the public? Algeria's reservation concerning article 15, paragraph 4, stated that its provisions "should not be interpreted in such a manner as to contradict the provisions of article 37 of the Algerian Family Code", which stipulated that a man must provide for his wife unless she had abandoned the marital home. That left no provision for a case where a woman might wish to leave because of violence but could not, because she would lose the economic rights to which she had access only through her husband.

12. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** pointed out the difference between the total equality enshrined in law and the reality of higher unemployment for women in the labour market, despite the fact that Algerian women had shown themselves to be highly qualified and committed. If there was no direct discrimination, then the answer must be indirect discrimination, which was often revealed in social constraints like the duty of obedience to a husband and clichés like women as the "weaker" sex. In what sense, she wondered, were they weaker, when so often they played a triple role in society compared with the single role of men in the labour market? Women's family responsibilities were also frequently cited, as though men had none of those as well. There was a need for deeper understanding of the nature of indirect discrimination and substantive equality and a need to promote cultural change in that respect. It was the duty of the State to combat stereotypes, not only in the education system, but throughout society, and to implement the kind of laws that would achieve change. It was not enough to state that certain legal provisions were obsolete; if that was the case, they should be removed from the statute books. Regarding Algeria's reservations to the Convention, she encouraged the Government to use its political will to move further along the path of equality in the country.

13. **Mr. Flinterman**, referring to article 10, congratulated Algeria on its progress in making education, as an important instrument for achieving human rights and fundamental freedoms, available to both girls and boys. He was, however, concerned at the high drop-out and grade repetition rates. How many of those who dropped out or repeated a grade were from

rural or low-income families, what had been the findings of the study undertaken by the Algerian Government together with UNICEF in that respect, and what government policies had been implemented since then to reduce the drop-out rate? The figure of 53 per cent of women in higher education was also a remarkable achievement; he wondered how many of those were rural women, and what proportion were from low-, middle-, and high-income families respectively. Finally, he wondered to what extent government policy on continuing adult education focused on women in rural areas of Algeria.

14. **Ms. Zou** pointed out that legal equality did not necessarily entail de facto equality, in employment as in other spheres of life, and asked whether there was any special court or institution in Algeria to supervise the issue of discrimination in the labour market. It was clear from the report that many measures had been successfully adopted by the Government to solve the employment problems of women, for instance by supplying microcredit and supporting small enterprises, but she wondered whether they included provision of microcredit specifically for women.

15. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that Algeria's reservations to the Convention could not simply be removed by a stroke of the pen; only when the underlying conflict had been dealt with could a reservation be withdrawn. Even addressing the conflicts between Algerian legislation and the Convention would not mean an immediate end to discrimination, as ending the covert discrimination hidden behind people's behaviour and mentality was a long-term task. Concerning employment, Algeria had noted the Committee's suggestion that women needed encouraging to enter the workforce. They did not need their husbands' consent to do so, although they might have been discouraged by the provision of Muslim law that a husband was obliged to keep his wife. Perhaps the economic crisis of the last few years had led to a positive result by creating opportunities for women to go out to work as a task now shared between both the partners in a couple.

16. Terrorism was becoming a less serious problem in Algeria as a whole, but unfortunately the incidents that still occurred did so in rural areas. Women were no longer being kidnapped in the way which had so recently horrified Algerians and the world community, largely because of an increased security presence throughout the country. However, even if the problem

was not so pressing as it had been in the past, the Government was aware that it must remain vigilant on that score.

17. **Ms. Zitoune** (Algeria), replying to questions concerning the figures for rural women, noted the Committee's request for more statistical information in the next report. While there had been a Ministry of Agriculture for many years, the rural development element had existed only for the last two, hence it had only recently become possible to distinguish between the majority of rural women, engaged in farming, and those engaged in education, health and social services. Access to statistical information had also become much easier since the introduction in 2000 of a data collection strategy which was slowly being implemented. The 1998 rural census — the first in more than 20 years — provided information on the number of women working, how many full-time and, how many part-time. Replying to a question on what was being done, in terms of public information for development and literacy for rural women, she said that public information was available, but a lack of trained outreach workers made their task difficult in a big country. Outreach workers targeted both men and women in their work. The overall illiteracy rate in the country was 26 per cent, but in the rural areas it was 35 per cent, which was partly explained by the fact that more than 50 per cent of women managing a smallholding or otherwise working in agriculture were over 60 years old. National literacy programmes, both urban and rural, were being implemented by the National Literacy Agency and especially by non-governmental organizations, though studies were needed to understand the needs of rural women better and improve the programmes targeted at them. A socio-economic survey had been carried out in 2000 on one category, rural women living in mountainous areas, whose problems were different from those of the women living below in the plains. A more recent study, carried out by the Minister responsible for rural development in 2004, had covered most of the country and had provided the Government with much valuable information.

18. Algeria had no concept of private ownership of land, as land was state-owned and "leased" to farmers under a system enshrined in law in which there was no discrimination against women. She cited one land lease programme, which included approximately 400 women with 99 year leases, granted on condition that they

worked the land, and even allowing their children to inherit the lease, which was tantamount to ownership. The plots were either five hectares (irrigated land) or ten (land in more arid areas). Another such programme, the "Grand Sud", included 5,000 women, or 10 per cent of all participants. Concerning rural housing, there was a programme run by the Ministry of Housing and, in addition, housing was a component of every integrated development programme. There was a special fund for the most vulnerable, who tended to be women, and programmes for vulnerable communities, not covered by other agricultural programmes, which also benefited women. Another important mechanism was the "community action projects", highlighting economic activity, in the pilot phase of which 1,300 projects had allowed 810 women to benefit from funds earmarked for craftsmen and women.

19. **Ms. Boumghar** (Algeria) referred to the Committee's request for drop-out and grade repeat rates disaggregated by urban and rural areas. Although the Ministry of Education did not disaggregate as such, there were separate statistics for the different prefectures (*wilaya*), and since many of them were predominantly rural, it was possible to have a fairly exact idea of the split between urban and rural populations. The figures disaggregated by sex did show, surprisingly for some, that fewer girls dropped out of school or repeated a grade than boys. UNICEF had carried out a qualitative study on the drop-out rate, aimed at understanding its causes in order to improve corrective policies, and the results showed the importance not only of social, economic and cultural factors but also of where schools were situated. Many measures had been implemented to help children to complete their schooling, including boarding schools, canteens and semi-boarding; more than 3 million children were helped with the cost of schooling and given free books, equipment and even uniforms. Because some parents rejected the idea of boarding school, the policy had been changed to bring schools nearer to home, making them smaller, with multi-level teaching on the same premises. The idea of bringing the school to the family was developing, with the result that more children remained in school.

20. The Government already had data on the drop-out and grade repetition rates in rural areas by *wilaya*, and it was now studying the disparities within each *wilaya*.

21. Fifty-four per cent of all university students were women, and even in the scientific and technical fields

they represented more than half. Since there were universities only in the cities, over half the university resident students were rural women, and their numbers were rising at a rate of 15 per cent annually, as against 8 per cent for men.

22. Adult education in Algeria was combined with functional literacy training, and included consciousness-raising and remedial or foundation courses. Illiteracy was steadily declining, and the literacy programme was now targeted to those lagging furthest behind, women and girls especially. Five literacy centres had, for instance, been established in one remote mountain *wilaya*, where 70 per cent of the population was illiterate.

23. **Ms. Zitoune** (Algeria) said that the Government's agricultural and rural development programmes were not discriminatory. In addition, it had a sustainable rural development strategy that specifically involved all levels of the population — men, women, young people — from the outset as it developed each project, and it was working with local community leaders in focus groups to determine the local problems and priorities.

24. **Ms. Benabdallah** (Algeria) said, regarding inequality between spouses, that the proposed reform of the Family Code would abrogate articles 37 and 39, to which members had objected as making wives subordinate to husbands.

25. **Ms. Bouaoun** (Algeria) said that about 150,000 women — over 50 per cent of all beneficiaries — had participated in the job creation programmes that were part of the Ministry of Labour and National Solidarity's social safety net. Of the young unemployed university graduates given the pre-employment contracts described in the report (pp. 44-45), 80 per cent were women. Over 500,000 women had received head-of-household benefits and over 25,000 had received single women's benefits. Sixty-three per cent of the women integrated into the job creation programme had no occupational qualifications whatsoever. Seventy per cent of participants in another social integration mechanism, the wage earners scheme, were women. For rural women, there was a participatory community development programme that helped create jobs in crafts and sewing: in the year 2000, about 500 such projects had been set up throughout the country. Nine per cent of the beneficiaries of microcredit programmes were women,

working mainly as artisans or farmers, and such programmes were being expanded nationwide. Women represented over 12 per cent of the young entrepreneurs involved in microenterprise programmes.

26. The Government provided school busing, uniforms and allowances to 6 million schoolchildren in rural areas. In addition, about 300 non-governmental organizations had received support from the National Solidarity Fund for their social and humanitarian programmes, computer workshops and craft workshops, and had been given infrastructural support. For the handicapped, five Braille libraries had been set up.

27. **Ms. Boumghar** (Algeria) said that the security measures taken by the Government to combat terrorism had sought not only to re-establish order but to return displaced rural populations, which had been hardest hit by terrorism, to their villages, reconstruct housing for them and compensate victims. Article 145 of the amended 1993 Finance Act was being applied to provide monthly pensions for widows with or without children and had improved the lot of tens of thousands of families; it also provided assistance to rape victims and to women widowed as a result of the kidnapping of their spouses.

28. **The Chairperson** invited the members of the Committee to ask questions under articles 15 and 16 of the Convention.

29. **Ms. Simms** observed that everyone understood what was meant by the delegation's reference to sociocultural and psychological barriers that had to be overcome, as in every country women were marginalized. It was therefore important to speed up legal reforms, but even more crucial to put into effect a programme of mass education that would attack the root causes of patriarchy. It was her impression that the kind of national machinery called for in the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action was not strong enough in Algeria, the advancement of women generally being considered a "soft" issue, and it was thus essential to set up a body with political clout that could lobby the Government on behalf of women. Also, since not all women were equally oppressed, she was very interested in seeing an analysis of their situation by ethnic minority and class.

30. **Ms. Gnacadja**, noted that one of the reforms of the Family Code had been to abolish guardianship for adult women when a marriage was contracted (replies,

p. 4), but that apparently the law retained an option for women to delegate decisions regarding choice of spouse to a father or male relative. The report (p. 63) indicated that most marriages were now contracted less traditionally in Algeria, hence that last vestige of guardianship should also be done away with. It was not clear whether the practice of repudiation of a wife was still in effect. The report also stated that women now had an equal right to divorce, but it would be interesting to know whether the grounds for divorce were the same for women as for men. The low rate — 3 to 4 per cent — of de facto polygamy in the country was no doubt due to economic reasons. Since society seemed to be ahead of the law in that case, the Government should consider abolishing polygamy. Also, regarding the exercise of parental authority, the father still seemed to be in charge of the children even after a divorce in which the mother had been granted custody; that legal provision as well should be revised.

31. **Ms. Morvai**, noting that it would be interesting for the delegation to use subparagraphs (a) to (h) of article 16 as a checklist for the Government's expectations, asked whether the proposed legal reforms would address the disparity between men and women as to the marriageable age. She was also interested in the actual legislative process of the Family Code reform. For example, she wondered whether it would produce a whole corpus of family law and whether the many highly qualified Algerian women lawyers who had done a great deal of recognized feminist legal work were involved in that process.

32. **Ms. Tan** said that it would have been useful to have a more detailed outline of the actual amendments to the Family Code in order to judge their compliance with all aspects of article 16 of the Convention. She asked whether the Family Code applied to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

33. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that he would circulate the amendments to the Family Code in French to the members of the Committee.

34. **Ms. Benabdallah** (Algeria), said that, while abrogation of provisions relating to guardianship of a woman by her father had been proposed, Algeria was still a Muslim society. She agreed that allowing women to choose to remain under the guardianship of their father could be seen as a way of maintaining the old system; however, such arrangements were currently

quite rare and efforts would continue to completely eliminate that practice.

35. Polygamy was limited to certain regions and barely 1.3 per cent of the population; changes in economic realities and in Algerian society had made it exceedingly rare. Although for religious reasons it had not been possible to include complete abrogation of provisions relating to polygamy in the proposed New Family Code, a man nevertheless had to seek approval from a judge in order to enter into a polygamous relationship and in fact virtually all men chose to divorce their first wife before taking a second. As for repudiation, she said that in order to divorce his spouse a man had to go before a judge and explain his case in the presence of both parties; the new Family Code would require that the parties attempt a reconciliation over a three-month period before proceeding to court. The new Family Code would also modify the grounds for divorce, adding incompatibility and allowing women as well to request divorce before a judge without providing any proof other than citing incompatibility. That represented tremendous progress towards equality between men and women. The proposed new Family Code would also make custody of children a shared responsibility of both parents rather than granting authority solely to the father as was current practice. It would also set the minimum age for marriage at 19 for both boys and girls.

36. The working group set up to review the Family Code was multidisciplinary and included magistrates, lawyers, jurists, representatives of civil society and religious authorities. All the participants were interested in women's issues and the promotion of the advancement of women, in particular with regard to family matters. Copies of the proposed amendments to the Family Code would be made available to the Committee in the hope that it would help alleviate the concerns expressed by some Committee members.

37. **Ms. Keddad** (Algeria) said that polygamy had always been a marginal practice; although there had been just over 400 new polygamous relationships reported in the recent census, overall, the percentage of polygamous relationships had dropped from 5.5 per cent in 1992 to a current level of 1.2 per cent. It was possible that the higher marriage age and the resulting increase in the number of unmarried young people could pose a problem unless there was a concerted effort to promote women's rights. Efforts to that end were an integral part of her Government's population

policy, which had led to a pronounced demographic transition. Fertility rates had dropped to a national average of 2.4 per woman, although slightly higher in rural areas; mortality rates had dropped; average lifespan had increased to 74 for women and 73 for men; the population growth rate had dropped from 3 per cent at independence to 1.5 per cent. Those demographic changes should lead to a reduction in inequality and her Government was moving towards increasingly targeted departmental and grass-roots-level programmes as part of its comprehensive approach to promoting literacy, health, living standards and quality of life.

38. **Ms. Pimentel** wondered whether the State party's research into domestic violence had included specific data on sexual violence against women, and girls especially, in the home, and whether the Government had taken any measures to prevent such crimes and protect victims. She also requested further clarification on whether the working group set up to review the Family Code had included women jurists.

39. **Ms. Shin** expressed concern that laws other than the Family Code and the Code of Algerian Nationality continued to contain provisions which in fact discriminated against women. For example, according to the State party's report (p. 15), under the Labour Relations Act, working women were entitled to take leave in order to accompany a husband whose place of work had changed or to raise a child under the age of five or having an illness requiring care. Unless the law provided that men were entitled to similar consideration, the provision was in fact discriminatory. There was also a glaring discrepancy between the high percentage of women attending university and their low level of representation, barely 15.21 per cent, in the labour force. It was essential that the State party review all laws in the light of the Convention in order to uncover direct and indirect discrimination and promote gender equality. Finally, she regretted that the current report, due in June 2001, had been submitted late and noted that the next, third, report was in fact due in June 2005.

40. **Ms. Gaspard** welcomed the publicity given to preparation of the State party's report and the active participation of civil society in that effort. It was important, however, that the State party's dialogue with the Committee and the Committee's conclusions and recommendations should likewise be widely publicized and that the working group on review of the Family

Code, and Parliament, in particular, take full account thereof.

41. **Ms. Morvai** said that the countries of the developed world had stated their commitment to supporting efforts to promote human rights in general and equality for men and women. She enquired as to the extent and quality of international assistance to promote women's issues in Algeria and requested information on the role played by Algerian women themselves. She also wondered whether international assistance, such as financial and technical support, had been provided for combating terrorism in Algeria.

42. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) acknowledged that even after reform of the Family Code and the Code of Algerian Nationality, discrimination against women would still exist; continued efforts would be required over the long term to ensure full equality between men and women. He reiterated that the working group on reform of the Family Code included jurists, academics, judges, religious authorities and representatives of civil society and had held wide-ranging consultations. He reassured the Committee that his delegation's current report and its dialogue with the Committee would once again receive wide publicity, including on his mission's web site.

43. Turning to the issue of terrorism, he said that for many years his Government had faced the terrorist threat alone despite requests for help from the international community; Algeria had paid a heavy price to protect the viability of the Republic. Since the tragic events of 11 September 2001, however, the international community had realized the universal threat posed by terrorism to international peace and security. His delegation therefore welcomed the new spirit of cooperation in the context, for example, of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and was sharing its own experience in the fight against terrorism with international partners.

44. **Ms. Benabdallah** (Algeria) said current research into the problem of violence against women in the workplace and in the family had yielded wide-ranging statistics, including with regard to sexual violence. Steps had been taken to deal with the problem of violence against women, as described in the report (pp. 16 to 18). Resources had been made available so that women could talk about their problems and receive counselling; they could meet with psychologists and receive advice, including on how to lay charges against

the perpetrators of violence. Like in many countries, however, women who were abused by their husbands were in a difficult situation and it was not easy for them to take steps to protect themselves.

45. Her Government was trying to deal with the problem by increasing women's awareness of their rights, including the right to file a legal complaint. Rape, for example, was punishable under the Criminal Code and aggravating circumstances were taken into account. Furthermore, even if a woman decided to withdraw her complaint, that complaint would nevertheless be brought before a criminal court by the prosecutor. Although much remained to be done to prevent sexual violence against women, including in the home, her Government hoped that through seminars, meetings and exposure in the media, women would become more aware of their rights and legal protections and would be encouraged to exercise those rights, even in rural areas.

46. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said Algerian women had fought hard to play an important role in Algerian society; his Government was likewise committed to promoting the rights of women. The Committee's sincere efforts to help and encourage the women of Algeria were most welcome, and he assured the Committee that its dialogue with the State party and its conclusions would be widely publicized and taken into account in revising the Family Code and the Code of Algerian Nationality, as well as other legislation.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.