



**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 674th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 18 January 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Manalo

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Combined second and third periodic reports of Croatia

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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)*

Combined second and third periodic reports of Croatia (CEDAW/C/CRO/2-3; CEDAW/PSWG/2005/I/CRP.1/Add.2, CEDAW/PSWG/2005/I/CRP.2/Add.1)

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

Articles 10-14

2. **Ms. Shin** asked whether women's studies were taught in Croatian universities, and whether the issues of gender equality, understanding sexuality and violence against women were included in programmes for the training of teachers. She also asked whether participation by teachers in seminars organized by the Ministry of Education or by others counted towards their promotion.

3. **Ms. Gaspard** noted that her own country had met with much resistance to the idea of women's studies from university teachers of both sexes, and had been forced to create special posts for teaching the subject. The statistics furnished to the Committee did not reveal whether Croatia had also been obliged to follow that course. It was important to have an educated corps of teachers of both sexes sensitive to the importance of gender studies, at both the national and local level.

4. **Mr. Flinterman** remarked that the statistics in the report were not disaggregated on ethnic lines, but that the Committee had been informed of a high drop-out rate for Roma girls even from primary education, high rates of illiteracy among Roma women, special segregated classes for Roma children in schools and the fact that very few Roma pupils, especially girls, went on to higher education. He wondered what measures were being taken to address the problem.

5. **Ms. Popescu** enquired what steps the Government was taking to address the problem of illiteracy among women. She was also concerned at stereotyping in the choices made in secondary education, with a clear minority of girls choosing science subjects, and wondered to what extent that imbalance affected women in the labour market and

whether the Government intended to take any remedial action. Concerning the segregated classes for Roma children, she asked whether they were taught in Romany or in Croatian, and asked how the Government intended to integrate the Roma pupils back into the broader educational system. Finally, she asked how the country's priority of gender training for local officials was to be implemented when the Office for Gender Equality had only three staff members.

6. **Ms. Khan** noted that Croatia's laws had been brought into compliance with the Convention and with the International Labour Organization Conventions dealing with discrimination in employment, but that the report showed continuing discrimination against women in the workforce in spite of their achievements in the sphere of education. The high percentage of unemployed women was of particular concern, especially as many of them were young women. She wondered what mechanisms, for instance a temporary special measure or a quota system, were used to make access to the labour market easier for women, and whether anyone had ever lodged a complaint under Croatian law seeking damages for discrimination. She would also like to know whether the special project for the economic empowerment of women was increasing access to jobs for Roma women, especially in the formal employment sector.

7. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** said she would appreciate replies to her questions on temporary special measures in the civil service and on women head teachers, and asked whether gender training was obligatory in the academy for judiciary staff. While the 2003 standards for textbooks forbade a negative presentation of individuals or groups, there was nothing to prevent them from displaying sex stereotypes. She wondered whether that fact was affecting the current difficulties in the labour market, especially for younger women. She enquired whether the Government and the public sector were following the excellent example set by Ericsson, a private company which had won a prize for equality in the workplace. She also asked whether any work had been undertaken to compare the low salaries in female-dominated public-sector employment like teaching and medicine with salaries in the male-dominated parts of the public sector. The apparent difference could well be a sign of indirect discrimination in terms of the Convention and the rulings of the European Court of Justice. Lastly, she would like to see the exact text of the article in

Croatia's Constitution which stated that children were required to look after their parents in old age, to see whether it obliged an unemployed woman to look after her parents at the expense of her right to seek employment.

8. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** wondered who cared for the young children of women who wanted or needed to work, in view of the small number of places available for children in nurseries and pre-school education. A family policy expressed in terms of reconciling family duties with employment for women negated the principle of parents sharing responsibility for child care, gave rise to stereotypical views of women and placed them at a disadvantage in the labour market. Family policy had to be articulated in conjunction with policies for equality in order to enhance the quality of life for all members of the family.

9. **Ms. Dairiam** praised the Labour Act in Croatia as amended in 2003, section 82 of which provided for equal pay for equal work, but enquired what legal remedies were available to women in cases where it was violated. For instance were there special labour tribunals, or were cases heard only in the courts of general jurisdiction as suggested in Croatia's written replies? She asked what mechanisms existed for assessing and evaluating different categories of jobs in that respect, especially in enterprises employing fewer than 20 people where section 82 did not apply. She wondered whether the delegation's statement that it was too early to evaluate the effects of the Labour Act meant that no complaints had been filed and said it was regrettable that no effort had apparently been made to collect such information from the different courts in the country.

10. **Ms. Patten** welcomed Croatia's ratification of the ILO conventions but asked what the Government of Croatia was doing to make women aware of the country's new laws and equality policies. She endorsed the previous speaker's questions about section 82, and said she hoped the labour inspectorate was effective in enforcing it. She would like to see information in the next report on the number of complaints brought, whether legal aid was available for complainants and whether women were using the system without fear of reprisals. Other United Nations committees had expressed concern over reports that the authorities did not always address cases of discrimination in the private sector on grounds of age, gender or ethnic origin; she asked whether that was so and what was

being done to promote women in senior management and to broaden the range of career choices for both sexes.

11. **Mr. Šetić** (Croatia) said that the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports had received no complaints of gender or job discrimination, and that the Education Act was non-discriminatory at all levels, as was the educational system in practice. He could offer some statistics: 97 per cent of kindergarten teachers were women, including the directors; about 80 per cent of elementary school teachers and 40 per cent of principals were women; about one third of secondary school principals were women; 56 per cent of university professors were women.

12. The Government sought to combat stereotyping in its family studies programmes, and had recently organized conferences about women in history. Sex education was part of the health and physical science courses in high school, but his Ministry had recently set up an expert commission to consider how better to integrate sex education into the curriculum.

13. Regarding the Roma, it was a fact that many children dropped out of the school system from the earliest grades, and simply disappeared from formal education, owing in part to the migratory habits of the Roma. To help Roma children advance, the pre-school classes for them were two years longer than for the rest of the population, a measure that had produced excellent results by the start of elementary school. Also, paid Roma teaching assistants drawn from their communities had been incorporated into the school system. He rejected the contention that there was segregation in Croatia: in certain areas the Roma constituted the great majority of the population, which of course applied to the schools in such areas. There was no way to resolve that problem. As State Secretary for Science, Education and Sports, he himself had visited such schools and his Ministry was giving much thought to raising the quality of the teaching there. The language problem was complicated because the Roma spoke two different languages and could not themselves decide which should be the official one in their communities. Most, however, wanted to learn Croatian as well.

14. Illiteracy in Croatia had declined from 3 per cent in 1991 to 1.8 per cent in 2001, mostly among people over 65. A well-publicized literacy campaign that would be in effect from 2002 to 2013 aimed to

eradicate illiteracy completely, and thus far it was on target.

15. The Ministry had prescribed guidelines to eliminate stereotyping in school textbooks and taken legal and administrative measures to achieve those standards as a way of promoting gender equality. The problem was an inherited one, and the Government was now completely overhauling the curriculum to eliminate the last vestiges.

16. **Ms. Štimac-Radin** (Croatia) said that there were special women's studies courses in universities to inculcate gender equality: the Faculty of Philosophy, for example, offered a course on theoretical trends in contemporary feminism. The universal introduction of women's studies in higher education was being debated, and research institutions were looking into the matter.

17. The stereotypic choice of courses by women did indeed exist, and it was a reflection of the situation in the labour market: women chose the humanities preponderantly while men went into science and the technical fields, but the situation was gradually changing among younger women. Her own Office for Gender Equality had begun to train local officials in the subject, using non-governmental organizations to offer seminars that familiarized them with the United Nations and European Union texts on gender equality. There were discussions between the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports and the Institute for Schools on establishing a programme to train teachers in gender equality, and some seminars on equality and tolerance were already being offered.

18. **Ms. Kerovec** (Croatia) observed that the fact that women were at a disadvantage in the labour market was not unique to Croatia. The situation was actually worse now than in 1998, although the status of men as well had slipped in the interim. Older women were the most affected because they dropped out of the labour market altogether when they could not find work, whereas younger women, being more flexible, tended to come back into the labour market. The Government was generously funding programmes to assist women over the age of 40, and both men and women over 50, by paying 100 per cent of their salaries to employers who hired them. Five thousand persons, 64 per cent of them women, had thus found jobs. Depending on the sector, women often had lower — though still acceptable — salaries. The Office for Gender Equality

had organized a conference on the status of women in the labour market to discuss its recent findings with non-governmental organizations, which were also aware of the problem. Women were definitely concentrated in the sectors of health, social welfare, education, finance and catering, and such segregation would not change unless radical steps were taken. The Government had begun to set up programmes specifically for women, such as the programme for unemployed women over 40, and another for women entrepreneurs, which provided full support in some cases, favourable interest and credit rates, training in computers and assistance in market research. There were also programmes for young people in which many women were enrolled. Since all unemployed persons registered as such had to prove that they were looking for jobs, unemployed women could not be restricted to caring for aged parents. The Ministry of Family Affairs also had programmes for persons with disabilities, and one of them, administered jointly with a non-governmental organization, provided training to deaf women who wished to become entrepreneurs, instructing them in modern techniques and the tax system.

19. Under the National Family Policy, women who returned to the labour market after a year of maternity leave were given some kind of refresher training. By law, the second six months of maternity leave could be taken by the father, who also received an additional two months, the aim being to involve men more in family obligations.

20. National statistics were mostly disaggregated. The Office for Gender Equality cooperated with the Statistical Bureau and monitored statistical trends, paying special attention to labour indicators like employment activity and unemployment rates, in keeping with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards and definitions. The Government also derived gender-disaggregated data on poverty from its employment surveys.

21. **Ms. Štimac-Radin** (Croatia) said that the Ericsson factory in Croatia had indeed won the European prize for gender equality: 25 per cent of its top management were women, a woman vice-president was considered the most successful manager in Croatia and the public was well aware that a private company on its own initiative had achieved such exceptional results, proving that women could be very effective at the top echelons. In another private-sector initiative, an

influential private web portal, through which tens of thousands looked for jobs, made a point of reminding prospective employers about their obligations under the law to provide equal opportunities to women. In practice, however, the problems persisted. Women were still asked by employers before hiring whether they intended to become pregnant, an illegal, inadmissible practice, but a common one. Given the high unemployment rate in general, it was hard to make headway.

22. The Office for Gender Equality had launched a multidisciplinary project together with the Ministry of the Economy, the trade unions and the Croatian employers' union, to identify areas of discrimination and elaborate standards leading to a code of conduct for employers. Another measure had been to require employers to indicate the job requirements applicable to both men and women when they advertised jobs.

23. **Ms. Stažnik** (Croatia) explained that all ordinary courts had divisions specializing in different areas of the law, and that consequently certain judges dealt exclusively with labour cases. Individual courts kept files on all court cases and labour disputes that had come before them, but the Ministry of Justice was now preparing a computer program for the central collection of data on cases, with reference to both its international and national obligations. The revised Law on Courts scheduled to be adopted by the summer of 2005 required the continuous training of judges, and made further study a factor in the advancement of judges who implemented university study programmes. It made attendance at the Judicial Academy a precondition for appointment to any judicial post, and the same applied to State attorneys. A training-of-trainers programme had already produced a number of trainer judges.

24. The Family Law required parents to provide for all children as long as they were minors or for a maximum of one year beyond that until secondary school graduation. Conversely, children who were of age were required to provide for parents who could not work and had no means of support. In practice, however, courts relieved them of that obligation if they were unable to provide for their parents. The National Family Policy adopted in 2002 envisaged a number of measures to reconcile family life and work. The economic situation required both parents to work to provide an adequate income for a family, but studies had shown that the average family had only one

breadwinner. The employment of women was consequently a top priority for the Government.

25. **Ms. Jelavić** (Croatia) said that under the Family Law, parents were required to support minor children until the end of high school, and, if necessary, for a maximum period of one additional year. Children of legal age were required to provide support for parents who were unable to work or support themselves unless it could be proved that they themselves had not supported the child, despite being in a position to do so. In cases where a child of legal age claimed to be unable to provide for the parents, the child could appeal to the courts to be relieved of the obligation to provide support. Her Government was committed to the National Family Policy, adopted in 2002, which aimed at harmonizing family life and work. Unfortunately, given the high levels of unemployment, especially among women, employment measures had priority; statistics showed that on average only one family member per household was employed and therefore most households' income was inadequate.

26. **Ms. Gabr** noted with satisfaction that the HIV/AIDS rate in Croatia was the lowest in Europe. The delegation's written report indicated that the National Programme was to be reviewed in 2003 (p. 49) and she requested information on the period 2003-2005, including difficulties encountered and measures aimed at meeting the needs of immigrants and minorities. More information would also be welcome on the special chapter on women and the environment in the Environmental Protection Policy mentioned in the report (p. 50) as well as on measures to treat breast cancer, including among immigrant and minority women.

27. **Ms. Arocha Dominguez**, referring to women's reproductive health and family planning, requested information on the availability and level of use of contraception. She would also welcome more information on current abortion rates; the number of abortions had declined by 50 per cent between 1991 and 1995 and she wondered whether that significant decrease could be explained by better sex education and availability of contraception or whether it was due rather to cultural obstacles and lack of access to health services. She expressed concern that although abortion was legal, cultural attitudes and resistance on the part of the medical community often made it difficult for women to obtain legal, professional abortion services.

28. **Ms. Morvai**, stressing the terrible physical and emotional toll abortion took on women, especially adolescents, asked whether any studies had been undertaken to ascertain why abortion rates were still high in spite of measures for education on sexual and reproductive health included in the National Plan of Action for Young People adopted in January 2003. In the former Eastern Bloc countries abortion had been used as a means of contraception and she stressed that it could be eliminated if women had access to adequate reproductive health services. In spite of feminist rhetoric about abortion and freedom of choice, if women truly had control of their own bodies they should never be in a position where they had to have recourse to abortion.

29. Turning to the issue of domestic violence, she noted that according to the report measures were being taken to provide counselling to the perpetrators as part of the Government's strategy. There were two possible approaches to the problem of domestic violence: a gender-neutral approach which saw the perpetrator as sick and in need of therapy and which saw the problem as one of conflict resolution, not violence, and an approach based on the notion of equality of the sexes, which saw the problem as one of power and control of men over women and considered that the man must be confronted with his sexist attitudes. She hoped that the latter approach was the one adopted by Croatia.

30. **Ms. Tan** said that although rural areas contributed a relatively small portion of Croatia's GDP, it was nevertheless important to address the problems of rural women. She wondered whether women had benefited from land redistribution, what percentage of women held land rights in their own name and what the proportion of women working in rural areas was relative to men. She also requested clarification about the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and other relevant institutions aimed at affirmation of rural women as mentioned in the report (p. 56).

31. **Ms. Pimentel** endorsed the previous speaker's remarks concerning the problems faced by rural women and the need to end discrimination against them. She wondered whether the real situation of rural women had been surveyed and whether the State party intended to adopt any special measures to address the special vulnerabilities of rural women.

32. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** said that, although women theoretically had equality of opportunity with men in the labour market, the actual situation was quite different, with only 37.1 per cent of women being employed as compared to 50.7 per cent of men; 59 per cent of the total number of unemployed were women. Although more than 60 per cent of grammar school and university students in non-technical faculties were women, their higher level of education did not seem to have borne fruit in the labour market; women also tended to earn less money than men. She requested more information on the economic and social situation of women, disaggregated by groups of women, including minorities, and on measures to improve the situation of women, as had been requested by the Committee during its consideration of the State party's previous report.

33. More information would also be welcome on the resources the Government had allocated to ensure its guarantees of women's reproductive rights, such as the level of services and availability of contraception and family planning, including for minorities. She also requested information on whether, how and how often the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality had intervened to protect women's rights. More information should also be provided on efforts, such as media campaigns, to promote diversity in the roles of men and women and sharing of family responsibilities, including for the raising of children, as well as on meeting the needs of disabled, elderly and poor women.

34. Although it was of course very positive that non-governmental organizations interested in women's issues were playing an important role, she stressed that it was the duty of the Government to implement the Convention as well as the Beijing Platform for Action and to allocate sufficient resources to that end. The State party should provide more statistics on the advancement of women and on the Law on Croatian citizenship as it affected women. Updated information should also be provided on the situation of rural women, especially given the significant decrease in the proportion of the overall population living in rural areas.

35. **Ms. Simms**, noting that the Office for Gender Equality had been established only in March 2004, said it was important that the State party should develop and implement a strategy to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout all government institutions and ministries. She wondered whether the head of the

Office for Gender Equality, had sufficient personal and institutional authority to exert a real influence on her Government's political will to address women's issues and to ensure coordination between governmental and non-governmental bodies with a view to creating a truly national machinery for the protection of women's rights.

36. **Ms. Ivanda** (Croatia), said that, in spite of the relatively low rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Croatia, her Government recognized that adolescents indulged in risky behaviour and were relatively unaware of the risks of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and abortion. It had established programmes and prepared brochures and pamphlets to educate adolescents about such issues in the context of a cooperative programme between the United Nations Children's Fund, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Science and Education, and the Croatian National Institute of Public Health, begun in 1996. The National Programme on HIV/AIDS prevention, established in 1993 and revised in 2003, also played an important role.

37. Turning to the issue of cancer and breast cancer in particular, she said a commission on radiotherapy and oncology had been established in the Ministry of Health to improve the quality of cancer services with a view to reducing total mortality from cancer by 15 per cent. A programme had been established to promote early detection of the most frequent types of cancer, including breast cancer, and a pilot project had been established in Primorsko-Goranska county to promote early detection of breast cancer in the context of the National Programme for Early Detection of Breast Cancer. A Commission for breast cancer prevention had been created and funds provided to increase awareness of such programmes. A survey had been made of the equipment needs for cancer treatment and resources had been allocated for upgrading of equipment; modern equipment would be installed at the tumour clinic in early 2006 in a joint project between the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Ministry of Health. It was hoped that soon all health centres would be able to offer the most effective care possible to the population.

38. In-school medical services were available to implement programmes to increase the awareness of young people about the need to protect their health. Some 156 doctors worked directly in the school system, providing care and health education to students

based on the latest research. Those health services were available to young people, teachers and adolescents and were aimed at promoting all measures conducive to good health, including the prevention of smoking.

39. She welcomed the decrease in the number of abortions; the latest data showed that in 2003 there had been approximately 10,000 abortions, which represented a decrease relative to 2002. Legal abortions represented 53 per cent of the total; there had been some 1,900 miscarriages and a small number of illegal abortions. The number of girls under 19 who had had abortions in 2003, although up slightly, still only represented approximately 6 per cent of the number of abortions by women up to the age of 34. A third of the adult women who had abortions were women who already had two children which reflected the fact that, unfortunately, abortion was still used as a means of contraception. Her Government was however trying to correct that situation by promoting better information and health care through counselling centres, training for gynaecologists and increased awareness and education for the general population.

40. **Ms. Jelavić** (Croatia), said that persons with disabilities had special rights under the law on social welfare. According to the 2001 census, there were some 429,000 disabled persons in Croatia, 183,000 of whom were women. They were entitled to free counselling; the blind and hearing impaired were entitled to an expert interpreter in all proceedings concerning their rights. Furthermore, the disabled received State assistance, including a lump sum for the payment of their rent, to enable them to live independent lives and work. In that regard, family care was provided through social welfare institutions and homes for the disabled, which were mostly State owned, although a considerable number of privately run institutions had now been established. The elderly enjoyed the same rights as the disabled. Women lived longer than men in Croatia; according to 2003 data, over 7,000 of the roughly 9,000 elderly people living in old people's homes were women.

41. **Ms. Kerovec** (Croatia) said that employers received incentives from the State for training disabled persons and adapting the workplace for their use. Thus, 80 per cent of their costs in respect of training was absorbed by the State, which paid them a lump sum of 2,000 euros for workplaces that were disabled-person friendly.

42. **Ms. Štimac-Radin** (Croatia) said that only 5.3 per cent of the female population in Croatia was rural. The Ministry of Agriculture had initiated a reform on privately owned land and a number of rural women's associations were trying to promote women's interests. Traditional roles in rural areas were changing. Many rural women had become very successful in the production of organic food, while others were also very active in many areas, including in politics and environmental conservation and protection. Noting that the current Minister for the environment was a woman, she said that the Government had launched a public debate on the role of women in the labour market and launched special programmes for entrepreneurs. Gender mainstreaming in all aspects of national policy was a high priority. As far as the Beijing Platform for Action was concerned, Croatia had submitted its national report and its national policy was structured along the lines of the chapters of the Platform.

Articles 15 and 16

43. **Ms. Tan** congratulated the Croatian Government on the new Family Law, sought clarification on the extramarital community and the unmarried woman's rights to property and wondered how the wife's rights could be reconciled with those of an unmarried woman under an extramarital relationship.

44. **Ms. Gnacadja** wondered whether the Family Law had two components, religious or customary law and civil law. If that were not the case, she wished to know whether some of the conditions accepted by religion or customary law governing marriage contravened the legal provisions of the Family Law. What was the prevailing law in the case of divorce? The delegation should confirm whether there was a kind of customary tribunal in Roma communities which regulated matters normally falling under family law and whether the existence of ecclesiastical courts under other religions did not constitute competition with common law in the area of family law.

45. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** wanted to know the reasons that justified the lowering of the marriage age from 18 to 16, how the mental and physical capacity of 16 year olds was assessed in such a case, who initiated the judicial procedure and how many boys and girls had used that procedure. Furthermore, she would appreciate statistics on the impact of that procedure on the schooling of girls.

46. **Ms. Jelavić** (Croatia) said that family law defined an extramarital community as a union of an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. Therefore, an unmarried woman who had a relationship with a married man could not enjoy any of the rights under such a community. As a rule, a marriage under Croatian legislation was concluded under the civil procedure. However, religious ceremonies were also allowed for religious communities which had concluded a contract with the State. As Croatia was a predominantly Catholic country, most of such ceremonies were conducted within the Catholic tradition. Religious marriages were verified by the State in order to ensure that they met the requirements for civil marriage and did not have the effect of civil marriage. The age of marriage was 18, but marriage could, exceptionally, be allowed for persons as young as 16 subject to the assessment of their maturity and background. It was usually girls who were involved in under-age marriages. Indeed, no boys under 18 had requested permission to marry. According to 2003 data, only 6 out of 217 requests in that regard had been rejected. Authorization for such a marriage was granted by the court or general jurisdiction and proof of conditions was furnished by the persons wishing to conclude the marriage, subject to the approval of the Centre for Social Welfare, which issued an opinion as to the maturity of the minor. In that regard, if the social workers were not absolutely certain that the underage persons were mature, they were instructed not to permit the marriage. However, the court was not bound by the assessments of the centre for Social Welfare.

47. **Ms. Staznik** (Croatia), referring to civil and religious marriage, said that civil procedures took precedence over the religious ceremony. The provisions of the Family Law were the only regulations in respect of marriage. In the case of a marriage conducted in a church or religious institution, the priest had to submit a certificate to the relevant State authorities within eight days for registration of the marriage.

48. **Mr. Šetić** (Croatia), referring to the education of girls who married very early and dropped out of the educational system as a result of pregnancy, said that the Croatian educational system promoted lifelong education and provided various possibilities for education at a later stage in life. Indeed, Croatia's educational system was in line with the Bologna process.

49. **Ms. Klajner** (Croatia) referred to the extramarital life of underage persons among the Roma population. In 2004, there had been 16 Roma adults living with minors. The Roma married very early in life, but their unions as a rule started out as extramarital ones. They lived in extended families and the oldest person within such an extended family presided over ceremonies and conducted reconciliation procedures. However, that institution was by no means a judicial institution.

50. **The Chairperson** thanked the members of the Croatian delegation for their constructive and fruitful dialogue with the Committee, which would forward its observations, conclusions and recommendations to Croatia.

51. **Ms. Štimac-Radin** (Croatia) said that regular reporting to the Committee was very important and should be a normal procedure for all countries. In that regard, Croatia would try to submit its next report on time in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. It was very important that the report be adopted by the Government and debated in Parliament. The exchange of experience was very essential, since Croatia had to learn from the experience of other countries that were more advanced in the area of gender equality, a global issue.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.