



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Forty-first session

Summary record of the 836th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 3 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Šimonović

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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 *(continued)*

Sixth periodic report of Nigeria
(CEDAW/C/NGA/6, CEDAW/C/NGA/Q/6 and Add.1)

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

2. **Ms. Bungudu** (Nigeria), introducing the report, said that the re-establishment of democratic rule had led to a vibrant civil society committed to the cause of women, as reflected in a number of ongoing programmes and activities to protect and empower women and federal and state machinery for the promotion of gender equality. Women leaders spearheaded the cause in the National Assembly and, through the Gender Electoral and Constitution Memoranda Committee, had demanded 35 per cent of elective positions at all levels of government throughout the country. In the same spirit, they had advocated the repeal of all laws impeding the participation of women in political life. Moreover, there was good hope that an executive bill currently under consideration by the National Assembly for the enforcement of the Convention in the Federal Republic would be enacted swiftly as part of the ongoing constitutional and electoral reform processes. Women also stood to benefit along with other vulnerable groups from the federal Government's recently launched National Economic and Development Strategy (NEEDS) aimed at reorienting values, reducing poverty, creating wealth and generating employment.

3. In order to protect women against violence, Human Rights Desks had been established in all police stations, while police officers received special training to enable them to uphold women's rights as human rights; legal clinics had been set up to provide women with legal aid and temporary shelters had been established nationwide, providing free medical treatment for female victims of violence. As part of the same trend, members of the judiciary increasingly took into account constitutional provisions and Nigeria's obligations under international law when dealing with women's issues. Relevant content had also been introduced into school curricula. The HIV/AIDS

National Strategic Framework for Action (NSF) 2005-2009 similarly included an important gender dimension and served as a model in that respect in West Africa.

4. A landmark event in the protection of women was the passage of the 2003 Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act as amended, leading to the establishment of an agency that had so far successfully prosecuted 20 traffickers and had 65 other cases pending. Recognizing that poverty increased vulnerability to trafficking, the Government had adopted a holistic approach to the phenomenon and was seeking to put in place microcredit facilities and training programmes for potential victims.

5. With regard to the representation of women in public service, while men continued to predominate, increasing numbers of women were acceding to positions of responsibility both in Nigeria's foreign service and in international organizations. Furthermore, following affirmative action, a number of key national portfolios had been entrusted to women, while in the past three years there had been a steady 2 per cent increase in the number of women elected to the legislative branch of government.

6. Action had likewise been taken to ensure free access to primary and secondary education for girls, particularly under a girl-child education project. As for the formal employment sector, while there were no clearly discriminatory laws or policies, there was a considerable imbalance in favour of men, which was being addressed by programmes at local, state and federal levels. Mother and child mortality continued to be a serious development challenge, to which the Government was responding by increased budgetary allocations to the health sector, an advocacy campaign and additional monitoring structures. Steps had also been taken to reform family law, under the leadership of the Law Reform Commission, which hoped to bring all the different family law systems in the country into line with article 16 of the Convention by 2009.

7. Integrated rural development was a leading national concern from which women benefited as part of the rural population, by way of Government subsidies, educational support and audio-visual services; they also enjoyed specific credit facilities, under the Women's Fund for Economic Empowerment, which had provided funding for a total of 818 women's cooperatives. Similarly, a soft credit facility for women

entrepreneurs had been set up by the Ministry of Women Affairs.

8. The Government was aware of the role that could be played by women in conflict resolution, reflected in the establishment in 2007 of an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Gender and Peacekeeping and in Nigeria's involvement in the African First Ladies' Peace Mission, of which the Nigerian First Lady had been elected President. In concluding, she stressed Nigeria's full commitment to the implementation of the Convention, which it saw as a critical barometer for assessing the country's own progress, considering that the elimination of discrimination against women benefited society as a whole.

Articles 1 to 6

9. **Mr. Flinterman** said that, at the time of the Committee's last constructive dialogue with Nigeria, more than four years earlier, it had expressed concern about the fact that the Convention had not been incorporated into national legislation, while recognizing the particular difficulties stemming from the federal nature of the State. The Government was nevertheless accountable for the implementation of the Convention and it was therefore encouraging to learn of its imminent domestication. It was regrettable, however, that the related legislative bill was supported only by the Ministry of Women Affairs and not by the federal Government as a whole. He noted that a two-thirds majority of the State Houses of Assembly was required for passage of a bill into national law and wondered what mechanism might be adopted to facilitate the State's due compliance with its international obligations. It would also be interesting to have fuller information about the status of the laws and policies listed in Box 2.3 in the periodic report and to know whether domestication of the Convention might be achieved as a gradual process.

10. **Ms. Shin** welcomed the broad range of interests represented by the numerous members of the delegation and asked whether the State party could organize a meeting every year for the same stakeholders to review progress in implementing the Convention, with particular reference to the Committee's concluding observations. Such an annual evaluation would serve as a good example for other States. One concern that remained was the harmonization of the different state laws in the light of the Convention. As for the Human Rights Desks

established in police stations, the principle was laudable, but apparently the officers in charge had not been given the requisite training in women's issues. She wondered whether any check had been made of the content of the training provided. The Committee would also like to know whether the National Human Rights Commission complied fully with the Paris Principles relating to such bodies, endorsed by the General Assembly in 1993.

11. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, enquired about the content of the domestication bill. Did it incorporate the Convention or did it follow it, fully or in part? She stressed that, even though 27 years had passed since Nigeria had ratified the Convention, its status was no more than that of a declaration so long as it had not been incorporated into national law. Information would also be appreciated about the work of the Committee on Women Affairs referred to on page 29 of the periodic report and about all the provisions governing equality between men and women both in the Constitution and in specific laws. She reminded the State party of its obligation to prevent discrimination as defined in article 1 of the Convention.

12. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that a majority was required to incorporate any treaty into Nigerian law. Furthermore, women's issues had to be considered at the state as well as the federal level. The CEDAW domestication draft bill was presented in 2007 but was not passed by Parliament owing to lack of advocacy. It had since been repackaged in coordination with a strategic alliance among the national gender machinery, NGOs and development partners from the United Nations, and was to be presented again. Though the bill did not pass, a number of states had presented legislation in respect of issues including equal opportunity and violence against women in an attempt partially to domesticate the Convention. Federal, state and local governments were working with relevant NGOs to ensure that the bill would pass by the end of 2009, and be systematically implemented across the federation thereafter. Passage of the bill would imply complete domestication of the Convention.

13. With regard to principles of equality between men and women, the Constitution contained information on social, economic and cultural rights, and on obligations on all levels of government to ensure protection of the principles of non-discrimination and equality among men and

women. The definitions of discrimination in sections 42.1-42.3 of the Constitution was not in line with the definition in the Convention. The Constitution was to be reviewed in 2008 and the issue should be addressed in cooperation with the Government, NGOs and development partners to widen the definition of discrimination and remove limitations with respect to women.

14. Turning to the harmonization of the tripartite legal system, he drew attention to the report (CEDAW/C/NGA/6) which detailed efforts made since 2005, and to the response document (CEDAW/C/NGA/6/Add.1) which clarified stages of harmonization. The Law Reform Commission had been assigned to evaluate all existing family laws. A workshop had been held in November 2006 to engage all actors involved in bringing family law in line with the Convention. The first phase of family law reform had produced two volumes of preliminary observations; the second phase was to be completed by 2009, and should produce two additional volumes. The delegation would forward the volumes to the Committee for its review, and it could then confirm that the Government had recognized the problems with existing law systems and was working to address them.

15. The National Human Rights Commission had made ongoing efforts to abide by the Paris Principles by consistently reviewing its strategic framework and plan of action and appointing a number of special rapporteurs on issues relating to women, children, access to justice, gender equality and environmental rights; desk officers had been established to report to the special rapporteurs, in particular in respect of women. The Commission had also consistently participated in periodic meetings of national human rights institutions, and had even chaired the 2006 meeting.

16. Collaboration and dialogue ensured that all levels of government abided by the Convention. Attorneys-General met periodically to discuss issues including the implementation of the Convention. The Ministry of Women's Affairs also met periodically with its counterparts at the state level to formulate strategies on how best to implement the Convention and the Committee's recommendations. Meetings had not been systematic, though efforts were ongoing to improve monitoring and evaluation.

17. Finally, in 2005 desk officers on gender issues had been created in police stations; training of police officers had focused first on law enforcement and human rights, then on law enforcement and gender issues and access to justice. Training was ongoing; a manual incorporating the recommendations of the Committee was being drafted and was scheduled for completion by end 2008.

18. **Ms. Ekaette** (Nigeria) said that the National Assembly reviewed all laws governing women. Amendments currently under review included one to the 1995 Act establishing the Human Rights Commission, after which the domestication of the Convention was to be addressed. The Constitution provided that all treaties must enjoy the concurrence of all states; therefore, in an effort to harmonize all levels of government, activities including workshops and consultations were held to provide information on the Convention. As soon as the Convention was domesticated it would be the law of the federation.

19. **Ms. Neubauer** wondered, with regard to the National Gender Policy and programmes, how cooperation and coordination functioned to ensure the completion of relevant activities. She would also like to learn about the capacity level of those involved in processes of coordination and monitoring of programme and policy implementation. Information on progress made by the Equal Opportunities Commission established on recommendation of the Committee on Human Rights and Social Security during the 2005 National Political Reform Conference would also be welcome. Finally, she wondered whether human and financial resources allowed the federal and state Governments to perform the tasks necessary for the implementation of the Convention.

20. **Ms. Chutikul** said it was difficult to decipher what states were doing with respect to vertical and horizontal coordination, and it was unclear how state progress and activity were monitored. She would appreciate an annex to the next report, including a matrix of states' progress. Turning to the macroeconomic framework, she wondered whether the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) allowed for the effective achievement of gender equality and advancement for women. The National Gender Policy was unclear and unspecific, and did not

cover all aspects of the Convention. It would be helpful to establish a national policy and plan of action for the implementation of the Convention, similar to the one established in 2007 for children. Finally, she would like more information on the role of NGOs, in particular as participants in advising or in decision-making.

21. **Ms. Dairiam** said that she would like more information on the consideration of the report of Nigeria to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2007, the persistence of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict and issues relevant to internally displaced persons (IDPs). In particular, she would welcome information on the Presidential Committee on Internally Displaced Persons, its development and adoption of a national policy on displacement, and how it addressed the particular vulnerabilities of women in conflict. More detail was needed on implementation of social reintegration measures, how the safety of women was protected in camps, what punitive measures had been established for perpetrators of violence against women, how capacity-building for state agents was handled and how data was collected. She would like to know whether the inter-ministerial task force on gender and peacekeeping was aware of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. Lastly, she recalled the obligations under Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) on acts of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflicts.

22. **Ms. Amadi** (Nigeria) clarified that NEEDS was a poverty reduction strategy at the national level, while SEEDS and LEEDS referred to the state and local levels, respectively. The strategies propelled national gender planning and spending, and opened a window of opportunity to address women's issues and close the gender gap. The first phase of the NEEDS framework was due for review; it had not been as detailed as hoped in respect of gender, but phase two would, through the recruitment of civil society experts, attempt to develop a chapter dedicated to gender and mainstream gender throughout. Turning to the role of NGOs, the Government increasingly relied on them for technical support and at times in an advisory capacity. While there was greater collaboration, there was still room for improvement.

23. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that, while the Equal Opportunities Commission had made recommendations on political reform, no action had yet been taken. With

respect to human and financial resources, while gender budgeting had increased gradually, work towards the goal of adequate funding was ongoing. The national plan of action and policy for children made specific reference to the protection of girl children and had been completed; a plan of action and strategic framework for women was under development.

24. The Presidential Committee on IDPs had collaborated with experts from the Brookings Institution and the National Commission for Refugees to develop a national policy and establish a committee on the prevention of IDPs. The national policy was yet to be approved, but the final draft had been submitted to the Presidential Committee, consistent with the draft policy on IDPs developed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs for consideration by all Member States. In June 2008 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had visited all IDP camps in Nigeria. Finally he noted that recommendations by female stakeholders had been included in the report of the Constitutional Conference that had influenced the aborted 2006-2007 constitutional reform. The issue of impact had not been assessed but would be completed, along with electoral reform, by December 2009.

25. **Ms. Gabr**, referring to the domestication of the Convention, said that, since the National Assembly had rejected the draft bill providing for enforcement of the Convention during previous Administrations, it would be useful to learn how the current Government was proposing to ensure its adoption in the near future.

26. Female genital mutilation, child marriage and widowhood practices were based on African customs and traditions. The Committee would appreciate further information on what was being done to eliminate such practices, especially in the northern part of the country where Islamic Law and the Sharia legal system operated. It also required further information on the Government's relations with religious leaders and whether it was learning from the experiences of other African countries that recognized Sharia law, since Nigeria was a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

27. **Ms. Hayashi** said that the Committee had been informed that the current Penal Code allowed wife-beating; she requested clarification whether the Code specifically allowed such conduct or whether there was another possible interpretation.

28. The report referred to a few shelters for women run by NGOs, while the delegation's presentation stated that temporary shelters had been established nationwide. Additional information should be provided on whether both the Government and NGOs were operating shelters and, if so, how many women were in the shelters, and how many of those women were victims of domestic violence.

29. The Penal Code established that the penalty for rape was 2 to 14 years' imprisonment; it would be interesting to learn what the penalty for domestic violence was. The National Assembly had failed to pass the 2003 bill on violence against women, and the Committee would welcome clarification on the status of the bill, as well as more specific information on how the Government was working with NGOs to combat such violence. In addition, even though it appeared difficult to domesticate the entire Convention, she wondered whether it would be possible to enact legislation on violence against women and what the Nigerian Government's priorities were in that regard.

30. The Committee had been informed that women were forced to perform or undergo degrading acts when their husbands died. It would appreciate information on whether any states had passed laws prohibiting such practices locally and what the penalties were.

31. The report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women referred to a 2004 decision of a Nigerian Sharia court sentencing two women to death by stoning for extramarital relations; the men involved had been acquitted based on lack of evidence. In her report, the Special Rapporteur had asked the Government to respond to her about the allegations; the Committee would like to know whether the Government had replied and, if so, what it had reported.

32. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** said that the report did not provide enough information on gender roles and stereotypes. There appeared to be no systematic way of addressing gender stereotyping and its effects. The report acknowledged the challenges deriving from patriarchy and deep-rooted traditional beliefs and customs, but did not say what was being done to overcome them. In its concluding observations on Nigeria's last report, the Committee had stressed that gender stereotyping was very harmful and the problem needed to be addressed.

33. The Committee was very concerned about all the different forms of violence against women prevalent in Nigeria, its only purpose appearing to be to assert male dominance. She asked whether the laws passed in some states on violence against women were implemented effectively, whether they were publicized among women and whether the issue was addressed in the country's gender policy.

34. **Ms. Zou Xiaogiao** said that, in its concluding observations on the last report, the Committee had asked the State party to launch a campaign to counter harmful practices against women. However, the current report did not provide sufficient information on any measures taken in that regard. Consequently, she would like to know what the Government had done to implement the recommendations, especially the Ministry of Women Affairs, and whether there were discussions with religious leaders concerning harmful traditional practices.

35. Traditional gender stereotypes were revealed at all levels and greatly restricted the possibility of women participating in public life. Changes took time and political will; consequently, she wanted to know whether the Nigerian Government had a plan to mobilize society and all stakeholders to eliminate harmful traditional practices.

36. **Ms. Begum** asked why there had been a delay in adopting the proposed bill on domestication of the Convention, which had already been mentioned in Nigeria's fourth and fifth periodic reports.

37. She also wanted to know whether there were any Federal regulations on female genital mutilation, child marriage and widowhood, and whether there was a national minimum age for marriage.

38. The report suggested that there were cases of custodial rape by law enforcement officers which were underreported and underprosecuted. Did the police force receive any training in human rights and, if so, was such training available to the Judiciary and other government officials?

39. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** said that Africa was steeped in tradition and culture, but culture could change over time. It was surprising that only when cultural issues related to women did they seem to be carved in stone. Nigeria was obliged to eliminate all types of harmful traditional practices without delay because, on ratifying the Convention, a State party undertook to

eliminate all forms of discrimination against women immediately. The Committee had been surprised to learn of a bill, sponsored by a senator, intended to prohibit public nudity, sexual intimidation and other related offences. Details of the bill revealed that it represented another effort to limit and infringe on the human rights of women. She would be interested in hearing the Ministry's opinion on the bill and what the Ministry proposed to do about it.

40. **Ms. Umoren** (Nigeria), referring to the domestication of the Convention, said that a State party had to examine the provisions in relation to its own circumstances to ensure that there were no contradictions. Nigeria had signed the Convention in good faith, but its extremely large population meant that much work must be done to publicize the Convention and obtain its acceptance. Parliament was currently examining the domestication bill, and the Ministry of Women Affairs was holding discussion on the matter with politicians and religious leaders.

41. Regarding child marriages, the 2003 Child Rights Act had been adopted by 15 of Nigeria's 36 states, five more than when Nigeria had presented its last periodic report. Moreover, women were not chattels; the 1999 Constitution allowed both men and women to acquire and own property.

42. The Law Reform Commission was examining the issue of stoning under Sharia Law and the Government had submitted a draft bill on the elimination of violence in society to the National Assembly; the bill represented an attempt to eliminate harmful traditional practices not covered by the Convention.

43. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that there was no law concerning female genital mutilation in Nigeria, but there was a national policy and specific state laws banning the practice. The Child Rights Act stated that the minimum age for marriage was 18 years and prohibited child marriages and betrothals. Eighteen states throughout the country had ratified the Act.

44. Regarding discussions with religious leaders and traditional rulers concerning negative practices and stereotyping, several meetings had been held over the last four years to examine the constitutionality of the Sharia Penal Code and the role of the Sharia courts in the two stoning cases. Nigeria had responded to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women that an examination of the case had determined that it raised issues relating to the right to a hearing, and to

retroactive punishment. Regarding the role of the Sharia judiciary in the stoning cases, the Sharia Court of Appeal had overturned the judgments of the lower Sharia court based on miscarriage of justice. Currently there were no cases of that type before the courts, not even in the parts of Nigeria where Sharia law was in force.

45. Rape was punished under criminal law but there was no law that punished domestic violence. Efforts were being made to pass existing draft bills on domestic violence and violence in general, which former Administrations had failed to adopt, and a significant advocacy effort would be made.

46. Officials from the Judiciary and from the Government received training on human rights. The Nigerian National Judiciary Institute had been providing training to judges and officials at all levels on the role of the courts in the administration of justice in relation to human rights and gender equality. In addition, the Government, in collaboration with NGOs, was organizing workshops to provide training to government officials.

47. Victim shelters had been established by both NGOs and the Government. The Government shelters, which had only recently been set up, provided shelter and rehabilitation for victims of trafficking, and Nigeria would be able to report on the number of women attended, the trends and the impact in its next report.

48. The 1995 Penal Code remained in force; however, the Government was making an effort to review all discriminatory laws in Nigeria. The World Bank and UNICEF had prepared a report on all the laws that discriminated against women and children and had made recommendations on how to amend or repeal them. The results of the report were currently before the Law Reform Commission.

49. **Mr. Dahiru** (Nigeria) said that all stakeholders, including NGOs and the general public, had the opportunity to share their opinions prior to the adoption of any bill. In relation to the bill under consideration, some NGOs had expressed views similar to those heard at the current meeting. They considered the law to be unconstitutional and contrary to the fundamental human rights of Nigerian women. Those views would certainly have an influence on the passage of the bill.

50. **The Chairperson** expressed her hope that the bill took into account the provisions of the Convention.

51. **Ms. Ukeje** (Nigeria) said that Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) had led to the convening of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Gender and Peacekeeping and that she was one of its women members. Consultations were currently being held with women's groups and civil society organizations and the next stage would be to prepare an agenda for the national plan of action. Nigeria was committed to ensuring women's involvement in peacebuilding.

52. **Ms. Bungudu** (Nigeria) said that it was now compulsory for every school-age child to be registered at and attend school for the complete cycle.

53. **Ms. Gabr** asked if it was true that men and women were held at the same detention centres and that rape of both women prisoners and their visitors had occurred. She also wondered whether there was a programme to rehabilitate women victims of trafficking. She was seriously concerned that women might be deterred from reporting rape as they could be accused of adultery if they were unable to prove the rape.

54. **Ms. Chutikul** suggested that the delegation should review the articles of the Convention and devise a thematic plan of action on any issues that were not already covered by the national gender policy and strategies. It was also important to decentralize the collection of gender-disaggregated statistics, while primary statistics should be collected at the state level.

55. She asked what measures had been taken for the protection of girl children victims and witnesses of trafficking and what was being done in relation to sex tourism. Did Nigeria's Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (the NAPTIP Act) cover trafficking for purposes other than prostitution, such as forced labour?

56. As a party to Convention No. 182 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) concerning child labour, Nigeria must already have produced a definition of hazardous work, which was also relevant for girl children. Convention No. 182 also required States to draw up a plan of action.

57. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** requested clarification concerning women's entitlement to own land and whether the Constitution contained equal provisions on that issue. According to the National Bureau of

Statistics, only 10 per cent of land was owned by women, which had consequences in terms of economic well-being, access to bank loans and so on. The Committee was interested in hearing about actual practice in relation to article 5 rather than about legal provisions that might not be enforced.

58. **Mr. Flinterman** asked what the federal Government could do if an individual state adopted laws or policies that were incompatible with Nigeria's obligations under the Convention. He also wondered if making the Convention part of domestic law would give the federal Government more power to ensure that all its provisions were implemented throughout Nigeria.

59. **Ms. Mahmoud** (Nigeria) said that the National Centre for Women's Development was going to start a master's programme on gender and peacebuilding in order to increase Nigeria's expertise and capacity in that area.

60. **Ms. Akinlami** (Nigeria) said that women and men were segregated in prison throughout Nigeria. Rape was a crime under the Criminal Code of Nigeria, and the victim could prove her case using medical reports as evidence. It was true that in Nigeria, as in the rest of the world, rape was often not reported because of the stigma attached to it. The NAPTIP Act covered both prostitution and forced labour.

61. **Mr. Dahiru** (Nigeria) said that the NAPTIP Act provided comprehensive protection for victims of trafficking, including shelter and financial support. Local embassies arranged their repatriation for rehabilitation and assisted them if they did not have passports.

62. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that the amended NAPTIP Act also provided legal aid, financial assistance and protection for witnesses, in view of traffickers' attempts to intimidate them. The amended Act also strengthened existing law on trafficking and covered all forms of labour and sexual exploitation. It took into account the Convention and the Optional Protocol and contained provisions to protect women and children from organized crime.

63. **Mr. Akindele** (Nigeria) said that Nigeria had bilateral relations with a number of countries which provided assistance in countering trafficking, including Italy, Switzerland and France. The initiatives included

microcredit facilities for young women and girls who had been trafficked.

64. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that the Nigerian Constitution defined the legislative and executive powers of the various levels of government. Any provision of a state law that was found to be inconsistent with a federal law or with the spirit and letter of the Constitution was considered to be null and void. On some matters, both the federal and state Governments could introduce legislation. The Child Rights Act had been initiated at the federal level and then promulgated in a dialogue with state governments to take account of local requirements. A substantial part of the Act had to be retained by all states, in particular the minimum marriage age and the prohibition of child betrothal and marriage.

Articles 7 to 9

65. **Ms. Gaspard** welcomed the large number of women in the Nigerian delegation and hoped that they would soon be equally well-represented in all decision-making areas. In 2004, the Nigerian delegation had referred to a national policy containing voluntary measures to increase to 30 per cent the proportion of women in legislative and executive posts. Yet in 2008, men still accounted for over 90 per cent of senators and members of the House of Representatives. As the voluntary measures had been announced once again, she was interested to know what kind of measures were intended and whether they would be applied only at the federal level or also at the state and local level. It would also be useful to have data on women in the judiciary and the police in the next report, if they were not available immediately.

66. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** noted that Nigeria had 36 states in addition to the federal capital, which made the adoption of legislation a more complex issue than it was in non-federal countries. Nigeria had signed the Convention almost 24 years earlier without making any reservations, which meant that the Convention should apply throughout the territory of the federation. Nigeria was an oil-rich country and had no time to lose in giving full civil, political and family rights to women in order to ensure the country's future progress.

67. Table 7.1 of the report showed that women had even less representation at the local level than at the federal level and there was no information on the numbers of women lawyers or magistrates. Finally, she

noted that Nigerian men could pass on their nationality to their children or to a foreign spouse, whereas women could not do so.

68. **Mr. Flinterman** asked what the delegation's position was on the need to change the statutory and customary laws that discriminated against women who married men from another state and moved to that state. Those women lost many of their rights and it would be interesting to know what time frame was envisaged for correcting the situation.

69. **Ms. Neubauer** said that although the 2 per cent increase in the number of women elected over the last three general elections had been described as an indication that discrimination was fading away, she saw it as evidence of Nigeria's failure to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. Although the declared intention of reaching a quota of 30 per cent women was included in the national gender policy, it was not backed up by any concrete action, time frame or legal measure. She wondered how Nigeria intended to implement the Committee's recommendation to introduce temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and general recommendation No. 25. The Government was obliged to take all appropriate measures and to pursue appropriate policies to ensure that the principles contained in articles 7 and 8 were fully respected. It should do so without delay.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.