



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

Distr.: General
18 July 2007

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Thirty-eighth session

Summary record of the 775th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 May 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Šimonović

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

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

Initial report of Serbia (CEDAW/C/SCG/1, CEDAW/C/SCG/Q/1 and Add.1)

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

2. **Ms. Prelić** (Serbia), introducing the initial report of Serbia (CEDAW/C/SCG/1), said that it had been prepared while the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro still existed. Since the dissolution of the Union in June 2006, the Republic of Serbia, as the legal successor State, had continued to be a party to the United Nations human rights instruments. She would present the part of the report that related to Serbia.

3. The first part of the period covered by the report, 1992 to 2000, had been characterized by conflict, instability, economic decline and the disruption of relations with neighbouring countries and the rest of the international community. During the second part of the period, 2000 to 2003, the economic situation had improved markedly and the process of democratization had begun. Significant progress had been made, particularly with regard to human rights and the repeal of laws that were discriminatory or incompatible with international law. Serbia had been reinstated as a member of various international organizations and, in pursuit of its aim to join the European Union, was making efforts to harmonize its domestic legislation with the *acquis communautaire* and international human rights standards.

4. The new Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, adopted in November 2006, prohibited all forms of discrimination and required the State to guarantee the equality of women and men and to develop an equal opportunities policy. It also provided for the introduction of temporary special measures in order to achieve full equality and enshrined specific rights relating to marriage, the family, childbirth and motherhood. It explicitly prohibited slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, sexual abuse and economic exploitation. It defined the Republic of Serbia as a secular State. Lastly, it stated that national legislation must comply with the international treaties to which Serbia was a party and with the generally accepted rules of international law.

5. A draft Gender Equality Law, which was widely supported but was still awaiting adoption by Parliament, would bring Serbian legislation into line with international standards and would set out policies to ensure equal opportunities and prevent discrimination against women in all areas of life. The Criminal Code established domestic violence and marital rape as criminal offences, while the new Family Law introduced special measures against violence and improved adoption and divorce procedures. The new Labour Law prohibited gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and the recently amended election laws introduced a 30 per cent quota for the less-represented gender on all lists of election candidates. A judicial reform project was also under way to conduct gender analysis of legislation, collect gender statistics from courts, monitor the way in which domestic violence cases were handled and provide the judiciary with training. A booklet on women's rights was also being produced.

6. The Gender Equality Council had been established as an expert advisory body of the Serbian Government, focusing in particular on gender-sensitive legislation, the national strategy for the advancement of women and of gender equality, the economic empowerment of women, and awareness-raising and capacity-building with regard to gender issues. The Gender Equality Committee of the Serbian Parliament was responsible for scrutinizing legislation and reviewing the policymaking process and the implementation of laws to ensure conformity with principles of gender equality. Local gender focal points also existed in 42 cities and municipalities, but no legal framework was yet in place to support them. The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina had similar gender equality structures of its own.

7. There was strong political will in Serbia for the promotion of gender equality. However, gaps between legislation and practice persisted, and in some respects the country lacked the capacity to effect change. Nonetheless, steps were being taken to improve the situation. For example, the Ministry of the Interior was carrying out training courses on dealing with domestic violence; efforts to combat human trafficking had achieved some degree of success; gender training courses had been conducted by the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Policy; special employment projects for women had been introduced; gender focal points were to be established in the workplace to

prevent discrimination; and the Statistical Office was preparing to compile gender-disaggregated data. In the sphere of private relations, some barriers to the achievement of gender equality persisted. There was a need to challenge stereotypes and change mentalities, a process which required time and commitment.

8. The National Action Plan for the Empowerment of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality for 2007-2010, which was based on the Beijing Platform for Action, had been drafted by the Gender Equality Council in cooperation with several NGOs and prominent gender experts. It covered the issues of the economy, decision-making, health, violence, education and the media as they related to women. All the available data on the situation of women had been used in the preparation of the Plan, and other relevant national strategies had been taken into account, including those relating to poverty reduction, health, the Millennium Development Goals, the integration and empowerment of Roma and efforts to combat human trafficking. The adoption of the Plan would be one of the first priorities of the new Government.

9. The gender perspective had also been incorporated into the national strategies for sustainable development and the development of information and communication technologies. Other projects focused on the economic empowerment of women, implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), raising public awareness of gender issues, capacity-building and research. In addition, cooperation between the State and civil society was improving, and gender mechanisms for the Western Balkans region were being developed with the support of United Nations system entities and other European and regional organizations.

10. The report did not contain detailed information on the situation in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija because, although the Province was part of the Republic of Serbia, it had been under the authority of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999. Therefore, Serbia could not assume responsibility for the implementation of the Convention there.

11. She was, however, able to inform the Committee that the human rights situation in Kosovo and Metohija was very grave. Discrimination against minority ethnic groups, particularly Serbs and other non-Albanians, was widespread, hampering the realization of most of

the rights enshrined in the Convention. Bearing in mind the conclusions of other United Nations treaty bodies with regard to initial reports of the Republic of Serbia, she suggested that the Committee should request UNMIK to provide information on the implementation of the Convention in Kosovo and Metohija. In that connection, Serbia's responses to the list of issues and questions referred to the relevant conclusions of the Human Rights Committee, which in 2006 had considered a report submitted by UNMIK about the status of human rights in the Province.

12. Serbia still faced a number of challenges in its efforts to implement the Convention. The negative legacy of the 1990s, including the conflicts that had taken place in the region, the effects of economic sanctions and the large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, was an ongoing problem. The Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija had been under United Nations administration for nearly eight years and the future status process for the Province was still incomplete. The country had been undergoing a complex process of economic and social transition with the aim of accession to the European Union, and the required reforms were particularly challenging in the field of gender equality and the advancement of women. Nonetheless, significant progress had been made, and Serbia remained committed to advancing democratization, fulfilling its international obligations, promoting human rights and improving the position of women in cooperation with the competent international institutions.

13. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee would take note of the suggestion to seek information from UNMIK on the implementation of the Convention in Kosovo and Metohija, and would decide in due course how to proceed in that regard.

Articles 1 and 2

14. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** requested information on the content of the new Law on Churches and Religious Communities. She wished to know when it had come into force and whether there had been a process of public discussion of it. She would also appreciate more information about the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious communities in public affairs, for example, whether such communities took part in parliamentary hearings on new laws or held seats on public boards.

15. Many religious faiths did not adhere to the concept of equality enshrined in the Convention, stressing instead the complementarity of the roles of men and women. Such an approach could lead to inequality. The State party should provide more information on the attitude of the Orthodox Church and other religious communities with regard to equality between men and women, and on the methods employed by the Government to monitor the involvement of religious communities in the performance of public functions.

16. Lastly, she had independent information that the Serbian Orthodox Church enjoyed privileges in various areas such as tax, property and economic activities. She would like to know whether similar privileges were granted to non-religious organizations in Serbia. Naturally, it was important to ensure religious freedom, but care should be taken to ensure that such privileges did not have a negative impact on the equality of women and men.

17. **Ms. Saiga** asked when the Gender Equality Law was expected to come into force, given that it was widely supported. Noting that the Ombudsman Law was already in place, she asked why no Ombudsman had yet been appointed and whether there were specific obstacles to the actual functioning of that institution.

18. The responses to the list of issues and questions stated that the initial report had been prepared by the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, but there was no mention of the involvement of any NGOs. She therefore requested more information about the procedure followed by the Ministry in its preparation of the report and what sources of information it had used.

19. Welcoming the Government's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, she asked whether Serbian women were aware of their rights under the Convention and of the action they could take if those rights were violated.

20. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, asked whether the Convention had been invoked in any domestic court cases and whether measures were in place to educate the judiciary about the Convention and the Optional Protocol. She would also like to know whether women were fully aware of the content of the Convention and what the Government was doing to raise awareness of the Convention as a legally binding human rights

instrument. The State party should also indicate whether it had national legislation prohibiting all forms of discrimination.

21. Noting the importance of transparency in the process of preparation of the report, she asked whether the report was available in the Serbian language, whether NGOs had been consulted in its preparation and whether they had been informed of its content. The State party should also indicate whether the report had been transmitted to Parliament and its Gender Equality Committee. Parliament should be aware of the procedures for implementing the Convention and reporting to the Committee. In that connection, the Committee's concluding comments on the report should be transmitted in due course to the relevant ministries and to Parliament.

22. Lastly, more information was needed on the National Action Plan for the Empowerment of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality. The State party should indicate how the Plan drew on the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing+5) and the provisions of the Convention. The Committee also wished to know what time frame was envisaged for the adoption of the Plan.

23. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** asked about government measures to guarantee women's rights under the Convention, in particular by giving them legal aid where necessary. Since the provisions of the Convention could be invoked in the domestic courts, she wondered what would happen in the event of a discrepancy between those provisions and domestic law. The Committee would appreciate clarification of the changes introduced into the Criminal Code, which seemed regressive (for example, sexual harassment was no longer characterized as a criminal offence). Lastly, she enquired about the penalties for violence against women.

24. **Ms. Prelić** (Serbia) said the new Constitution provided for the direct implementation of all international instruments ratified by Serbia and for the harmonization of domestic law with international norms. Over the period 2001-2006, several new laws had been drafted accordingly. The courts would not need to invoke the Convention where domestic legislation already regulated areas covered by it, for example family and labour legislation; however, in the absence of relevant domestic legislation, the courts

would apply the Convention directly. Regulations had been adopted on the provision of legal aid by the State, as necessary. As for the provisions of the new Criminal Code, far from being regressive, they offered women broader protection against harassment and violence, both at home and in the workplace. In Serbian legislation, criminal acts were covered not only by criminal law but also by other laws proscribing certain types of behaviour. Moreover, women were now more inclined to report incidents of abuse and to apply for protection.

25. On the question of training for judges on the provisions of the Convention, a special project under way for the reform of the judicial system provided for continuing training for judges and public prosecutors in order to ensure the protection of women and all vulnerable groups, in accordance with Serbia's international obligations. In response to another question, she said that the Ombudsman Laws had been adopted, but its implementation had been delayed by the constitutional reform process, under which the new Parliament was required to elect the Ombudsman. The new Parliament in place would proceed accordingly and would be taking all other requisite measures; it was committed to the further democratization of the State and to its European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Adoption of the new laws before it, including the Gender Equality Law, would enable all the necessary institutions to come into operation.

26. The Law on Churches and Religious Communities, which had entered into force in 2006, placed all established religious faiths on an equal footing, including the Serbian Orthodox Church, along with the Roman Catholic, Jewish, Protestant and Evangelical faiths. The situation was different for other, less traditional religious communities, which were required to register with the Ministry of Religion. Under the Constitution, Serbia was a secular State but ensured freedom of religious affiliation. There was separation between State and religion, but, in the event of abuses, including any violations of women's rights, the State could intervene in matters under the independent control of religious communities. In schools, pupils had a choice between civic education and religious instruction; all the religious authorities, and not just the Serbian Orthodox Church, had a hand in the shaping of the religious content of curricula. Representatives of the different religious communities could attend parliamentary proceedings as observers,

but not as participants; they could not stand as candidates for Parliament.

27. **Ms. Petrović** (Serbia) said that the new Government of Serbia had only just been appointed, following a complex political process which had been marked by an interruption of several months in the work of Parliament. That was the reason for the delay in the entry into force of the new laws. The Anti-discrimination Law would contain a definition of discrimination in accordance with the Convention and would provide for a system of individual protection. On the question of awareness-raising and training, measures had already been taken at the federal level of the former State, from which a large number of State employees had benefited. A conference had been held on the reporting procedure for the Convention, basic documents had been translated and panels were planned. The Gender Equality Council had been in operation since 2004 and would be reporting to the Government once a year. It included awareness-raising among its strategic priorities and had already launched media campaigns to that end, aimed particularly at improving the treatment of women in the media. A fund had been established for the promotion of gender equality and a number of educational measures were planned. Further efforts still needed to be made to secure greater involvement by men in women's issues.

28. **Ms. Mohorović** (Serbia) said that the process of preparing the initial report had not been favourable, coinciding as it had with a series of major changes in the very nature of the State. With that period of instability behind them, Serbia expected to be able in future to discharge all its international obligations in a more normal way and, to that end, to count on the full engagement of the State authorities, civil society and the public at large.

Article 3

29. **Ms. Neubauer** welcomed the establishment of the Gender Equality Council. She wished to know the extent of its capacities and the human and financial resources allocated to it.

30. **Ms. Chutikul** asked how and by whom the public figures and representatives of civil society on the Gender Equality Council were selected. Who chaired the Council and how did it discharge its mandate, particularly its monitoring functions? In the light of the statement in the responses to the list of issues and

questions that the Service for Human and Minority Rights would identify parameters to monitor progress in the achievement of gender equality and submit them to the Statistical Office for monitoring, she wondered whether there was not some duplication with the work of the Council. Which body would be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Committee's concluding recommendations?

31. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** asked for more information on the structure, mandate and functioning of the national machinery for the advancement of women. Noting that the recently established Gender Equality Council had an essentially advisory role, she asked how it coordinated the implementation of policy and what it was doing to protect the rights of minority women. She also requested more information on accountability and enforcement within the national programme for the advancement of women. Noting the establishment of focal points at the local level to monitor and advise on gender policy, she asked what percentage of municipalities were covered.

32. **Ms. Zou** asked how the National Action Plan for 2007-2010 and the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Women and the Advancement of Gender Equality, both mentioned in the opening statement of the delegation, were related. She requested more information on the Gender Equality Council and its powers to implement policy.

33. **Ms. Saiga** said that it was difficult to get a clear picture of the national machinery for the advancement of women. She asked which departments or ministries had day-to-day responsibility for coordinating gender issues.

34. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, noted that there had been recent developments in the national machinery that dealt with gender equality and asked whether any new bodies had been or would be created.

35. **Ms. Prelić** (Serbia) said that only the Government had authority and responsibility in Serbia for setting and implementing policy. A Service for Human and Minority Rights with cross-cutting advisory functions had been established to monitor and report on the work of the ministries in implementing Serbia's international obligations in those areas. The Gender Equality Council, also an advisory body, had been established to deal specifically with gender issues. The Council was not responsible for

implementing policies but rather for monitoring the situation of women and advise ministries on gender issues. It also organized training programmes, consultations, awareness campaigns and contacts with civil society. The offices of the Council were situated within the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, as that Ministry seemed to cover most of the core issues relating to women.

36. Responding to a question about which body would implement the recommendations of the Committee, she said that the recommendations would presumably be sent to the Government, which would forward relevant portions to the appropriate ministries for action. The Gender Equality Council would receive a copy of the recommendations and would monitor the actions taken by each ministry. With regard to the gender focal points, she pointed out that the 42 offices established so far covered about 25 per cent of all municipalities. They were part of a pilot idea for which a firm legal basis remained to be established. She hoped that the new law on local self-government would provide for gender focal points in all municipalities. With regard to the situation of rural women, she noted that, although education opportunities had improved significantly in rural areas, rural women continued to migrate to the towns and cities, which had a negative impact on villages.

37. **Ms. Petrović** (Serbia) said that the Gender Equality Council was an interdisciplinary advisory body made up of Government, academic and civil society experts. The work of the Council had expanded and it had requested strengthening of its administrative staff and an increase in international support. The National Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Women and the Advancement of Gender Equality had been prepared by the Council and represented the core of the National Action Plan referred to in the introductory statement.

Article 3

38. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** noted that the materials submitted by the delegation seemed relatively silent about Government measures to ensure equality of opportunities, not just rights, for minority women. Generally, the Government's approach to gender and discrimination issues seemed ad hoc and reactive rather than all-embracing and proactive. She hoped that the entire Government had been made gender-sensitive.

39. **Ms. Dairiam** said that no clear normative legal framework based on the Convention seemed to have been established in Serbia. It was also not clear how comprehensive the national action plan was, for example, whether it incorporated the concerns contained in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), including issues relating to displaced persons, property restitution and social services for war victims, wherever they found themselves.

Article 4

40. **Ms. Simms** urged the Government to make full use of temporary special measures under article 4 of the Convention to accelerate the achievement of greater equality, especially with regard to minorities, for whom the playing field was rarely level. In that connection she asked whether any Roma women served on the Gender Equality Council and whether any special measures had been taken for their benefit.

41. **Ms. Prelić** (Serbia) said that Committee members should understand that the report itself covered the period from 1992 to 2003. However, there had been profound changes in Serbian governance and democracy since 2000, which meant that much of the report was out of date. Her delegation intended to focus on the current situation, as described in the responses to the list of issues and questions and in its opening statement. With regard to minorities, in particular the Roma, she pointed out that the Roma had been given official minority status and they had their own administrative and representative bodies. The National Action Plan dealt with the Roma and outlined measures to improve their situation. A persisting problem was overcoming traditional attitudes among the Roma and the non-Roma for instance, with regard to education and integration. The Service for Human and Minority Rights included a female Roma advisor. International organizations and donors were providing assistance and guidance in dealing with such problems.

42. With regard to women refugees and internally displaced women, efforts were under way to establish regional cooperation mechanisms to deal with the trauma of war and conflict. On the subject of special temporary measures, she noted that the new Constitution provided for positive discrimination in favour of women, including in the drawing up of slates of candidates for elections at all levels.

43. **Ms. Neubauer** said that gender stereotypes still prevailed in Serbia, causing problems in private relations and highlighting the need for changes in mentality. It appeared from the country report that Government efforts to address the portrayal of women in the media were inadequate. As gender stereotyping was also practised within the different minority groups, the Government should encourage autonomous communities to respect the principles and standards of the Convention, which was part of domestic law. She enquired about specific measures in place to tackle persisting gender stereotypes, particularly when they accompanied harmful traditional practices in some minority groups, e.g. in the predominantly Muslim region of Sandžak, where there was evidence that female genital mutilation and forced marriages were re-emerging. How were the authorities responding to those human rights violations?

44. **Ms. Patten** said that the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences had expressed concern about the high incidence of various forms of violence against Serbian women, especially domestic violence. She would appreciate details on the framework for a national strategy to combat violence against women developed by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy and the National Action Plan for the Empowerment of Women, which called for stronger legislation and other measures to combat violence. Had Serbia revised its definition of domestic violence to include mental, psychological, physical and sexual violence? Did the legal reform process include penal sanctions that were more robust than those contained in the current Criminal Code; civil remedies and compensation; preventive measures, including public information programmes that challenged violence against women and cultural acceptance of it; protective measures (shelters and rehabilitation); support services for female victims or potential victims of violence; and rehabilitation of perpetrators of domestic violence?

45. Was training of medical law enforcement personnel being envisaged together with training of the judiciary? Did training encompass the multiple forms of discrimination faced by Romani and other minority women? Was legal aid provided to victims of violence to encourage reporting? Serbia's data collection methodology, based on court records, was insufficient and should be reviewed. Would the rigid admission

criteria for State-funded safe houses, which made access difficult for Romani women, be reviewed?

46. **Ms. Shin** said that Serbia had made progress in fighting violence against women but there remained questions regarding prosecution of perpetrators, since, although violence against women had been criminalized, the actual sanctions were far from satisfactory, with only 37 per cent of cases leading to guilty verdicts, charges being dropped in most cases, and only 5 per cent of perpetrators being sentenced to imprisonment, while most received only probation and fines. Were stiffer penalties being contemplated?

47. In rape cases, survivors were re-victimized by having to give repeated statements of traumatic events for medical examinations and investigations. How could victims be expected to report to the police if that was what they had to endure? What was the Government doing to address the problem?

48. With regard to protection of victims, was there a nationwide 24-hour victim hotline available? How many shelters were there? How many were run by the Government and how many by NGOs? Was the Government providing financial support for NGO-managed shelters? She enquired about specific prevention programmes targeting boys and men to correct their behaviour.

49. Was there a comprehensive and systematic plan to eliminate violence against women? Referring to General Assembly resolution 61/143 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, and the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women, she urged the State party to consider all possible measures for the protection, prevention and prosecution of all forms of violence against women.

50. **Ms. Pimentel** commended the Serbian delegation for its enthusiasm and commitment and welcomed the criminalization of domestic violence under article 194 of the Criminal Code (CEDAW/C/SCG/Q/1/Add.1, p.16). Nevertheless, given the specific nature of domestic violence, was the Serbian Government considering a new, special law on domestic violence as part of its national strategy against violence and the National Action Plan for the Empowerment of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality?

51. Were women's NGOs included in the National Action Plan as important actors in the strategy to

combat violence? Did Serbia have any campaign to sensitize the public to the re-emergence of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation in Muslim communities? Did the Government intend to prohibit such practices? In that connection, she drew attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 14, which recommended that States parties encourage politicians, professionals, religious and community leaders at all levels, including the media and the arts, to cooperate in influencing attitudes towards the eradication of female circumcision, and promote research and seminars on the problems arising from it.

52. Referring to the records on violence against women mentioned in Serbia's response to question 13 of the list of issues and questions, she asked what percentage of women 15 to 65 years of age had been victims of any form of violence perpetrated by a partner within the past year? How many women had been murdered? How many reported cases of violence against women had reached the judiciary?

53. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** stressed the importance of tackling traditional perceptions of the role of women. Referring to the survey of school textbooks mentioned in the report, she asked whether there were any plans to revise the textbooks in order to make them more gender-sensitive. She encouraged the Government of Serbia to develop concrete implementation strategies to combat domestic violence. Evidence from other countries showed that laws alone did not yield results.

54. **Ms. Prelić** (Serbia), agreeing that stereotypes could not be eliminated merely by adopting laws, said that organized actions to that end had recently been taken in cooperation with the media. Efforts to eliminate stereotypes had also included a campaign to promote women's participation in public and political life (CEDAW/C/SCG/Q/1/Add.1). The fact that 60 per cent of the State Secretaries in the previous Government had been women, had also helped to eliminate stereotypes concerning women's status and role. Serbia's delegation to the Committee was composed entirely of women because all of them had serious mandates to carry out in their respective ministries. The practice of female genital mutilation gave no cause for concern in the Republic of Serbia, even in Muslim areas, although boys in Muslim and Jewish communities were circumcized. With regard to family violence, much had been done to create a legal framework to sanction such violence; however, much

remained to be done in terms of gaining recognition for women's rights and changing the mindset of the male population, a process that was under way.

55. As to whether women would report violence if they had to be re-victimized by the judicial process, she said that all proceedings concerning rape and sexual violence were closed to the general public and procedures were kept as short and simple as possible. Victims had to testify of course, but they were not required to repeat their testimony numerous times. Media reports could not mention a victim's name or give information that would identify her. Only by giving women such assurances could they be encouraged to report cases of rape and violence. Slowly but surely, women were becoming more aware of their rights, no longer believing that they deserved to be beaten. There was no need for a special law on family violence, as the criminal law and the family law together regulated all issues of domestic violence. Criminal offences characterized as family violence ranged from physical violence to mental abuse, rape, marital rape, sexual harassment and abuse. Special training for judges and prosecutors was still needed in order for the courts to implement the new legislation, particularly in the area of sentencing. The conviction rate of 37 per cent that had been mentioned was not correct. The figures requested for the group between 15 to 65 years of age would be provided at a later date. The gender-sensitive statistics that were being compiled would facilitate reporting in future, as it would be possible to categorize victims, for example, by age groups. Funding was needed to acquire the necessary information technology for such methods.

56. Serbia's responses to the list of issues and questions described its efforts to eliminate stereotypes from textbooks, curricula and syllabuses. Generally, the degradation of women in curricula and syllabuses was not a serious problem. What deserved more attention, however, was positive discrimination, i.e. gaining greater recognition for the role and achievements of women in history, culture, arts, literature and other fields. Civic education should include the role of women as part of a new, democratic vision. Violence against women was an urgent problem in Serbia as elsewhere. Training was being offered to prosecutors, police and health workers. There were dozens of shelters but none were State-managed and they depended on local organizations. Financial assistance had been provided to some but the problem

needed to be addressed systematically within the framework of the national strategy for combating violence. In that connection, a multidisciplinary national conference involving all relevant ministries, the media and the Statistical Office, was being planned. The conference was expected to provide an overview of future needs and orientations, and to propose measures commensurate with the seriousness of the problem. There should be an obligation to reintegrate both victims and perpetrators into normal social life.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.