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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 9th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 12 October 2015, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Kupradze (Vice-Chair)..... (Georgia)

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*In the absence of Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Ms. Kupradze (Georgia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

**Agenda item 29: Advancement of women** (*continued*) (A/70/38 and A/70/124)

**(a) Advancement of women** (*continued*) (A/70/204, A/70/205, A/70/209 and A/C.3/70/3)

**(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly** (*continued*) (A/70/180)

1. **Mr. Oña Garcés** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), reaffirmed the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and said that States parties must fully comply with their international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. The international community had made much progress since the adoption of those instruments, but was still a long way from reaching its goals and commitments.

2. The status of women was a matter of growing concern, particularly because of the feminization of poverty; the unequal burden of unpaid care work; violence against women and trafficking in women and girls. It was vital to use the opportunity of the review of the implementation of those instruments to strengthen the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all sectors and in all areas of development.

3. Consensus existed that priority should be given to women's empowerment as a prerequisite for the advancement of the development agenda. Member States should repeal discriminatory laws, ensure equal access to justice, and remove formal barriers and obstacles to the realization of women's rights and to their full and equal participation in decision-making processes. As drivers of sustainable development, women should be guaranteed equal access to food, housing, opportunities, public services and quality education at all levels, including information, education and prevention programmes for adolescent pregnancy.

4. Legislative and administrative reforms needed to be undertaken to grant women equal rights to economic

and productive resources, including ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, financial services, credit and new information technologies. The division of labour should allow for both productive and reproductive dimensions, as women shouldered a disproportionate burden in reproduction.

5. Commitments and actions to promote women's representation in public office and their participation in decision-making processes at the highest levels in the political, economic, cultural, social and environmental sectors should be renewed and prioritized in national and international agendas. The participation of women at the highest managerial levels in the private sector should also be promoted.

6. CELAC was committed to establishing the necessary conditions for the development of women and girls at both the national and international levels to enable them to enhance their capabilities; receive quality training and education at all levels; enjoy equal conditions in the workplace and receive equal pay for equal work; have access to health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and strengthen their economic autonomy, including through integration in the various production sectors.

7. CELAC member States had agreed to intensity efforts aimed at women who faced multiple discrimination factors, especially women with disabilities, older women, women of African descent, migrants, and rural and indigenous women. The contribution of women migrant workers to the development of their countries of destination and countries of origin must be fully recognized. The human rights of migrant women and girls must be fully respected, regardless of their legal status.

8. CELAC renewed its commitment to combat all forms of violence against women, including femicide and violence resulting from drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, especially children and women. Measures were intensified to prevent and combat the smuggling and exploitation of migrants in all its forms and to guarantee protection and care for victims, with particular attention to women, children and adolescents. States were urged to establish and strengthen appropriate focal points for coordination among countries of origin, transit and destination to combat those crimes.

9. She welcomed the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls in the Sustainable Development Goals and the inclusion of critical dimensions such as a life free from violence and discrimination, ensuring access and resource distribution and gender equality in decision-making. Stronger institutions, greater accountability and more participatory and effective governance would reinforce the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was a top priority for the region's Governments.

10. CELAC member States strongly supported the mandate of UN-Women, which was a leader in providing a strong voice for women and girls at all levels. However, much remained to be done, and new global challenges required coordinated and coherent work at all levels. It was necessary to strengthen mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress in achieving gender equality and encourage the participation of civil society. More international dialogue and cooperation was needed to support national initiatives in developing countries designed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Social and economic development and the achievement of real democracy were only possible in conditions of genuine equality.

11. CELAC pledged to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective fulfilment of its commitments in accordance with national laws, policies and priorities. That would require a greater allocation of financial, technical and human resources, gender-responsive budgeting and accountability. Gender statistics and indicators were important in order to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and dialogue must take place between the producers and users of data. To that end, States and international cooperation agencies must allocate sufficient resources to strengthen national statistical capabilities and compile pertinent, timely and reliable information.

12. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that 2015 marked important milestones for gender equality: the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fifteenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace, and security. He welcomed the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and especially the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5, to achieve gender

equality and empower all women and girls, noting that inclusive sustainable development would not be attainable while women were denied their full human rights and opportunities. He hoped that the Sustainable Development Goals would complete the unfinished work of the Millennium Development Goals.

13. The Community's main objective was to achieve sustainable development and economic growth in order to alleviate poverty and enhance the standard of living for all SADC nationals. The economic empowerment of women was a priority because it would have a multiplier effect, as women constituted 50 per cent of the region's poor and played key roles in societies and economies. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development urged the adoption of gender-based policies that ensured equal access and opportunities for women in trade and entrepreneurship, in both the formal and informal sectors.

14. The affirmative action provisions in the Protocol were being implemented in order to enhance economic opportunities for women, including in public procurement processes, and ensure that all people had equal rights to economic resources, access to basic services, ownership of and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, financial services and microfinance. Implementation of the SADC Protocol had yielded dividends, though implementation gaps persisted.

15. Equal participation for women in politics and the decision-making process continued to be a priority as a means to enhance economic empowerment. Overall representation of women in Parliament had increased, with 7 of the 15 member States having achieved more than 30 per cent representation, and more women were holding managerial positions in the public sector.

16. Violence against women and girls hampered regional efforts to achieve gender equality and equity, reduced the quality of life, limited prospects for empowerment, and increased exposure to HIV infections. Those acts of violence were fuelled by patriarchal and harmful cultural and traditional norms and attitudes. Member States enacted and enforced strong legislation and developed policy frameworks prohibiting all forms of gender-based violence against women and children, including trafficking in persons.

17. Poverty continued to affect women, particularly those living in rural areas. One fourth of the population

was made up of women in rural areas who participated in micro-enterprises and the informal sector. Despite their vital contribution to agriculture, rural development and national economies, rural women faced a lack of collateral and limited access to financial resources. The empowerment of rural women was critical to realizing their rights, to securing the well-being of their families and communities and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. A multi-dimensional women's economic empowerment programme had been developed by SADC to explore sustainable solutions to the economic marginalization and poverty of women.

18. Education and health remained major priorities. Access to education for women and girls had steadily risen in the region, and most of the member States had achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education. Access to health care for women had improved, reducing maternal and infant mortality rates. Member States were working to increase antiretroviral provision services and prevention of mother-to-child transmission coverage.

19. The situation of the girl child remained a priority. Girls who were heads of household or raised in child-headed households were prone to poverty, discrimination, and physical and mental abuse. The international community was called upon to work together to address the situation of the girl child and provide financial resources and other technical support in order to conduct an in-depth study on the magnitude of child-headed households. Lastly, SADC reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women, as well as to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

20. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association had recognized the important role of women in development since the ASEAN Women Leaders' Conference in 1975 and furthered its commitment with the Declaration on the Advancement of Women in ASEAN in 1988 and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region in 2004. The ASEAN Committee on Women met annually to coordinate and monitor the implementation of key priorities in women's issues.

21. Between 2005 and 2010, work plans for women's advancement and gender equality and the elimination of violence against women had been successfully implemented. Action had been undertaken across multiple platforms to incorporate a gender perspective in development, including two regional events on gender and climate change in 2015: the Regional Conference on the Social Impact of Climate Change on Women and Children and the ASEAN Regional Workshop on Gender Issues in Climate Change and Its Adaption.

22. In 2014, the ASEAN Regional Conference of Senior Officials on Strengthening the Protection and Empowerment of Women Migrant Workers had been convened, with the support of the International Labour Organization. The Gender-Sensitive Guideline for Handling Women Victims of Trafficking in Persons was being finalized in order to improve practices by law enforcement agencies, social workers, health officers, service providers, and other frontline agencies and non-governmental organizations.

23. Since its establishment in 2010, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children had actively worked to eliminate all forms of violence against women and to enhance the effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Commission was currently developing regional action plans to eliminate violence against women and children and preparing to launch a network of social service agencies to provide support for victims.

24. Women in the region enjoyed increased participation in the labour force and political life, improvements in education, a reduction in poverty and increased access to improved sanitation and water. National and regional mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Women's Circle, had also been established to advance women's participation and engagement across all sectors.

25. The role of the ASEAN Secretariat was vital in making gender mainstreaming a standard practice in the Association's policies across its political, security, economic and social-cultural pillars. Since women were the agents of change and development, efforts to promote their well-being and empowerment would contribute significantly to the achievement of the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development. ASEAN looked forward to engaging with the United Nations and its agencies as well as with other partners to work towards a prosperous and inclusive global community, with women serving an integral role in socioeconomic development at the national, regional and international levels.

26. **Mr. Whiteley** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that women whose rights were respected and who had the power to participate on equal terms in economic, social and political life were agents of peace, sustainable development and change. However, when rights and opportunities were denied to women, development was threatened.

27. The Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved without gender equality, as many world leaders had stressed at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. He welcomed the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender in the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the mainstreaming of gender throughout the whole agenda.

28. The European Union remained committed to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and had contributed to the high-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). An additional push from the review was expected in order to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and to address new challenges, such as violent extremism and women migrants and refugees. In parallel to the review, a baseline study was being conducted to measure gender integration in the Common Security and Defence Policy and crisis management missions.

29. In 2015, the main policy frameworks on women would be renewed. Several important policy documents had been or would be adopted to guide internal and external action. Future priorities for gender equality policy were being established, building on a

consultative process with major stakeholders and the broader public. The policy priorities would respond to current needs and challenges, build a just and equal society, and continue the fight against persisting gender inequalities. Particular attention was given to establishing and implementing internal mechanisms to enhance women's participation in decision-making.

30. The European Union had adopted a plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations (2016-2020). An Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) had also been adopted to undertake actions on women's rights, especially women's political participation and leadership, peacebuilding and conflict prevention and early warning mechanisms. The Union welcomed the contributions of the Commission on the Status of Women and UN-Women and was fully committed to the effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. All countries that had not yet done so were urged to sign, ratify and fully implement the Convention.

31. All forms of violence against women and girls were strongly condemned. Custom, tradition, culture, religion, or so-called honour could not be invoked to justify violence in any of its forms or to reduce the obligations of States to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls and effectively prosecute perpetrators. The European Union cooperated with the Council of Europe in the context of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and supported the global fight against all harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

32. The European Union was committed to ending sexual violence in conflict and supported all work aimed at an integrated approach to prevent and punish acts of sexual violence and bring justice, services and reparation to its victims. A Guide to Practical Actions at EU level for Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict was adopted in 2014. A commitment had also been made to the global initiative Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies. Lastly, the European External Action Service had recently appointed a Principal Advisor on Gender and Women, Peace and Security to ensure coordination with other

international, regional and national actors on gender-related issues.

33. **Ms. Kuret** (Slovenia) said that with a view to eliminating of all forms of violence against women and ensuring women's full and equal participation in decision-making, her country pledged to support special measures, including gender quotas in corporate boards, and had launched a project to improve the representation of women in the highest positions of management and leadership in business. The employment rate of women was rather high in Slovenia, and it had the highest employment rate of mothers and the narrowest gender pay gap in the European Union. There was 47 per cent representation of women in the Government and 34 per cent in Parliament.

34. Activities aimed at promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities and duties between men and women must be supported. The share of daily unpaid work undertaken by men in Slovenia was the highest in the European Union according to a survey. Her country would continue to support and promote the active role and responsibility of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality and women's and girls' rights; the Prime Minister and ministers had joined the HeForShe campaign to demonstrate such support.

35. Slovenia had ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and urged States and other stakeholders to challenge cultural norms and practices that perpetuated structural inequalities as a root cause of such violence. All forms of violence against women, including marital rape and intimate partner violence, must be strictly prohibited and punished.

36. Her Government had adopted a national programme for achieving gender equality by 2020, covering economic independence, work-life balance, gender stereotypes, social inclusion, decision-making, women's health, violence against women and gender equality in foreign policy and international cooperation.

37. **Ms. Kassangana-Jakubowska** (Poland) said that the successful and peaceful transition to democracy and the free market in her country 26 years earlier was a transformation co-designed by Polish women, who had boldly stepped up to shape the future of their country, society, community and family, becoming

agents of change in society, advocates for social justice and supporters of democracy and the rule of law.

38. Poland had done a tremendous job to ensure that the principle of equal treatment enshrined in its Constitution was reflected in other legal acts. In 2010, mandatory quotas of 35 per cent representation of women on election lists had been introduced, and the percentage of women in Parliament had increased to 24 per cent after the 2011 elections. The number of women nominated to medium- and high-level decision-making positions had significantly increased in recent years. For example, the leaders of the three major political parties in Poland were women. Her country had been ranked fourth in the glass-ceiling index, which listed countries according to the chances of women receiving equal treatment at work.

39. Poland was ready to share its experiences in political participation and economic empowerment. Polish women could act as role models and help to equip women from Africa and other regions with management, business, development, marketing and communication skills, enabling them to start and expand enterprises and create jobs in their communities.

40. Poland firmly supported all international initiatives aimed at eliminating discriminatory laws and practices with regard to women and was grateful to the African Group for bringing the issue of female genital mutilation to the work of the Third Committee. The Global Summit of Women to be held in Warsaw in June 2016 would focus on women's economic advancement in the digital age and provide a platform for exchanging experience and good practices and exploring new ways for the economic empowerment of women.

41. **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt) said that the adoption of Agenda 2030 was a key milestone in global efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Egypt remained committed to upholding all international instruments to safeguard the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women. Discrimination on the basis of gender was prohibited under the Constitution, which, inter alia, provided for a mechanism to monitor discrimination and for particular attention to be accorded to the situation of poor and elderly women and to women with disabilities.

42. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Egypt had reduced both maternal

and child mortality rates by over 66 per cent. Female enrolment rates in primary, secondary and tertiary education were rising, and women comprised almost two thirds of university graduates. Women also comprised at least 20 per cent of the Egyptian diplomatic corps and held senior positions in the judiciary and business. The National Council for Women played a pivotal role, addressing women's practical needs and promoting their full participation in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres.

43. Draft legislation addressing violence against women was ready for consideration by the new Parliament. Civil society organizations also played a crucial role in supporting efforts to curb all forms of violence against women and eliminate female genital mutilation. In that regard, the Kamla campaign, a school-based intervention developed by a coalition of non-governmental organizations, had been launched in 11 governorates and, to date, had encouraged more than 20,000 families to declare their intention to abandon the harmful practice.

44. Despite the progress achieved by many countries in terms of empowering women and upholding their rights, well-coordinated efforts were still needed to address the situation of the many marginalized women around the world who continued to live precarious lives. States must, moreover, do more to address the plight of the growing numbers of female victims of human trafficking.

45. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that, at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, the President of Brazil had underscored the country's unwavering commitment to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as towards gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of women's rights on all fronts. The President had also committed to ensuring humane assistance to all women in situations of violence, increasing the number of women in politics, ensuring women's development at all educational levels and strengthening maternal health care.

46. With a view to speeding up the achievement of gender equality, Brazil had recently passed a bill criminalizing femicide and launched a national programme establishing facilities for providing assistance to women victims of violence. Over the past decades, Brazil had put in place policies resulting in

clear advances for women's rights and women's economic and political empowerment. Women had been the main beneficiaries of social policies, such as cash transfer programmes and housing credit, and in rural areas women also benefited from technical assistance and rural extension programmes.

47. Although women and girls constituted over 50 per cent of students at all education levels in Brazil, their participation in the economically active population was quite below that level, but was increasing. The Government had made every effort to enhance women's access to decent paid employment, including through the regulation of domestic work.

48. Poverty eradication was currently the greatest global challenge; promoting gender equality was indispensable for reducing inequality overall and, eventually, eradicating poverty. The persisting gender gap in employment and the feminization of poverty marginalized women; Brazil thus welcomed the priority given to the need to finance the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the outcome document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development.

49. The priority theme of the forthcoming sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women would be women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development, the consideration of which would include representatives of civil society, whose valuable work would be strategic in the implementation, monitoring and attainment of the goals and targets agreed by 2030.

50. **Mr. Dery** (Philippines) said that his country had worked hard to implement commitments under the 12 critical areas identified in the Beijing Declaration since its adoption. The Philippines had ranked ninth in the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum for 2014 and been identified as a country that had fully closed the gender gap in educational attainment and health and survival.

51. Since 2009, completion rates in primary and secondary education in the Philippines had favoured females over males. At the tertiary and postgraduate levels, more females were enrolled than males. The Government provided scholarships for females who enrolled in male-dominated courses and vice versa. In the political sphere, there were women leaders in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of Government, and women were at the forefront of

national peace processes. In terms of economic participation and opportunities, 54 per cent of enterprises were female owned, and 63 per cent of managers in micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises were women.

52. To improve the lot of rural women, who constituted 42 per cent of the agricultural labour force, the Government had awarded 674,486 certificates of land ownership and implemented programmes to increase access to resources in relation to livelihood, education and leadership opportunities through training in production, post-harvest and processing technologies, farm inputs, loans and credit, and market assistance.

53. Six in every ten Philippine overseas workers were women, many of whom were vulnerable to abuse. His country provided pre-departure orientation seminars to arm migrant workers with information and advice on the realities in the destination country, coping mechanisms and available support networks for women migrants in distress.

54. A 24/7 hotline had been established to respond to emergency and crisis calls from victims of human trafficking, which was accessible from anywhere in the Philippines and from overseas. A financial education and entrepreneurship programme, jointly undertaken by the Government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the private sector, had been introduced to teach female migrant workers and their families and beneficiaries how to plan and manage their finances towards the attainment of their goals.

55. **Ms. Pérez Gómez** (Colombia) said that the gender perspective was a cross-cutting concept of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; efforts to implement all the goals should thus be in line with existing agreements on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Efforts were needed to ensure that all women could benefit from sustainable development and play a determining role in its achievement, regardless of their age, urban or rural status, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or any other reason. Measures for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres should be strengthened.

56. Her country was making progress in implementing a plan to guarantee women a life free from violence and had adopted legislation against

femicide. New notions of masculinity must be established for the advancement of women and gender equality, and men and boys should be included in the processes needed to transform culture and gender stereotypes. Innovative strategies involving the use and appropriation of information and communication technologies by women should be promoted as a fundamental element of their empowerment.

57. In light of the growing problem of discrimination and violence against migrant workers, States must promote and guarantee the full respect of the human rights of all migrants, work in a united, collaborative and responsible manner to respond to that situation, recognize that women faced specific vulnerabilities in the migratory process and not create negative stereotypes on the basis of nationality, ethnic origin or any other reason.

58. It was time to act more systematically and responsibly in countries of origin, transit and destination in order to put in motion an action-oriented agenda to create a more secure and transparent international mobility system that protected the human rights of all migrants, enhanced their positive contribution to development, encouraged cohesion in multicultural environments and improved public opinion of migrants by recognizing them as vital members of society.

59. **Ms. Shilo** (Israel) said that her country fully endorsed the vision of a society in which women and men shared equal responsibilities and were given equal opportunities to choose career paths that would enable them to reach influential positions. Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence guaranteed equal rights for all citizens. In the current Government, a new ministerial position formed to deal with gender and social equality had been filled by a woman.

60. Dozens of Israeli non-governmental organizations were working on the ground to enhance cross-cultural exchanges between Jewish and Arab women. The Centre for the Advancement of Women in the Public Sphere aimed to advance the democratic and civil status of women from diverse social backgrounds.

61. Believing that coexistence, as seen through the eyes of women, was key to a better global society, Israel strove to empower Arab and Jewish women and give them the encouragement and resources to engage in their communities and build mutual respect and openness. Gender equality in all aspects of life would



help promote the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

62. **Mr. Sauer** (Finland) said that equal rights for men and women to participate in political, economic and public life were a great step towards the eradication of poverty. Equal opportunity did not only make economic sense, however, it was a human right. The provision of equal access to financial resources, inheritance rights and land ownership was of primary importance for women's empowerment in many countries.

63. Finland was the first country in the world to establish universal suffrage, but the formal participation of women in public life was of itself not enough. Gender equality and non-discrimination needed to be ensured through structures that facilitated the combination of work and family life for both men and women. Currently, many countries were facing the additional challenge of integrating migrants, and special attention should be paid to providing migrant women with education and employment possibilities.

64. States needed to become more vocal in eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. The role of men and boys was vital. Through the HeForShe campaign launched by UN-Women, Finland had pledged to reduce the number of cases of violence against women and girls by five per cent by 2020. The Finnish Government remained committed to supporting the work of UN-Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and to the realization of sexual and reproductive health rights.

65. Finland also actively supported the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and its follow-up resolutions. Women should be seen not only as victims, but as agents of change, whose participation in mediation and post-conflict reconstruction processes was of potentially vital importance for the future of societies.

66. **Ms. Arauz** (Mexico), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the inclusion of Goal 5 and the mainstreaming of the gender-perspective in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were to be celebrated. The status of women in the world remained unequal, however, and efforts to establish mechanisms that would expedite the empowerment of women, the full realization of their rights and the elimination of violence against them must be redoubled.

67. Women were essential to a country's economic, social and cultural development; without their involvement, true sustainable development would be impossible. Recognizing the work done by the United Nations system to promote gender equality and empower women thus far, Mexico believed that actions aimed at advancing the situation of women should lay down concrete measures that ensured their full participation in development.

68. The Mexican Government had recently demonstrated its commitment to gender equality with the announcement of a number of coordinated policy actions, including the raising to ministerial status of the national gender equality system, the promotion of more equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women in the home, and greater efforts to prevent teenage pregnancies and reduce maternal mortality.

69. The national strategy to prevent teenage pregnancies included the promotion of informed decision-making and increased access to sexual and reproductive health services and sex education at all levels. Civil society and academia were involved in its implementation. Meanwhile recent political reforms that guaranteed gender parity in candidature for local and federal legislatures had resulted in women now accounting for 42 per cent of deputies in Congress. Mexico would continue to promote and share its experience with sex-disaggregated statistics and budgeting.

70. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that ending gender discrimination was a key element of her country's effort to advance human rights. Women played an important role, not only in development, but also in peace and security. The United States still strongly supported the principles of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and the Government's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security reaffirmed its position that women's full and active participation was necessary for addressing global security challenges. Data showed that women's involvement in conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery efforts increased long-term prospects for peace; yet women were often absent from the places where decisions were made, in particular about their futures.

71. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, continued to serve as an ambitious road map for

empowering women and promoting women and girls' human rights everywhere. Moving forward, the United States would work to consolidate the gains of the previous 20 years, dedicate new resources to promote girls' education around the world, redouble its efforts to address gender-based violence and continue to work with its partners to advance women's political and economic empowerment.

72. Many States had already made impressive progress in following the road map. Some countries, however, continued to silence the voices of women activists. In the lead up to the Beijing + 20 event held in New York in September 2015, the United States had highlighted the cases of 20 unjustly imprisoned women who had worked to promote the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, ensure people's access to basic health care and education and defend children, refugees, and other vulnerable persons. They had been selected to represent the thousands of women around the world who should be free to help improve their societies. Her Government was pleased to note that two of the women included in the campaign had since been released and called for the immediate liberation of the 18 others.

73. **Mr. Marani** (Argentina) said that, at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action held on 27 September 2015 in New York, the President of Argentina had called for change in culture whereby the empowerment of women was the result, not of compliance with treaty obligations, but of men and women's firm conviction that it was right. To advance the situation of women, priority should be given to the full realization of women's rights and gender equality in all spheres, as well as joint efforts to achieve them. The inclusion of a stand-alone goal on the subject in the 2030 Agenda was a step in the right direction.

74. Gender inequality was one of the most perverse forms of inequality. It affected most of the world population and manifested itself in physical and psychological violence, including human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The situation of older women, who continued to face discrimination in access to services and be especially vulnerable to abuse and violence, was also of concern. The Argentine Government was committed to combating gender-based violence and was implementing various policies to protect women. To end discrimination and violence against women, the gender perspective needed to be

mainstreamed in all national and international institutions.

75. Legal instruments were particularly effective at bringing about social change and attacking inequality. Argentina had enacted laws to facilitate childbirth, protect the rights of children and adolescents, regulate bioethical matters and implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

76. Her country accepted the concept of family set forth in the documents of the Fourth World Conference, specifically recognizing the existence of diverse forms of family and that families could stem from same- or different-sex marriages. Argentina would continue to promote the empowerment of women and efforts to shatter the glass ceiling that prevented women from accessing positions of power. In that regard, the time had come for a woman to be appointed the next United Nations Secretary-General.

77. **Ms. Moutchou** (Morocco) said that political, economic and social equality between men and women was important for democracy and development. Progress had been made in realizing some of women's legitimate ambitions thanks to efforts to address women's issues directly and involve women in development processes, but women continued to face many obstacles that hampered their emancipation. Inequality persisted in education and health, and women still suffered physically and psychologically from violence against them and particularly from the spread of serious diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

78. King Mohammed VI attached particular importance to the emancipation of women in Morocco. Gender equality was now enshrined in the Constitution, and Morocco had been party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since 1993 and its Optional Protocol since 2008 and had withdrawn all its reservations thereto in 2011. The personal status, civil, penal, commercial, civil service and labour codes had been amended to ensure the fair treatment of women under the law. Moroccan women were increasingly involved in decision-making through their increased participation in public affairs and public institutions at all levels.

79. King Mohammed VI had also established the Mohammed V Foundation shortly after his coronation to improve the situation of persons living in poverty, persons with disabilities and rural women and girls in particular. The Foundation provided microcredits to

women and worked with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to combat marginalization and build an equitable society. Civil society organizations played a key role in the advancement of women in Morocco, especially through their local development activities, and had become increasingly involved in the promotion of women's rights in the legal, cultural, social and economic domains.

80. **Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) said that the implementation of the commitments assumed at the Fourth World Conference remained important, particularly the need to address poverty, unequal access to education, health issues, violence against women, inequality in decision-making and the shortage of mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women. Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development called for countries to join forces to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls and eliminate all gender-based violence, including early and forced marriage. The challenge for States was to take stock of the current situation and identify opportunities for expediting improvements in gender equality, the empowerment of women and respect for women's rights.

81. Peru's national gender equality plan for 2012-2017 was designed to fulfil the country's national and international commitments and promote inclusive development based on equality and non-discrimination. The Government was committed to mainstreaming the gender perspective at all levels of public administration. In addition to including women in its social programmes, the Government was developing mechanisms to ensure the empowerment of women on the political front by guaranteeing them seats in elections.

82. The Sustainable Development Goals must be achieved by 2030 and no later. That required urgent action in pursuit of Goal 5 and all the Agenda's gender-equality commitments because sustainable development would never be achieved if countries curbed the potential of half the world population: women.

83. **Ms. Lee** (Singapore) said that, with its people being its only available resource, providing equal opportunities for men and women on the basis of meritocracy had been a matter of economic survival for Singapore. That remained true today given the country's very low birth rate and rapidly ageing population. A range of measures, such as flexible

working arrangements, longer paid maternity leave, extended childcare leave and more childcare facilities, had been introduced to help working mothers better manage their work and family commitments. To encourage better sharing of parental responsibilities, working fathers now received up to two weeks of government-paid paternity leave.

84. As a result of those policies, between 1995 and 2014, the employment rate of women in their prime working age had risen from 57 per cent to 76 per cent, and the employment rate of older women from 19 per cent to nearly 53 per cent. In addition, more women were now in previously male-dominated professions. Despite those achievements, only 8.3 per cent of companies listed on the Singapore Exchange had women on their boards of directors. A Diversity Action Committee comprising business leaders and professionals from all sectors had therefore been set up to increase that proportion.

85. Singapore was ranked fifteenth out of 152 countries on the Gender Inequality Index in the 2014 United Nations Human Development Report. Women in Singapore enjoyed strong legal protection. That protection had been extended in 2014 with the enactment of the Protection from Harassment Act, which covered cyberbullying, stalking and sexual harassment both within and outside the workplace.

86. Her country was committed to combating trafficking in persons and had recently acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and enacted legislation to criminalize trafficking in persons in the form of sex, labour and organ trafficking. Singapore remained committed to the goal of achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls and would continue to work with all elements of society, including individuals, companies and civil society, to do so.

87. **Mr. González Franco** (Paraguay) said that the historic tenacity and selflessness of Paraguayan women and their capacity to rebuild the country after times of conflict and crisis were almost without comparison; yet their contribution to economic and social development still tended to be underestimated. To address the inequality gaps, gender equality had been made a crosscutting objective of the 2030 National Development Plan under which the Ministry of Women was pursuing three lines of action: the economic

empowerment of women, the prevention and punishment of gender-based violence and human trafficking, and the promotion of women's participation in public and political life.

88. The country had recorded notable achievements in the advancement of women in recent years in terms of access to employment, housing and other services, education, credit and social welfare programmes. The advances made at the regional level also deserved recognition, but States must now strengthen their political commitment to achieve concrete results that benefited women and children and, through them, families and society at large. The full realization of Goal 5 was crucial because sustainable development would be impossible as long as women and girls suffered inequality, discrimination, violence and social and economic exclusion.

89. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that said that for four harrowing years, Syrian women and girls had been subjected to the most hideous forms of terrorism and extremism at the hands of so-called jihadist takfirist terrorists from Arab and western countries who were supported by Arab, regional and western Governments. Gang rape, forced marriage and subjection to twisted ideological restrictions were among the abuses that Syrian women, who had previously played a prominent role in their society, had endured in those dark days, both in the Syrian Arab Republic and in the camps of shame along the country's borders with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

90. Hundreds of Syrian girls had been abducted and enslaved by Wahhabi terrorists, and some had committed suicide to avoid that fate. Women were being negated as human beings, turned into mere objects for the physical enjoyment of terrorists, and stripped of the dignity and freedom that they had enjoyed for decades. Meanwhile, thousands of Syrian women were at the mercy of human traffickers as they attempted to cross the Mediterranean in death ships in search of refuge. In view of that catastrophic situation, Syrian women wondered when certain Governments would cease their support for terrorism in Syria. It was, moreover, incumbent upon everyone to implement Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014) fully and impartially.

91. Certain high-ranking United Nations officials and Western countries had made numerous declarations in favour of women's rights. Meanwhile, Western and Arab

media outlets had busied themselves with levelling spurious accusations, fabricating lies and demonizing the Syrian Government, forgetting all that it had done to empower women and grant them equal rights in all areas of public life. Indeed, women in Syria held 30 seats in parliament and senior positions in Government and the armed forces and, in contrast to other parts of the region, enjoyed the right to drive vehicles.

92. Takfirist Wahhabist fatwas had provided cover for terrorist crimes while forbidding women from exercising their rights. The most glaring instance of a fatwa offensive to Arabs and Islam was the so-called "marriage jihad". The Syrian Government had on several occasions tried to warn the United Nations of the spread of that phenomenon, had demanded a prompt response to prevent innocent women and girls from falling victim to the disgraceful practice, and had called for those who issued such fatwas and their sponsors to be held accountable. However, those calls had met with reprehensible international silence and apathy.

93. The international community's indifference to the plight of women in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq had facilitated the dissemination of such fatwas and, as a result, hundreds of girls from Arab and Western countries had fallen into the hands of extremists. His delegation reiterated its call for sincere international efforts to put an end to those obscurantist fatwas and to establish a mechanism for Governments with legal jurisdiction over those who issued or propagated fatwas to hold them accountable. Unless something was done, the profoundly negative impact of those ideas on women and girls — most notably, their denial of women's humanity — would ultimately undermine the rights of women worldwide.

94. **Ms. Moreno Guerra** (Cuba) said that progress in the advancement of women had been fragile and insufficient. One in three women suffered physical or sexual violence; women accounted for 90 per cent of victims of human trafficking, 75 per cent of refugees and 70 per cent of the world's poor; and women received less pay for work of equal value and were sorely underrepresented in parliaments. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women would require first and foremost a fair and just international order, the eradication of poverty and war, the preservation of the environment and the prioritization of human beings over capital.

95. Cuba guaranteed free education and health services for all its citizens, and women enjoyed equal access to them. Female life expectancy was 80.45 years, and maternal mortality was one of the lowest in the world. There were special programmes to ensure that both parents participated in child rearing, to prevent the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS among adolescents and to care for the elderly. Sexual and reproductive rights, including the right to abortion and freedom to choose the number and spacing of children, were guaranteed.

96. Efforts to improve the sharing of the care burden within the family and to increase the presence of women in high-level government positions were ongoing. At present, women accounted for 48 per cent of the civil service (where they held 46 per cent of senior management posts), 78.5 per cent of health workers, 48 per cent of scientific researchers, 66.8 per cent of those with the highest technical and professional qualifications and almost 49 per cent of the members of parliament.

97. The elimination of violence against women, however, required the elimination of all unilateral coercive measures. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba for over 50 years was an act of genocide, constituting the main form of violence suffered by Cuban women and girls and the main obstacle to their advancement.

98. **Mr. Tacharoen** (Thailand) said that his country welcomed the outcome of the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, and was fully committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 by the 2030 deadline. To achieve that objective, it was particularly important that rural women should enjoy access to decent work opportunities, and for that to occur, they must enjoy access to education. Thailand had therefore made every effort to achieve the Education for All goals and had eliminated gender disparity at all levels of education. Furthermore, the country's revised curriculum would promote positive attitudes towards gender roles among young children.

99. The 2015 Gender Equality Act protected everybody from gender-based discrimination, Government agencies were stepping up their efforts to collect sex-disaggregated data and the new national economic and social development plan, which sought to promote people-centred, inclusive development and

reduce social inequality, would provide further opportunities for women to participate in the country's economic and social development. The Thai Government had also approved steps to prevent and address sexual harassment in the workplace.

100. Thailand was committed to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, commended efforts by United Nations agencies to promote women's rights worldwide and was increasing its annual contribution to UN-Women to \$20,000. His country had also appointed female officers to United Nations peacekeeping missions in Darfur, Haiti and Kashmir. Thailand had also worked with the International Peace Institute on its report entitled "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes" and hoped that such research would contribute meaningfully to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

101. **Ms. Mansouri** (Algeria) said that the current economic crisis had exacerbated the vulnerability and economic disadvantages of women and increased the risk of women being subjected to exploitation and violence. National action plans and strategies on violence against women must include prevention measures, support services and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

102. Algeria had worked to improve its national legal framework and place the protection and promotion of women's rights at the heart of its strategic plans and national policies. Legislation had been adopted to eliminate discriminatory provisions and combat violence against women. The Family Code and the Nationality Code had been substantially amended to ensure greater equality and balance in family relationships.

103. Education in Algeria was mandatory. Primary school enrolment was over 97.3 per cent for girls, and girls now outnumbered boys at all levels of the education system. Female employment had significantly increased in the public sector, with women accounting for over half of all doctors and teachers, almost 40 per cent of judges, and 32 per cent of persons in senior government posts. Rural women benefited from targeted literacy programmes, microcredit and training aimed at improving their income generation capacity.

104. On the political front, a new law establishing a specific female quota in all lists of candidates for parliamentary and local elections had increased the number of women elected to parliament from 8 per cent in 2009 to over 31 per cent since 2012. Women's empowerment and active participation in all aspects of society could have a transformative impact on multiple issues, yet despite the known benefits and despite success in many areas, further action was clearly needed. Peace and security in the world could not be achieved without the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women in general, and sexual violence in conflict situations in particular.

105. **Ms. Vodenikova** (Russian Federation) said that the Commission on the Status of Women, should continue to be the main coordinating body in the United Nations system for the advancement of all categories of women's rights and the harmonization of efforts to combat violence against women and gender-based discrimination.

106. National legislation and law enforcement practices aimed at improving the situation of women were being updated in the Russian Federation in light of recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. On 27 October 2015, the Russian delegation would present its eighth periodic report on its country's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the Committee.

107. While welcoming the efforts of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in coordinating gender-related activities across the United Nations system, her delegation believed that UN-Women must involve all groups of countries without exception in its practical work and should only be present and provide assistance on the ground upon the request and with the permission of the States concerned. There must be consistency between the overall political leadership of the Commission on the Status of Women and the operational strategies approved by the UN-Women Executive Board. As a member of the Board, the Russian Federation intended to continue cooperating effectively with UN-Women and was prepared to foster constructive dialogue with all interested parties.

108. Lastly, she pointed out that on 24 and 25 September 2015, female deputies and representatives of executive authorities, business circles, academia and

public organizations from 85 countries had gathered at the Eurasian Women's Forum in Saint Petersburg to discuss social security, sustainable development, international cooperation and the expanding of opportunities for women to participate in politics and the changing economy.

109. **Mr. Dempsey** (Canada) said that there was growing global consensus that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were essential prerequisites for peace, prosperity, and sustainable development for all. Canada had worked with partners from around the world to ensure that the needs and realities of women and girls were meaningfully addressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and therefore warmly welcomed the fact that the new Agenda included a strong, stand-alone goal that addressed the structural barriers, namely violence and discrimination, that prevented women and girls from participating fully in society.

110. Gender equality had also been integrated in the targets for other goals and that would help women and girls access education and health care services and decision-making and economic opportunities. Canada commended, in particular, the adoption of a target on ending child, early and forced marriages, which had impeded the achievement of six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and called for prompt, coordinated and sustained efforts to eliminate that harmful practice.

111. Despite significant progress, many countries had failed to meet the relevant MDG targets on maternal, infant and child health. Canada therefore supported the renewal of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, which would help accelerate progress in that area. Women and girls also continued to encounter barriers to political participation and empowerment, discriminatory laws and practices, harmful attitudes and stereotypes, and sexual violence. In situations of conflict, they faced horrific attacks, including as part of deliberate and systematic campaigns of sexual violence undertaken by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram. While those groups publicized their crimes, similar atrocities also took place in other conflicts behind a curtain of silence and shame.

112. Accountability, let alone true justice, remained elusive and women's rights defenders, serving as a voice for the voiceless, were themselves often targeted.

One of the best ways to combat those examples of gender inequality was through women's full and effective participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. It was crucial for women to be able to take part in a free and vibrant civil society, where their voices were heard without fear of retaliation or harassment. Canada was therefore committed to encouraging women's leadership and democratic participation, promoting their economic security and ending gender-based violence, including against Indigenous women and girls.

113. **Mr. Hahn** Choonghee (Republic of Korea) said that women still constituted the vast majority of the world's poor and continued to suffer disproportionately from gender-based discrimination and violence. The Republic of Korea therefore welcomed the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, which reflected States' strong political will to address ongoing gender-based challenges.

114. To accelerate its efforts to promote women's empowerment, his country's Government had recently enacted a framework act on gender equality to bolster the country's efforts to promote equality between men and women in all areas of life and combat sexual, domestic and other gender-based violence, which constituted an entrenched and pervasive violation of women's human rights. The Republic of Korea was a strong supporter of initiatives to prevent sexual violence in conflict and commended the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/293, which provided for the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict to be commemorated annually on 19 June. The political will shown by the international community must now be translated into concrete action.

115. In that context, the case of victims who had been forced into military sexual slavery during the Second World War, the so-called "comfort women", was a key instance of an unresolved case of sexual violence in conflict. As the international community marked the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, those women must not be denied an unambiguous acknowledgement of what they had been forced to endure. Appropriate measures must be taken to settle the issue, which was one of human rights and human dignity. Given that the victims were getting older, the issue must be addressed without delay.

116. **Mr. Iiyas** (Kazakhstan) said that, as a member of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, his delegation had strongly supported the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Despite laudable progress, women continued to face gender-based discrimination in education, employment, marriage, parenthood, access to reproductive health care services and political participation and were also often victims of gender-based violence. The advancement of women was closely linked to the most pivotal issues on the United Nations agenda, including peace and security, sustainable development, climate change and human rights.

117. Measures must be taken to combat the structural causes of gender inequality, such as restrictions on women's participation in decision-making, the fact that women were often not paid for their work and had limited control over assets and property, and States' non-compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant instruments. To bring transformative change to the lives of the most marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls, who often facing multiple intersecting forms of discrimination and abuse, action was needed to build capacities at all levels, forge new partnerships, mobilize adequate financial resources and establish robust oversight and accountability mechanisms.

118. To that end, Kazakhstan had developed relevant policies through the National Commission on Gender and Family Demographic Policy, which proposed and amended legislation on the protection of children, reproductive health, the prevention and treatment of disease, and rehabilitation from serious medical conditions. Kazakhstan also paid particular attention to combating human trafficking, ensuring the equal participation of women in the labour force and politics and protecting them from domestic and other forms of violence.

119. The national plan of action for improving the status of women, and the strategy on gender equality for 2006 to 2016 were being rigorously implemented with a view to enhancing the economic status of women, developing women's entrepreneurship and strengthening the family in society. His country's 2050 development strategy also underscored the importance of promoting maternal health, advancing the economic

empowerment of women and extending their social rights and capacities.

120. There were currently 28 women serving as members of Parliament of Kazakhstan; women had been appointed to high-level positions within the Government and held 55 per cent of posts in the civil service. Moreover, it had been estimated that they contributed some 40 per cent of Kazakhstan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, the country would continue to provide political support and fulfil its voluntary financial commitments and would also strive to lead regional efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment throughout Central Asia and beyond.

121. **Mr. Sarki** (Nigeria) said that the advancement of women required a multi-stakeholder approach that brought together governments, civil society, communities and individuals. In that connection, the Sustainable Development Goals had established a strong framework for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, which was a prerequisite for sustainable development. Creating opportunities for women and facilitating their participation in the economy would enhance their earning power, help families escape poverty and spur economic growth. Steps must also be taken to combat negative gender stereotypes, ensure women's access to land and other resources and empower vulnerable women working in the informal sector.

122. Women in Africa were often economically marginalized, with negative repercussions for their families, communities and local economies. Nigeria was committed to the effective implementation of the international instruments on gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly.

123. The Government had made women's reproductive health, girls' education, the situation of rural women, countering violence against women, women's economic empowerment and women's participation in decision-making processes key priorities in its development agenda and its national gender policy. It had also dedicated additional resources for maternal, newborn and child health interventions and was scaling up cost-effective interventions to save women and girls

from death from preventable diseases such as malaria and pneumonia, in particular by reducing the cost barriers preventing women and children from accessing adequate health-care services.

124. **Mr. Ciss** (Senegal) said that although some progress had been achieved in areas such as improving girls' access to primary education and in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, they continued to suffer higher poverty rates than men and gender-based discrimination in terms of their access to secondary and tertiary education, employment and in their participation in public life. Furthermore, little progress had been achieved in terms of improving maternal health and women's access to reproductive health-care services.

125. Particular focus needed to be placed on improving the lives of rural and migrant women workers. Rural women constituted a quarter of the world's population and could play a key role in combating poverty. That potential lay largely untapped, however, because of restrictions on women's access to water and other productive resources, high maternal mortality rates, the impact of early marriage on girls' education as well as climate change and other economic and financial factors.

126. Furthermore, female migrant workers, who were key drivers of development in both their home and destination countries, were at high risk of becoming victims of violence at home and in the workplace. It was crucial therefore that, regardless of their immigration status, protections for migrant workers were strengthened in line with international law.

127. His Government had given priority to improving the lives of women in the country. It had adopted a national strategy on gender equality and had amended the country's nationality law to allow foreign spouses and children of Senegalese women who had been born abroad to obtain Senegalese nationality. The percentage of parliamentary seats held by women had increased from 22 per cent in 2007 to 43 per cent in 2012 as a result of a law on the parity of political representation. Women had also held senior positions in Government, the civil service and the police and served in the Senegalese armed forces and in peacekeeping operations.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*