



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Eighty-second session**

Summary record of the 1883rd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 15 June 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

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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)*

Tenth periodic report of Portugal (continued) (CEDAW/C/PRT/10; CEDAW/C/PRT/Q/10; CEDAW/C/PRT/RQ/10)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Portugal joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Portugal** said that €10,000 had been allocated to support projects combating female genital mutilation. There was also an intersectoral thematic working group on female genital mutilation, coordinated by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, that played an active role in designing and implementing the relevant public policies.
3. Since 2021, support units had been provided at the National Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants in the Algarve and in the north for victims of domestic violence and other harmful practices, including female genital mutilation. Those units, which benefited from cooperation with civil society organizations, provided specialist care, information and support to victims. Moreover, the Family Planning Association had produced an information kit for health-care professionals on female genital mutilation, and in 2021 the Directorate General of Health had published guidelines identifying procedures to help women and raise public awareness, and providing for the possibility of reconstructive surgery and reparations for victims of the practice. The Directorate General also had a national policy for the prevention of violence, which included protocols for primary prevention, early warning and risk identification, including for female genital mutilation.
4. Forced sterilization was prohibited under the Criminal Code. The sterilization of minors, persons with disabilities or older persons could take place only with a ruling from a competent court. Reversible sterilization procedures required the informed written consent of the person in question.

Articles 7–9

5. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that it would be useful to know why only 36.5 per cent of members of parliament were female, a figure lower than in 2019, and what steps were being taken to increase that number. Noting the public funding allocated to increase the civil and political participation of women and girls, she would like to know which women's projects had received support, how much support they had received and what the results had been.
6. It would be useful to know whether the State party planned to introduce mechanisms to increase support for women elected to the parliament, whether it had adopted measures to prevent the political harassment of women in decision-making positions and whether there were any quotas or other mechanisms under consideration to support the inclusion of women with disabilities in decision-making roles in the public and private sectors. She also wondered whether the gender quotas specified in recent legislation for decision-making roles had been met and whether there were any mechanisms to increase the number of women in such roles, respectively in the public and private sectors. The Committee would like to know what the Government was doing to increase the number of women in the foreign service and in international and regional organizations. Lastly, it would be useful to learn whether the State party would consider introducing a gender-based "zipper" system for electoral lists so as to ensure that 50 per cent of listed candidates were women or that the lists were sometimes headed by women.
7. **Ms. Narain** said that she wished to know whether Portuguese women had the same rights as men to acquire, retain or change nationality, whether they were able to pass their nationality to their children if the father was not a Portuguese national and what social, cultural and economic factors affected women's exercise of those rights. In view of the increasing trend for Portuguese nationals to have children through surrogacy, with the surrogate mothers living in other countries, she wondered whether children born under such circumstances were entitled to Portuguese nationality and whether the State party intended to regulate such cases.

8. **Ms. Almeida Rodrigues** (Portugal) said that Portugal used the d'Hondt system of proportional representation in elections. A two-thirds majority of members of the parliament would be required to make any changes to the electoral system.

9. **A representative of Portugal** said that, by law, at least 40 per cent of the places on every electoral list, at all levels, must be reserved for each of the sexes. Lists of candidates that did not meet that requirement were not permitted to stand in elections. Government appointments were subject to an alternation rule: a given post could not be held by persons of the same sex more than twice in succession.

10. **A representative of Portugal** said that legislation had recently been introduced to increase the participation of women in senior management. Portugal had received international recognition for its level of women's participation at decision-making levels; women occupied 17 per cent of senior roles in listed companies and 12 per cent in the public sector. The impact of rules and quotas to ensure balanced gender representation in leadership roles could be seen in the central public administration and in higher education. There had been significant awareness-raising efforts, including in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which had encouraged women to seek senior positions. The Government had also worked with the Business Confederation of Portugal to train women to prolong their careers and advance to decision-making posts. The relevant project had been so successful that it was being continued without government support.

11. **A representative of Portugal** said that there was a special legal framework that recognized the Portuguese nationality of the children of Portuguese citizens born through surrogacy with foreign surrogate mothers.

12. **A representative of Portugal** said that both men and women who had acquired Portuguese nationality were able to pass their nationality on to their children.

13. **A representative of Portugal** said that there were 166 female diplomats, accounting for 32 per cent of the total; there were 14 female ambassadors and 70 male ambassadors. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, women constituted 42 per cent of senior management and 40 per cent of middle management. Women had recently been appointed as the country's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York and as political director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; both of those posts had previously been held exclusively by men. Entry to the diplomatic service was contingent on passing a public examination, and one of the tests had recently been withdrawn, as it was thought that it could have a negative impact on women's access to the diplomatic service.

14. **A representative of Portugal** said that, in 2019, a quota aimed at achieving 60 per cent employment for persons with disabilities had been introduced. In addition, since 2001, there had been a rule on quotas for persons with disabilities employed in the civil service. No distinction between men and women was made in either case.

Articles 10–14

15. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, as the State party's data indicated that girls were outperforming boys in education, she would appreciate further information on the situation of boys. She wondered whether education was perceived as "feminized". It would also be useful to know which subjects girls and women were studying. It would be of interest to the Committee to find out whether government initiatives had resulted in greater numbers of girls studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects) and what action would be taken in the future to encourage them to study such subjects. She also wondered whether there had been an impact assessment of the pilot distance-learning programme for information and communications technologies (ICT). She would appreciate further information on the content of sexual education programmes in schools, including on reports of the use of pornography in such programmes. Additional information on the causes of violence in schools, as well as measures to combat it, would be welcomed.

16. It would be useful to learn more about the educational funding allocated for members of the Roma community and whether barriers affecting their access to education were being addressed. She would also appreciate further information on the access to education of girls with special education needs or disabilities, and of girls in rural areas. She would like to know

whether any laws had been adopted containing provisions for temporary special measures for women with professorships. She wondered whether the State party intended to maintain and institutionalize the educational procedures introduced in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic so that they could be used in other challenging situations.

17. **A representative of Portugal** said that schooling was free and compulsory in Portugal up to the age of 18 and that the dropout rate was just 5 per cent. Boys and girls had equal educational opportunities, and there was a National Strategy for Citizenship Education, under which compulsory education on human rights and gender equality was provided to all pupils in every year of schooling. There was a programme for students to participate in organizational activities at school so that they could obtain experience in participation and decision-making. The number of girls studying STEM subjects had increased in recent years, resulting in a subsequent increase in the number of women working in related fields. While students had a free choice of subjects, there were programmes in primary and secondary schools to promote science, mathematics and robotics. Similarly, the “Engineer for a Day” event encouraged girls to consider careers in engineering.

18. A decree-law concerning children with special educational needs provided for the inclusion of all such children in public schools rather than in special education facilities. The curricula had been adapted to meet their needs. Health education formed part of the 2017 National Strategy for Citizenship Education and of the related teacher training plan. The issues addressed in the Strategy included mental health, physical health, prevention of violence and the promotion of positive values and attitudes, including respect for others.

19. **A representative of Portugal** said that programmes aimed at the prevention of violence and innovative strategies to address violence through art had been introduced in schools throughout the country. A women’s rights NGO produced artistic portraits depicting scenes of gender violence every year to raise awareness of the problem.

20. **A representative of Portugal** said that an initiative had been launched in the area of science, technology, engineering and mathematics to enhance digital competence by 2030 so that the younger generation could obtain access to high-level digital posts in higher education and research. A budget of €250 million had been allocated to a programme aimed at increasing young peoples’ qualifications in STEM subjects and updating adult skills through short-term training courses in higher education. Budgetary funds had also been allocated to the Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions project, launched in 2018, which was managed by the General Directorate of Higher Education. A number of initiatives and projects related to science and technology had been carried out by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, in cooperation with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; they had produced an impact at the national level. About €1 million had been allocated to 21 projects to raise awareness of violence against women and domestic violence and to promote preventive action, and competitions had been held to focus on measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of artificial intelligence and the involvement of women in research. There had been a considerable increase since 2018 in the number of research grants awarded to women, who now accounted for over half of the personnel engaged in scientific fields.

21. **A representative of Portugal** said that a post-COVID-19 cooperation plan to provide schools with the necessary resources had been launched for the period from 2021 to 2023 with the municipalities and school directorates. The impact of existing educational plans was currently being assessed.

22. **A representative of Portugal** said that grants had been awarded to 19 boys and 21 girls from the Roma community under the 2020/21 higher education programme and to 17 Roma girls under the programme for the current academic year. While the total number of grants awarded to Roma girls since 2020 might seem small, their impact was undeniable. Balanced representation of men and women, namely at least 40 per cent for each, was required under the grant programme. The Choices Programme promoted the social inclusion of children and young people from vulnerable communities. During the Programme’s eighth cycle, it had provided support for 28,000 children and young people, about half of whom were girls. Over 7,000 were descendants of migrants, and the beneficiaries also included a

number of young refugees. Under the Programme, 105 projects were being implemented throughout the country.

23. **A representative of Portugal** said that the 2020–2030 Agenda for Agricultural Innovation was designed to promote a more inclusive and egalitarian agricultural system, as well as gender equality in agriculture. The State sought to develop rural areas through revitalization, innovation networks and support for family agriculture through the work of the bodies responsible for vocational training. Innovation was promoted by means of Agriculture 4.0 tools and through a training and digital literacy programme aimed at sharing technology and promoting women's access and participation in that field.

24. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she would welcome an explanation of the fact that there were 25,446 females in the first phase of higher education and only 19,065 males. Sexual education should be institutionalized, and the issue of pornography should be included in the curriculum.

25. **Mr. Safarov** welcomed the Government's legislative measures to address unequal treatment of men and women in the labour market, but he noted that major challenges persisted. It had recently been reported that the number of dismissals of pregnant women and workers on parental leave had almost doubled between 2014 and 2019 and had increased by 30 per cent in 2020. Disaggregated data would provide a more comprehensive overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's lives. According to the Bar Association, women in the labour market had been severely affected by the pandemic. They continued to be underpaid, they were denied access to social benefits, and many of their jobs were expected to disappear in the near future. It was unclear whether digitalization would provide opportunities for women in the labour market, since they were often deemed to lack the requisite digital literacy and considered to have less access than men to digital technology. According to the Gender Pay Gap Elimination Project, the pay gap had recently increased from 14 to 17 per cent. The Committee would welcome precise statistics for 2021 and information on the grounds for such inequality and on measures taken to address the problem.

26. The Committee would also welcome data on criminal and administrative legislation prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace and the action taken to enforce such legislation.

27. He wished to know whether women had equal access in the formal and informal sectors to social security and other benefits, including paid maternity leave. It would be useful to know what percentage of part-time and full-time positions were occupied by women in the formal sector. He also wished to know what action was being taken by the State party to eliminate discrimination in the workplace and horizontal and vertical gender segregation. It would be useful to the Committee if the State party could explain why pregnant women continued to lose their jobs while such dismissal was illegal, and if it could describe the measures taken to respond to women's disproportionate loss of jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. He would also like to receive updated and disaggregated data regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, members of the Roma community and migrants, especially women, respectively in the public and private sectors.

28. **Ms. Almeida Rodrigues** (Portugal) said that all statistical data would be provided in writing.

29. **A representative of Portugal** said that there was a unique trilateral mechanism for guaranteeing equality, including gender equality, in the workplace. It comprised representatives of competent ministries and the social partners and focused on guaranteeing non-discrimination in employment. Pregnant women and persons on parental leave could not be dismissed unless such action was deemed permissible by the Commission for Equality at Work and in Employment. Action taken contrary to a decision of the Commission would require the involvement of a court. There had been an increase in dismissals and non-renewal of contracts of pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic because they tended to be employed in economic sectors such as restaurants, hotels and other vulnerable businesses; even the wages and salaries of women who retained their jobs were frequently reduced. However, there had recently been an improvement in the labour market for both men and women. The current unemployment rate of 5.8 per cent was the lowest recorded in the past 20 years.

30. Studies showed that domestic and caring tasks in the family environment were not equitably shared and that women's burden in that regard had actually increased. Training courses were provided to enhance digital competence by 2030, and at least 40 per cent of the training programme slots were reserved for women. There was a two-year delay in obtaining data on the pay gap. According to the currently available data, there had been a reduction in the gender pay gap for basic salaries, to 14 per cent, in 2019. The reduction was consistent with a trend that had been discernible since 2015 and was partly due to a sustainable rise in the minimum salary, since most employees who earned such salaries were women. Act No. 60/2018 aimed at combating the pay gap was based on a mandatory transparency system for determining remuneration. When companies were unable to justify the factors on which different salaries were based they were presumed to be guilty of discrimination.

31. A recent amendment to the Labour Code required employers to implement a code of conduct aimed at preventing harassment in the workplace. It also provided for the protection of witnesses, as employees were frequently reluctant to support complaints by their colleagues owing to a fear of retaliation. Men predominated in the engineering and scientific professions and women in the less well-paid educational and caring professions. Programmes in the education system, including a large-scale project developed by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, sought to combat such occupational segregation. The current system promoted the equal sharing of parental leave. The proportion of persons taking parental leave who were fathers had increased during the past decade to over 46 per cent.

32. **Ms. Ameline**, commending the State party's achievements in digital technology, said that she wished to know how women's leadership in that area could be accelerated.

33. **Mr. Safarov** said that clarification was needed of the criminal and administrative sanctions for workplace harassment and whether it was considered a separate crime.

34. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that it would be good to know whether specific measures had been adopted to improve access to health care for women from marginalized groups, such as Roma and migrant women, women with disabilities and women who used drugs. She would like to find out how members of those groups were informed of their rights as established under Act No. 110/2019, which set out the principles, rights and duties applicable in terms of protection in preconception, medically assisted procreation, pregnancy, childbirth, birth and the puerperium. She wished to know whether the Act addressed the State party's very high rates of maternal mortality and whether other measures had been adopted in that regard.

35. Noting the high number of caesarean sections undertaken at private hospitals and the serious shortcomings in obtaining women's free, full and informed consent for such procedures, she said that it would be useful to the Committee to find out whether pre-signed patients' consent forms were available in languages understandable to migrant women and in formats accessible to women with disabilities. She wished to know what was being done to address administrative barriers at some hospitals that prevented women, particularly women from marginalized groups, from accessing abortion within the legal time frame; whether women with low incomes received assistance in purchasing the morning-after pill; and what steps had been taken to reduce the State party's very high number of births to mothers aged between 11 and 19. She would welcome information on community-based mental health services, in particular the services provided to women in Madeira and the Azores, and on whether reconstructive surgery was offered free of charge to victims of female genital mutilation. Disaggregated data on the forced sterilizations carried out in the previous three years, as well as information on efforts to reduce rates of HIV/AIDS in women who used drugs, would be useful.

36. **Ms. Almeida Rodrigues** (Portugal) said that sexual harassment was a crime, and the abuse of a position of authority in such a context, for example in a workplace or educational setting, constituted an aggravating factor.

37. **A representative of Portugal** said that mental health legislation had been reviewed in 2020, and a grant from the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility would be used to reform the mental health system, including by strengthening community and regional mental health teams and promoting the reinsertion and rehabilitation in the community of

persons with mental health problems. Mental health services were coordinated by a national coordinating body.

38. **A representative of Portugal** said that the Government had adopted its second strategy on the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, was universal, regardless of sexuality, vulnerability or disability, and particular attention was paid to the needs of vulnerable groups. Standard and emergency contraception was provided free of charge during family planning consultations and at hospitals and other facilities. No supplementary fee was due for family planning consultations, which were available to all persons, regardless of migration status. Information on access to sexual and reproductive health services had been translated into different languages and disseminated.

39. Access to abortion, which was also universal and free of charge, had been prioritized during the COVID-19 pandemic. If a public hospital was unable to offer abortion services, a referral was made to the private sector, and no fee was payable. Abortion rates had been rising since 2011, and information leaflets on the procedure had been translated into English, Chinese and Russian.

40. Pre-signed consent forms did not replace good practice on the part of health professionals, who could use a telephone interpreting service to assist them in providing information to women. Women were entitled to access caesarean sections through private health-care providers, and the Government promoted good practice in order to reduce rates of caesarean sections and obstetric complications and to implement Act No. 110/2019. Sex education at schools and primary health-care facilities had led to a significant decrease in early pregnancies between 2011 and 2021. Guidance on female genital mutilation had been updated, and victims could receive reconstructive surgery through the National Health Service.

41. Maternal mortality numbers were low. The increase in reported maternal deaths was attributable to the success of measures to address their underreporting, which included the use of electronic death certificates, the codification of causes of death among pregnant women, epidemiological research and the creation of a warning system. A tool had been developed to monitor maternal mortality, which would also be examined by an expert committee that had been given a five-year mandate. Ninety per cent of pregnant women attended a health-care consultation in early pregnancy, a figure that had remained unchanged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

42. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she wished to know when regulations for the recently adopted legislation on unpaid surrogacy would be issued, and specifically what that legislation addressed.

43. **A representative of Portugal** said that the legislation covered, inter alia, payments for health care during surrogate pregnancy and disability or chronic illness resulting from such pregnancies.

44. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that she wished to know whether the pension system provided the many women aged over 65 with decent pensions and how the Social Radar programme assisted them, and specifically how it addressed the needs of survivors of domestic violence and migrant women. It would be useful to have information on the measures adopted to alleviate the State party's housing crisis, especially in relation to young women, survivors of domestic violence and women with disabilities. She would welcome information on whether a gender approach would be incorporated into the strategy for fighting poverty in Portugal, and she would like to receive statistics on access to microcredit for women. Lastly, she wished to know whether measures had been adopted to prevent violence and harassment against women in sport and to promote equal opportunities and wages for them.

45. **Ms. Almeida Rodrigues** (Portugal) said that work was under way to draw up a strategy to combat violence in sport that would involve measures aimed specifically at women.

46. **A representative of Portugal** said that all national housing programmes were based on the principle of universal and non-discriminatory access and that the Government was

ensuring access to housing by substantially increasing the amount of public housing. Under all public housing programmes, national or municipal, weighting was applied to housing applications submitted by persons with disabilities, single-parent families and victims of domestic violence; the latter two cases mainly applied to women. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic the Government had protected vulnerable tenants by suspending private- and public-sector evictions and deferring rent payments.

47. **A representative of Portugal** said that the Government had established a shelter specifically for women victims of domestic violence with mental illnesses and another for victims with disabilities. Moreover, the National Rehabilitation Institute was training the staff of the National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence on how to handle victims with mental illnesses or disabilities, so as to increase their awareness and improve their capacity to respond to their cases.

48. **A representative of Portugal** said that, beyond the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018–2030, specific measures to promote the economic empowerment of women in vulnerable situations included encouragement and support for migrant and ethnic minority women’s participation in associations, which were carried out in partnership with the Support Programme for Roma Associations. Gender-equality training was provided for persons working with homeless people, migrants, Afrodescendent persons, members of ethnic minority groups and other vulnerable groups. A specialist continuing education plan was in operation for the staff of the network of Homelessness Planning and Intervention Hubs. Tuition had been provided for children in vulnerable groups, with the aim of preventing school dropout. Gender had been mainstreamed into the National Anti-Poverty Strategy 2021–2030: data collected for the Strategy were disaggregated by sex, with a view to countering discrimination.

49. Discrepancies in pension payments were due to the gender pay gap during the beneficiaries’ working lives. The Solidarity Top-up for Older Persons was paid to people who, not having made social security contributions for much of their working lives, received only a surviving spouse’s benefit. Nearly four fifths of its beneficiaries were women.

50. **A representative of Portugal** said that she wished to highlight the national network of emergency shelters for especially vulnerable persons, in particular women victims of domestic violence and trafficking in persons.

51. **Ms. Nadaraia**, referring to the concluding observations issued by the Committee after its previous interactive dialogue with Portugal, noted that the State party had been asked to encourage rural women’s entrepreneurship and commercial farming and said that she would like to know what had been achieved since that meeting. She also hoped to hear how the Government planned to reduce poverty and precarity among rural women. Information on the National Roma Communities Integration Strategy’s key outcomes related to the situation of women and girls would be useful, in particular details of whether the Strategy ensured their access to adequate housing and basic services. In addition, she wondered how the State party intended to reduce the number of child marriages and early pregnancies involving Roma girls, with a view to preventing school dropout. She wished to know the extent to which the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018–2030 ensured access for disadvantaged groups of women to education, employment, health care, housing and formal financial institutions.

52. She would welcome information about women migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers who faced detention and about the applicable regime to ensure that they had access to justice, in particular through legal aid. The Committee would like to hear how many women with disabilities had turned to the justice system and benefited from free legal aid since Act No. 49/2018 had come into force. The Committee would find it useful to know what measures the State party intended to adopt to promote the deinstitutionalization of women with disabilities and to ensure that they had access to decent, accessible housing. It was unclear how the Government had made a number of reforms applicable to women who used drugs. It would be useful to hear details of any measures in place to reduce discrimination and systemic violence against women who used drugs while ensuring non-discriminatory, accessible and safe reporting mechanisms and equitable access to crisis accommodation, and while safeguarding the rights of parents and guardians. She was especially interested in the

situation of women living with HIV, women involved in sex work and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. The Committee would welcome the Government's response to reports that Act No. 38/2018 did not adequately protect intersex children against genital surgery.

53. **A representative of Portugal** said that efforts to support rural women's entrepreneurship included the conferring of Family Farm Status, the adoption of the 2020–2030 Agenda for Agricultural Innovation and the drafting of an Action Plan for the Decade of Family Farming. Public consultation was still ongoing for the Action Plan, which would include various measures designed solely to benefit women in rural areas. Women could benefit from affirmative action in the selection of beneficiaries to receive funding under one of the initiatives of the 2020 Rural Development Programme.

54. **A representative of Portugal** said that one outcome of the National Roma Communities Integration Strategy was the establishment of a municipal intercultural mediators project, under which Roma women receive intercultural mediation training so that they could create links between the local authority and their communities. Another of the Strategy's outcomes was the production by the Directorate-General of Education of a preschool education handbook. Training-of-trainers courses had been provided for Roma persons, and two external Roma trainers had been incorporated into the team of trainers made available by the High Commission for Migration. He also wished to highlight the support provided by the office for immigrants' entrepreneurship, promoted by the High Commission for Migration: between January 2020 and April 2022, the support office had helped 70 businesses to be founded, 40 of them by women.

55. **A representative of Portugal** said that there were crisis centres specifically for temporarily housing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Instruction and peer-to-peer training was provided for the various stakeholders working with drug users so that they would be better prepared to deal with instances of violence.

56. **A representative of Portugal** said that the National Health Service never conducted surgery on intersex children. If such surgery were conducted, both the parents and the doctors who performed the procedure would be subject to criminal penalties.

Articles 15 and 16

57. **Ms. Leinarte**, noting that one key goal of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018–2030 was to tackle early and forced marriage and that the issue affected both the Roma and refugee communities, said that the Civil Code stipulated that the age of majority was 18 years but that the legal minimum age for marriage was 16. In the light of that discrepancy, she wished to know what steps the State party intended to take to amend its legislation to remove all exceptions permitting marriage before the age of 18. She wondered whether the Government was taking measures to address the fact that in most legal marriage contracts the couple's property was registered in the husband's name. Lastly, she would be interested to hear about any plans to amend the law to rescind the antiquated requirement for divorced women to wait for a given period before they were permitted to remarry.

58. **A representative of Portugal** said that minors over 16 years of age were considered mature enough to make some decisions for themselves and that their entitlement to marry was consistent with other rights enjoyed by persons of that age, such as the right to choose their sex. The difference in the lengths of time that men and women must wait following a divorce before remarrying no longer existed in domestic law.

59. **Ms. Almeida Rodrigues** (Portugal) said that she wished to reiterate that forced marriage was a crime in Portugal. Her country had three marital property regimes: full community property, community of acquired property and separation of property. The marital property regime, even if it involved a form of community property, was chosen by the two parties to the union and was applicable regardless of whose name appeared in the marriage registry.

60. In conclusion, she wished to reaffirm her country's complete commitment to promoting, protecting and realizing the human rights of all women and girls and, in view of the Convention's importance to the pursuit of that goal, the country's complete commitment

to its full implementation. The Committee's concluding observations and general recommendations had contributed greatly to the achievements of Portugal in respect of women's rights. Since the establishment of democracy in 1974, the country had made huge strides in relation to the rights of women and girls, despite very challenging circumstances, such as the sovereign debt crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, despite all the progress made with the protection of such rights, there undeniably remained much to do.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.