



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
27 October 2023

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-sixth session

Summary record of the 2018th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 20 October 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

Contents

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

Tenth periodic report of Uruguay (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

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

Tenth periodic report of Uruguay (continued) ([CEDAW/C/URY/10](#);
[CEDAW/C/URY/QPR/10](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Uruguay joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the members of the delegation of Uruguay to continue replying to the questions raised by the Committee members at the previous meeting ([CEDAW/C/SR.2017](#)).

Articles 7–9 (continued)

3. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the bill on gender parity in elections was currently being studied by the Senate Human Rights and Gender Equity Commission. The law currently applicable, namely Act No. 18.476, set a 30 per cent quota for elections to the Senate, the House of Representatives, departmental and municipal councils and electoral boards, by requiring that every three names in a party list should include at least one woman. Meanwhile, Act No. 19.555 of 2017 provided for the equitable participation of persons of both sexes in the membership of national and departmental elected bodies and in political party leadership. For the first time in its history, Uruguay had a woman as its Vice-President and a woman senator of African descent. Women accounted for 26 per cent of seats in the House of Representatives, 30 per cent in the Senate and 19 per cent of ministry posts. Around one quarter of local mayors and more than one third of local councillors were women, while women held around 70 per cent of positions in the judiciary.
4. **A representative of Uruguay** said that all political parties now had gender commissions or similar mechanisms working to raise women's profile in senior positions. In addition, senior political figures from all parties, from around the country and reflecting gender, ethnic and racial and generational diversity, were due to graduate from the 2023 political leadership capacity-building programme, a 60-hour course in communication, negotiation and funding.
5. **A representative of Uruguay** said that women accounted for a quarter of the country's ambassadors, half of its consuls general and 40 per cent of diplomatic officials. The posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Montevideo were occupied equally by men and women. Since 1975 it had been possible for women and men to enter the foreign service and move up through the ranks to the level of minister-counsellor on merit and by examination, and to the rank of minister or ambassador by promotion.
6. Under the Migration Act (No. 18.250) and the Refugee Status Act (No.18.076), migrants and refugees, including Syrian refugees, could avail themselves of State services in health, education and employment regardless of nationality, on equal terms with Uruguayan nationals and free of charge. They were also entitled to take courses with the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training and join job creation programmes. More specific information regarding Syrian refugees could not be provided, by virtue of the provisions on confidentiality of the Refugee Status Act. Passports continued to specify the holder's country of birth because Uruguay adhered to the relevant International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regulations. There was no distinction on gender grounds. A bill on the free movement of legal Uruguayan citizens was currently being considered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
7. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the State had never broken off its dialogue with civil society or excluded civil society from any decision-making or policymaking body. Civil society associations were involved in all the major bodies responsible for social and gender policies.
8. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that, while she understood that the State was unable to impose a requirement of gender parity on institutions such as universities and trade unions or on private companies, she would appreciate clarification of the measures that the State party

was in fact taking to ensure compliance with its legislation on women's access to senior positions in the public and private sectors of the labour market.

9. She would also like to hear more about the way in which the State party maintained a dialogue with civil society, given that, in their reports to other treaty bodies, various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had depicted their relationship with the Uruguayan State as problematic.

10. **A representative of Uruguay** said that civil society was represented in the inter-agency bodies responsible for devising and monitoring State policies and plans, such as the National Gender Council and the National Advisory Board for a Life Free from Gender-based Violence against Women, as well as in the relevant commissions of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Social Development. In addition, the State helped to support civil society by concluding co-management contracts and outsourcing work in areas such as the health sector, services dealing with violence and projects with the Institute for Children and Adolescents. It was possible that civil society associations had a different perspective on the dialogue with the State. Given that they were often ideologically closer to the opposition, it might be that they perceived a deterioration in their interaction with the Government, but in her view that merely reflected a difference of opinion as to how such cooperation should be conducted.

11. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the Institute for Children and Adolescents provided a good example of cooperation with civil society, which played a very important role in supporting children and adolescents of all ages, from early childhood to running youth centres, throughout the country.

12. **The Chair** said that civil society's role in monitoring the implementation of the Convention and other international human rights instruments was fundamental to furthering the realization of human rights, including the rights of women and girls around the world. The Committee did not believe that that work was carried out in a spirit of opposition.

Articles 10–14

13. **Ms. Akia**, referring to the discussion of girls and young women dropping out of school contained in the State party's report (CEDAW/C/URY/10, para. 169), said that she would like to know what practical action the State party was taking to strengthen implementation of the General Education Act and related education policies in order to tackle the root causes of girls dropping out of school and increase access to all levels of education, from preschool to tertiary, as well as to age-appropriate sex education and to science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) subjects, for women and girls of African descent, women and girls in rural areas or living in poverty, refugees and migrants. She would welcome the delegation's comments on alternative reports indicating that, despite a certain uptake, scholarships and quotas were not being fully utilized by those who were ostensibly targeted, including women and girls of African descent. Could the delegation give figures for the number of women and girls who effectively benefited from such measures?

14. Notwithstanding the State party's significant efforts to address abuse and violence against women and girls in the education sector and facilitate the reporting of such conduct, reports showed that levels had not abated. Did the State party have disaggregated statistics on such abuse, including cyberbullying? She would also like to know how many such cases had been dealt with by the specialized courts with competence to hear cases related to gender-based violence against women.

15. She wondered whether reports to the effect that children with disabilities were enrolled in special schools were accurate. If so, what steps was the State party taking to ensure that the enrolment of girls with disabilities in special schools did not present an obstacle to their social and economic inclusion or deprive them of lifelong opportunities?

16. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that she commended the State party for its progress on labour issues such as the gender pay gap, the reduction of workplace harassment and the provision of breastfeeding facilities. However, she would like to know whether there were any plans to review the length of parental leave allowances for workers, which for Latin America was quite progressive but in global terms could well be extended. She would also

like to know, in relation to workplace harassment, whether a special office for complaints and advice on discrimination issues had been created within the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate, whether the protocol for dealing with situations of workplace harassment or discrimination was being used effectively, and, if so, what results had been achieved.

17. Since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had revealed the extent of women's engagement in informal work, she would welcome information on any training made available to women since the pandemic with a view to their incorporation into formal employment. She had been very interested to learn about the strengthening of the Employment Policies Division and the review of all public employment services and would like to know what the outcome of that exercise had been. Noting that, in 2019, Uruguayan women's hourly wage had been 5 per cent less than men's and that, in professional and financial sectors, women's pay had been around 70 per cent of men's, she asked what action was being taken to reduce and eliminate the gap.

18. She would be interested to hear the delegation's assessment of the implementation of the Youth Employment Act (No. 19.133) of 2013, given that it had been designed in part to encourage the recruitment of women by offering a special subsidy to employers who did so, and also of the implementation of the Domestic Labour Act and the accompanying protocol, designed to protect migrant workers informally employed in domestic labour.

19. **Ms. Ribeiro** (Uruguay) said that the 2020–2025 National Education Policy, which provided for an inclusive education system, paid particular attention to abuse and bullying in schools. To help youngsters to deal with such situations, special courses on issues such as the prevention of violence, sexual abuse and trafficking, gender and violence against children were provided at all levels of education from elementary school through to secondary level and technical and vocational education. In addition, human rights education was included as a cross-cutting subject. A protocol was in place to deal with cases of bullying. That protocol also covered cases of teenage pregnancy, which were frequently the result of abusive situations, while another protocol covered the reintegration of girls who had lost a year or more due to pregnancy and wished to resume their studies.

20. On the question of the enrolment gap between girls and boys in education, the information before the Committee appeared to be incorrect. Admittedly, in preschools there were more boys than girls, and that tendency continued in primary education, but girls were more numerous at both levels of secondary education, although in technical and manual training boys were in the majority. Overall, girls' completion rates were 74 per cent compared with 69 per cent for boys in primary school, 87 per cent compared with 69 per cent for boys at lower secondary level and 47 per cent compared with 33 per cent for boys at upper secondary level. Detailed figures would be provided to the Committee in writing.

21. **A representative of Uruguay** said that her Government had made the promotion of coexistence in schools a major part of its education policy. A special project on coexistence was being tested and a protocol on bullying, developed with the help of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), had been rolled out in a pilot phase. To help to prevent dropouts, a number of circulars had been issued, one setting out a special system for monitoring attendance and another to provide support for students, including pregnant girls, with the help of educational psychologists and social workers, in order to help them to remain in school and pursue their education. A protocol was also being prepared to equip school boards and teachers to work with teenagers. As to preventive measures, a programme entitled "If I were John" (Si yo fuera Juan) was being developed to address the issue of pregnancy from the standpoint of joint responsibility for care.

22. Age-appropriate sex education was provided at all levels of education. In preschool and primary school, it was taught by class teachers while, at the secondary level, it was a cross-cutting subject taught over 10 hours of workshops by 150 sex education specialists in conjunction with class teachers. The technical and vocational training curricula also included a health and sexuality workshop. The core curriculum for trainee teachers, at both the primary and secondary levels, covered human rights education, sex education and inclusive education and learning.

23. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, to help to narrow the gender gap in access to the labour market, her Government was working with the International Labour Organization

(ILO) to install a labour market information system that would provide up-to-date disaggregated figures to form the basis for decision-making and the development and monitoring of plans and policies. It was hoped that the Comprehensive Plan for the Promotion of Employment, along with new legislation, would facilitate the development of proactive employment policies for groups facing particular difficulties in accessing the labour market, such as young persons aged 15 to 29 years old, persons over the age of 45 and persons with disabilities.

24. Training courses were offered by the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training to promote the elimination of workplace violence through the dissemination of information and awareness-raising on the Act on gender-based violence against women (No. 19.580). Action was also taken in companies to provide information on the Act on the prevention and punishment of sexual harassment in the workplace and special support was provided to young persons in companies in order to prevent discrimination and sexual harassment. The Protocol on reception and priority referral for women victims of violence was applied at all job centres and, where necessary, training at the local level was coordinated with relevant agencies and civil society organizations.

25. A joint project with the World Bank was under way to address gender stereotyping in employment, in part by encouraging women to move away from traditionally female, lower-paid sectors and look at more highly paid sectors. Information technology was one such area, and one that had the resources to reduce gender inequity while at the same time narrowing the digital divide and meeting its own human resource needs. A special mentoring project had been rolled out to help women wishing to join technology companies while, for 16- to 20-year-olds, a special work experience programme was in place to introduce them to the labour market and help them to develop skills of various kinds while continuing their education. As part of the State party's arsenal of affirmative action, 50 per cent of the places on that programme were set aside for young women.

26. Parliament was preparing to vote on legislation to implement the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security had created a complaints section accessible to the public either in person or online. The online facility was very important for women living in smaller towns or rural areas whose anonymity could not be guaranteed if they were observed going to an office to lodge a complaint in person. In addition, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina, the Ministry was drafting a manual for dealing with cases of violence for internal use. It had also delivered training sessions on that subject to the staff of other agencies.

27. The Ministry of the Interior had established a protocol for dealing with reports of sexual harassment submitted by staff. It had also set up a standing committee for dealing with cases of sexual harassment, which was tasked with raising awareness of the offence among staff as well as preventing and punishing such conduct. Every complaint of sexual harassment received by the Ministry was forwarded to the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate in order to prevent work from being duplicated. The subject of sexual harassment formed part of the training and refresher courses delivered to officials of the Ministry. The number of complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace had increased since 2020 in line with the improvements made to reporting channels.

28. The proportion of women working in the informal labour market was lower now than it had been during the COVID-19 pandemic and the proportion of women currently working in that sector was lower than the proportion of men. Labour inspectorates periodically carried out inspections in sectors where a significant proportion of women were working informally, such as the domestic and care work sectors. If necessary, labour inspectors could request authorization to carry out inspections within private homes. When the inspectors responded to a complaint filed by a domestic worker, they inspected a number of homes in the area concerned to prevent the worker who had filed the complaint from being singled out. Domestic workers in Uruguay were represented by a trade union and could therefore engage in collective bargaining. As a result, the minimum wage for domestic workers was higher than the national minimum wage. In the previous few days, domestic workers had signed an agreement on leave for care purposes. Legislative measures had been taken to make it easier

for persons belonging to certain groups to find employment, including persons with disabilities and persons under 25 years of age or over 45 years of age.

29. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the National Institute for Women had received a number of requests for advice on how to develop protocols relating to sexual harassment in the workplace. In response, the Institute had established a unit responsible for the area of sexual harassment and had appointed two lawyers specializing in gender-based violence to follow up on the initiative. All the committees on sexual harassment attached to the various government agencies had taken measures to prevent sexual harassment and almost all of them had a member who held a formal qualification in the area of gender. Half of the committees had established a protocol and had conducted assessments and investigations. One third of the committees had been in existence for at least seven years.

30. The Government was keenly aware that the issue of care was the most important issue in gender policy as the unequal distribution of care work was the main obstacle to gender equality. Uruguay had established a national care system in 2016 that had recently been reformulated on the basis of lessons learned. Earlier in 2023, the National Gender Council had launched a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of ensuring that unpaid care work was distributed equally between men and women. The Government was of the view that the State should not be solely responsible for the national care system. For that reason, it had established childcare centres, known as “Siempre” centres, that were run in conjunction with trade unions and private companies. Other centres, known as family and child support centres, cared for children aged 3 years and under and were managed in cooperation with civil society. Over 500 such centres had been established around the country.

31. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the family and child support centres were run by the State in collaboration with parents and civil society organizations and were responsible for promoting children’s emotional and intellectual development. They benefited from excellent infrastructure and equipment and were located in places where the most vulnerable children lived. Plans were in place to establish over 80 mobile centres that would visit places where a permanent centre had not yet been established.

32. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, in 2021, legislative measures had been taken to permit public officials who had a child with a disability to take special leave to attend medical appointments. Public officials were permitted to take up to 96 hours’ leave per year to look after a family member with a disability or a terminal illness. Measures had been taken to make maternal and paternal leave more flexible for parents working in the private sector. Act No. 20.000 provided for the extension of parental leave for parents who met the conditions set out therein. Under the recently adopted Act 20.129, fathers were permitted to take time off work to accompany expectant mothers to check-ups.

33. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the National Institute for Women implemented the Quality with Gender Equity Model to promote women’s access to employment. In 2023, the model had been reformulated to incorporate the private sector. Employers who agreed to adopt the model committed themselves to assessing their organization from a gender perspective, which involved publishing their salary scales and establishing committees responsible for combating harassment, among other measures.

34. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that she wished to know whether the State party had considered conducting a review of its law on abortion, under which women considering a termination of pregnancy were required to appear before a panel made up of a gynaecologist, a mental health expert and a social worker. It would be interesting to know whether the Government had considered conducting an assessment of that system. Given that doctors had the option of refusing to perform abortions on grounds of conscience, she wondered whether the State party would see to it that every hospital, in every part of the country, had a doctor willing to perform abortions so that women were not forced to travel long distances to obtain access to abortion services.

35. Noting that standards of health care varied from place to place, she asked what would be done to ensure that all women in every part of the country, including Indigenous women, had access to quality health care. The Committee would welcome up-to-date information on the care provided to women affected by the human papillomavirus, cervical cancer, uterine

cancer and breast cancer. It would also be grateful for information on the suicide rate for women and the support given to women experiencing mental health problems.

36. **Ms. Bethel**, noting that policies on care referred only to direct forms of care, said that she wished to know what steps were being taken to promote shared responsibility for all forms of care within families, including care for older persons and the performance of household tasks such as cooking, washing and cleaning. The Committee would be grateful to know how the State party's policies on care benefited women and improved their economic standing and remuneration from care work and how the State party measured and accounted for unpaid care work. The delegation might also explain how the State party's policies on care benefited disadvantaged women living in remote areas and share any available data attesting to the impact of those policies on the number of women returning to the workforce.

37. She would welcome details of any measures being taken to support women entrepreneurs of African descent as well as information on the socioeconomic integration of Afrodescendent women in different parts of the country. She wished to know what impact the results of the national survey of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, conducted in 2017, had had on policies concerning women and whether the data obtained from the survey had been used as the basis for measures to reduce gender gaps in different sectors. She would also be interested to know what measures had been taken to support agricultural projects led by women, including women of African descent and young women, and would welcome information on the accessibility of credit for women, including in sectors such as agriculture, and on any measures taken to facilitate their access to credit. The State party might provide gender-disaggregated data on loans issued for entrepreneurial ventures, the beneficiaries of the loans, the terms of the loans and any special support mechanisms, including any special interest rates.

38. The Committee was curious to know which government agency provided women with technical support and training in productive processes and venture funding. It would also be interested to hear about any steps being taken to boost women's entrepreneurial skills and improve their financial literacy.

39. **A representative of Uruguay** said that statistics relating to abortion had remained relatively stable since 2018. A total of 95 per cent of the women who appeared before an abortion panel went on to give birth, while the remaining 5 per cent terminated the pregnancy. The current system did not appear to influence the decision that women took although it was possible that some women might be unwilling to appear before a panel. Women who lived in one of the few departments where no doctor was willing to perform an abortion had the option of travelling to another department where abortion services were available. As Uruguay was not a large country, it was usually not necessary for them to travel very far.

40. The national health system was a universal system made up of public and private health-care providers. Access to the system was guaranteed for all citizens, including those working in the informal sector. Under an agreement established between the National Institute for Women and the National Cancer Screening Programme, new tests for cervical and uterine cancer were being distributed in local communities where the prevalence rates for those forms of cancer were highest. The tests in question could be applied by women themselves.

41. The suicide rate in Uruguay had risen significantly since 2010 and was currently among the highest in Latin America. The suicide rate for men was significantly higher than the rate for women and was particularly high in certain departments in the interior of the country. The National Honorary Commission on Suicide Prevention administered the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention 2021–2025. The Observatory on Gender-based Violence against Women was conducting a study to determine whether women victims of gender-based violence were more likely to commit, or attempt to commit, suicide.

42. A survey on the distribution of unpaid work between men and women conducted in 2022 showed that very little had changed since the previous survey, conducted 10 years earlier. Women carried out two-thirds of all unpaid work. Paid work accounted for one third of women's income and two thirds of men's income. If paid and unpaid work were taken together, women worked about four hours more per week than men.

43. **A representative of Uruguay** said that a number of policies existed to support rural women, including women farmers. Those policies included calls for proposals for production projects specifically targeted at rural women; the establishment of a specific State-backed credit for rural women; the establishment of the first call for applications for land directed at women; the mainstreaming of policies providing for environmental measures in the areas of farming and climate change; and the organization of specific courses and grant schemes relating to various aspects of farming, finance, climate change, native forestry and digital literacy, among other subjects.

44. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the National Directorate for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises organized training courses in e-commerce and e-business while the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining had launched a source of non-reimbursable funds for women and transgender women leaders of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. To date, funds had been allocated to around 33 women, including a number of women of African descent. In 2020, the National Development Agency had launched an initiative to promote financial literacy that included a train-the-trainers programme with a specific focus on small and medium-sized enterprises. A total of 40 trainers in the area of financial literacy had been trained and had since replicated the programme throughout the country. Although the programme had been designed for both men and women, it incorporated a gender perspective in order to break down harmful gender stereotypes about women's supposed lack of financial acumen. The National Women's Institute and the Organization of Women Entrepreneurs had held workshops on financial literacy for women entrepreneurs throughout the country. Some of the workshops had been held in-person for women who would not otherwise have been able to attend.

45. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would be interested in receiving more information on the time-use survey, including the indicators used, and on the challenges encountered in the implementation of the care policy of Uruguay. Given that women's unpaid work amounted to 16 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), she wondered what steps were being taken to compensate them for their time.

46. **Ms. Reddock** said that she wished to know whether the State party might consider conducting specialized intersectional studies on the lives of Indigenous women, women of African descent, rural women, women and girls with disabilities and women deprived of their liberty in order to gain a deeper understanding of their situation and establish a basis for continued policy and legislative interventions. She would welcome information on the current status of the Family Production Registry, the inter-institutional policy for rural women and the National Gender Plan in Agricultural Policies, including an indication as to whether any mechanisms had been put in place to monitor their implementation. She wondered to what extent the 2030 National Gender Equality Strategy had improved women's land ownership in rural areas and whether any other mechanisms were in place to improve rural women's access to land.

47. She would like to know what mechanisms had been established to address the stigma and discrimination faced by Indigenous women and girls in every sphere of public life; whether any budgetary resources had been earmarked for public awareness-raising campaigns to promote the rights of Indigenous women and girls and combat intersectional discrimination; what measures were being taken by the National Council for Racial Equity to address racial discrimination against Indigenous women and girls; and what was being done to value Indigenous knowledge, culture and ancestral practices. It would be useful to know whether the State party was giving consideration to the implementation of the Committee's general recommendation (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, in consultation with Indigenous women's organizations.

48. She was curious to know the extent to which women's and gender issues were taken into account in the implementation of the National Plan for Racial Equity and People of African Descent, and whether the State party would consider reinstating the Directorate for Uruguayan Women of African Descent within the National Institute for Women. She wished to know what action the State party was taking to address high and increasing incarceration rates, including of women with children, overcrowding and a lack of specialized health staff or mental health care in women's prisons. She would be interested in learning what was being done to reduce the impact on women of the Urgent Consideration Act, which had led to a rise

in the number of women, many of them poor and of low education, being convicted and deprived of their liberty for microtrafficking offences. It would be helpful to know whether the State party was implementing the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and the international guidelines on human rights and drug policy.

Articles 15 and 16

49. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken by the State party to prevent early marriage, educate the public about its risks and implement a complete ban on marriage for persons under the age of 18, in accordance with the Committee's previous concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/URY/CO/8-9](#), para. 46 (a)). She wondered to what extent the registry of persons required to pay alimony under income withholding orders had been successful in ensuring the payment of court-ordered or approved alimony; whether there were plans to revise the law on filiation to include women in civil partnerships; and what public policies and awareness-raising campaigns were planned to ensure recognition of filiation for women in same-sex couples and eliminate discrimination against them.

50. With regard to a recently adopted law on joint custody, she would be interested in learning more about the aggravating offence of making a false allegation of domestic violence or gender-based violence. She would also welcome information on the use of mediation in cases of gender-based violence and on the steps taken to strengthen training and capacity-building for judicial officers so that they were better equipped to protect women victims of domestic violence and avoid decisions based on stereotypes and sexism.

51. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the need for specialized intersectional studies had been taken into account in the National Gender Plan in Agricultural Policies. A diagnostic analysis had also been carried out, later forming the basis of a public policy to reduce gender inequalities in the agriculture sector. The Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries had taken steps towards mainstreaming gender not only in its agricultural policies but throughout the sector by means of a cross-cutting plan to mainstream gender for the period 2021–2024, which had been drawn up following citizen consultations. Among other elements, the plan had a civil society-led monitoring committee and an online transparency portal, as well as five strategic themes, among them productive systems and agriculture and livestock value chains; women's participation and empowerment; and internal control, monitoring and evaluation. More than 50 public-private, national and international organizations were involved in the plan's implementation. Among other advances, gender awareness had been raised, rural women had been able to participate in forums, public officials working in the agricultural sector had been involved in gender awareness-raising and targeted policies on rural women had been created. Moreover, the plan contained three objectives specific to family farming, including one related to the empowerment of women in family farming.

52. Measures to reduce the unpaid work burden for women and girls in the agriculture sector included making such work more visible and recognizing its value. To that end, questions on unpaid productive work had been incorporated into livestock farming management tools; information gathered from tools, surveys and censuses was being systematized; and campaigns were being developed with the aim of recognizing rural women and the value of their unpaid agricultural, care and domestic work.

53. Concerning women's co-ownership of family-owned production enterprises and access to land, it was worth noting that all persons of legal age working in that field were recognized as family producers. According to the most recent general agricultural census, almost 20 per cent of farms in Uruguay and just over 11 per cent of land surveyed were owned by women, while women's co-ownership of land awarded by the National Settlement Institute had increased three-fold.

54. **A representative of Uruguay** said that all of the self-identification variables recommended by the Committee and other treaty bodies had been incorporated in the 2023 population, households and dwellings census, which had recently been conducted.

55. **Ms. Ribeiro** (Uruguay) said that the Criminal Code established penalties for all forms of discrimination and racism. However, as had been borne out by a number of anthropological and ancestral studies, Uruguay was an almost uniformly pluriethnic society. There was great respect for Indigenous traditions. All Uruguayans had Indigenous, African and European ancestry; there were no Indigenous groups with specific or localized social, territorial or political organization. Necessary measures were nevertheless being taken towards the recovery of historical memory, including with regard to the events that had occurred in Salsipuedes in 1831. As things stood, discrimination against Indigenous Peoples was not a major issue, since Indigenous groups with their own traditions or that differed from the rest of the population did not exist to any major degree in Uruguay.

56. **A representative of Uruguay** said that a number of studies concerning women deprived of their liberty had been carried out. For example, a national study on the situation of women deprived of their liberty funded by the European Union was being used to inform gender-related measures to be taken by the National Rehabilitation Institute. Another study, mapping out alternative measures to detention for women, had been conducted in cooperation with the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Prison System and the country office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

57. In accordance with article 12 of the Convention, women and men deprived of their liberty received health care from the same health-care providers. Efforts to ensure equality of treatment with regard to mental health care were being taken. In the short term, a mental health ward was planned to provide 24-hour medical and acute psychiatric care, as well as detoxification, for women deprived of their liberty. A similar ward had been set up in 2022 for men deprived of their liberty. In the meantime, women had access to a mental health team through their prison medical service.

58. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, under the Urgent Consideration Act, the courts could apply a penalty for an attempt to commit an offence. The penalty for the commission of a microtrafficking offence was reduced by one third in cases of attempted microtrafficking. Since that invariably amounted to a minimum sentence of less than 2 years' imprisonment, conditional release or house arrest could be ordered. As a result, many women who had been imprisoned for attempted microtrafficking were now being released.

59. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, to date, some 75,000 persons, the vast majority of them men, had been registered as being required to pay alimony under income withholding orders. Ensuring the payment of alimony constituted a challenge, however, since monthly income could easily be manipulated, especially if the persons concerned worked in the informal sector.

60. **Ms. Ribeiro** (Uruguay) said that, in 2013, the minimum age for marriage had been set at 16 years for girls and boys. However, discussions were under way on drafting a bill to further increase the age to 18 years for both sexes. To date in 2023, 13 minors had been married, 11 of them girls.

61. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, whenever there was a complaint of gender-based violence, precautionary measures were automatically and immediately ordered. Under the new law on joint custody, which had been adopted in May 2023, those precautionary measures could be revised by judges specializing in family law, thereby providing the defendant with the right to a defence, which he would not previously have had. Unfortunately, in some cases the Act on gender-based violence against women had been used in bad faith and as a tool by one parent against the other to detrimental effect. Complaints from a fathers' group had given rise to the rule concerning making a false allegation. The aim was to ensure that solutions could be found within a legal context that provided guarantees to all the rights holders involved, in particular children and adolescents. In the event that precautionary measures were applied, expert opinions would be sought with regard to visits with the parent concerned, taking into account the best interests of the child; in the meantime, there would be no contact between that parent and the children.

62. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, the new law on joint custody notwithstanding, in accordance with Act No. 19.580 on gender-based violence against women, mediation would not be permitted in cases involving gender-based violence.

63. The Centre for Judicial Studies of Uruguay provided training on human rights for aspiring judges, serving judges and public defenders and prosecutors. Initial training for aspiring judges included courses on domestic violence and gender-based violence, and the rights of children and adolescents. Continuous professional development for serving judges covered a wide range of gender and protection issues, such as the gender perspective on the property regime of cohabiting partners, the burden of proof, and the rights of women and girls. The courses available for public defenders and prosecutors include one on the Act on gender-based violence against women and another on human rights with a gender perspective.

64. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the Government considered it important to work with civil society organizations and incorporated them into all relevant processes.

65. **Mr. Albertoni** (Uruguay) said that the exchange with the Committee had served to identify areas in which his Government needed to redouble its efforts to bridge the gender gap. The Committee's forthcoming concluding observations would be invaluable in enabling the Government to continue working towards a just and egalitarian society in which all persons were equal before the law, without distinction, and in which women and men had equal opportunities to exercise their political, economic and social rights. There was work still to be done and his Government would face the challenges head on.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.