



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
14 February 2024

Original: English

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

Summary record of the 2033rd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 31 January 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

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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)*

Seventh periodic report of Tajikistan (CEDAW/C/TJK/7; CEDAW/C/TJK/Q/7; CEDAW/C/TJK/RQ/7)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Tajikistan joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the draft seventh periodic report (CEDAW/C/TJK/7) and the responses to the additional list of issues submitted by the Committee in connection with the report had been discussed with representatives of civil society and international organizations. Implementation of recommendations from the Committee would be developed in coordination with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
3. Under article 17 of the Constitution, the State guaranteed the rights and freedoms of every person regardless of gender. The Government attached particular importance to women's rights and considered it a priority to enhance its legislation on gender equality and women's empowerment.
4. In his message outlining the main pillars of domestic and foreign policy in December 2023, the President of Tajikistan had mandated the relevant bodies to take measures to further bolster the participation of women in various spheres and to provide financial and technical incentives for women entrepreneurs. The Government had declared 2024 the Year of Legal Education, during which events were planned to raise citizens' legal literacy, including women and girls. It also intended to improve practices aimed at eradicating discrimination, abuse of and violence against women and girls, and would collaborate with civil society to that end.
5. A strategy on protecting human rights up to 2038 had been adopted by a government decision of 5 August 2023. It included a set of measures to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, eradicate gender discrimination and broaden women's participation in political life and their representation in government bodies, vocational education and other areas. The Act on Equality and the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination, adopted in 2022, regulated matters concerning constitutional guarantees for equality between men and women throughout society. It also provided for the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) to conduct anti-discrimination expert reviews of all legislation.
6. Article 143 of the Criminal Code established liability for the violation or restrictions of rights and freedoms, or the establishment of advantages for citizens, including based on gender. Anti-discrimination legislation was reflected in all sectoral laws and regulations. An interministerial working group was in place to develop national legislation on the elimination of discrimination, including discrimination against women. An action plan and programme were in place on preventing domestic violence for the period 2014–2023 as well as a national action plan on implementing the recommendations received from the States members of Human Rights Council under the universal periodic review for the period 2017–2020.
7. A working group had been established to improve legislation on the elimination of gender stereotypes, protecting women's rights and preventing domestic violence pursuant to a presidential order of 7 June 2017. It worked in close coordination with civil society and women's NGOs.
8. Key activities had been carried out to eliminate violence against women and girls under the joint effort of the United Nations and the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative, which aimed to identify shortcomings in the Government's prevention strategies and response to gender-based violence and to analyse legislation and policies linked to such violence in five sectors: justice, security, health, education and labour. The Government had also prepared recommendations on introducing changes to regional legislation and development programmes on prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence. A checklist had been developed for forensic medical experts and doctors on providing assistance to women and girls with disabilities and on documenting cases of violence in

accordance with the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol).

9. Other activities carried out under the Spotlight Initiative included awareness-raising work about the need to challenge entrenched gender norms in society. A communication strategy had been established, the aim of which was to change gender stereotypes and negative social norms. It would be implemented by both national and local government bodies.

10. The number of associations promoting women's rights was increasing. In 2023, the 80 civil society organizations working in that field had carried out projects worth €4 million. A key achievement had been the creation in the Ombudsman's Office of a department of public protection of the right to equality and freedom from discrimination. The Ombudsman had also adopted a procedure for the consideration of complaints from women and girls who suffered sexual and gender-based violence.

11. The Government had taken effective steps through national action plans to combat trafficking in persons. It had adopted measures to protect and provide support to the victims of trafficking in persons and vulnerable migrants, and give unconditional assistance to victims under supervision. Victims received protection during criminal investigations where necessary and mechanisms were in place to identify cases of exploitation and refer them to the relevant bodies.

12. On 2 January 2019, the Criminal Code had been amended regarding trafficking in persons, the definition of which had been broadened to bring it into line with international standards. To improve the identification of victims of trafficking and provide them with adequate services, in 2022 a national plan had been adopted on combating trafficking in persons for the period 2022–2024. In May 2020, a regional social service centre for victims of trafficking had been established in Dushanbe. It provided rehabilitation assistance to victims of trafficking and of domestic violence, abandoned partners of migrant workers and vulnerable migrants. Between 2021 and 2023, the centre had assisted 239 women. A public hotline had also been established for combating trafficking in persons.

13. Tajikistan had widely implemented temporary special measures, such as preferential terms for recruitment to the civil service and quotas for higher education. The proportion of women in the Majlis-i Oli, the parliament of Tajikistan, had increased over the last 25 years, from 3 to 27 per cent. Two of the nine committees of the Majlis-i Namoyandagon, the lower house of the Majlis-i Oli, were chaired by women, and one in three deputy chairs of the Majlis-i Namoyandagon were women.

14. A national strategy for empowering women in Tajikistan for the period 2021–2030 had been established, together with a plan of measures for the period 2021–2025 to implement it. In April 2022, the Government had adopted a programme on the selection and training of female executives, under which it aimed to increase to 30 per cent and 25 per cent the number of female civil servants and female senior executives respectively. Funding for the initiative had been increased by 84 per cent on previous programmes.

15. National legislation prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in education and general education was mandatory for all citizens. In 2020, the Government had adopted the National Strategy for the Development of Education for the period up to 2030, whose primary long-term purpose was to create an effective education system that promoted inclusiveness and equal opportunities. Of the 41,232 Tajik students who were currently abroad, more than 11,000 were female. In the last 10 years, 11,000 women had graduated from higher education institutions under the presidential quota. Out of 3,300 young citizens who had travelled abroad in 2023 to work, 30 per cent had been girls. During the 2022/23 academic year, 157,000 women and girls had studied at professional vocational education centres, including rural women, of which over 45,000 had enrolled free of charge and received free textbooks.

16. The main objectives of the State Programme for Employment Promotion for the period 2023–2025 were to increase employment, create an inclusive education system, promote the employment of women, young people and persons with disabilities in order to reduce their vulnerability and improve their competitiveness on the labour market. Over 88,000 women had been assisted in finding permanent jobs, about 46,000 women had

received vocational training, advanced training and retraining and more than 4,000 women had received assistance in entrepreneurial activities and folk crafts.

17. The Government had reduced the list of professions prohibited to women from 336 to 195 and measures had been taken to further reduce the list. In accordance with a government decision of 30 December 2023, various ministries, trade unions and employers were working to automate certain processes and enhance labour conditions to ensure broad access by women to those professions. In accordance with a presidential decree of 9 January 2024, to further support vulnerable groups, various public sector employees would receive a 40 per cent pay increase and increases in insurance, labour and social pensions. From 1 July 2024, there would be a 33 per cent increase in the national minimum wage.

18. Tajikistan was implementing several laws and regulations to enhance occupational safety for women and girls, as well as procedures for providing medical support for women from pregnancy to the period following birth in State health-care institutions. It was also implementing procedures for providing medical services for reproductive health consultations to minors and young people, including members of at-risk groups. Since 2022, in all cities and areas of the country, measures had been taken to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

19. The country was working to create a comprehensive system to support women's entrepreneurship, including financial and technical support. It developed women's business through sectoral government programmes and in concert with international development organizations. According to a government decision of January 2021, presidential grants worth 2.5 million somonis (SM) were allocated annually to support 80 women entrepreneurs. In November 2023, the Government had adopted a programme to develop women's entrepreneurship in Tajikistan. Full exemption from taxation was granted to legal entities involved in satin and silk production, sectors that mainly employed female entrepreneurs. Loans provided to female entrepreneurs, which were 30 per cent higher in 2023 than in 2022, demonstrated women's active participation in the Tajik economy.

20. To ensure gender equality and equal rights in marriage and family relations in State educational institutions and in basic vocational training, the Government had developed a module on family education. It covered topics such as equality in the family, domestic violence and discrimination against women. Equality and prevention of discrimination against women were also included in courses to enhance the qualifications of head teachers and technical teaching staff at basic vocational training centres. Mass media and social networks were used for information and outreach activities to enhance awareness of the need to ensure gender equality and eliminate gender stereotypes. Government entities conducted outreach work on the negative effects of early marriage for the health and well-being of women and girls, and on the need for official registration of marriage and the prevention of bigamy and polygamy.

Articles 1–6

21. **Ms. De Silva de Alwis** said that she would like to know how the judiciary applied the Convention in its judicial reviews of domestic laws and how it and other human rights treaties were used in constitutional jurisprudence. She would be interested to know how the Convention was translated and adapted into domestic laws through judicial decision-making.

22. She asked what mechanisms to ensure judicial independence and a code of ethics were in place given their importance for access to justice for women. She would also like to know how the judiciary and legal professions were trained on the Convention and what legal aid was provided for women in the criminal justice system.

23. She would be interested in learning whether the landmark Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination had been cited in the courts. She also wondered which court had jurisdiction to hear cases on gender discrimination and how many gender discrimination cases had been brought before the courts since the adoption of the Act.

24. The prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation had been removed from the final draft before the Act had been adopted in 2022. During the universal periodic review

in November 2021, the State party had received a recommendation to protect sexual orientation. What steps been taken in that regard?

25. The Labour Code still prohibited women from over 150 professions that were considered hazardous, which contradicted the above-mentioned Act. Given that any hazardous working conditions would be harmful for both women and men, would the State party consider harmonizing the Labour Code with the Act by removing the bans on certain professions for women?

26. While the bill currently pending to amend the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act provided for penalties for domestic violence, it did not include sexual violence in the family or marital rape, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendations Nos. 19 (1992) and 35 (2017). The proposed amendments offered the State party a good opportunity to remedy that shortcoming and bring the law into line with the Convention.

27. Freedom of speech and the right to peaceful assembly were fundamental to the rule of law and equality before the law. However, several renowned women human rights defenders and journalists had been arrested and sentenced, including the Pamiri journalist and women's human rights defender Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva in Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province, who had been sentenced to 21 years' imprisonment following a closed trial. Several NGOs, including news agencies, had ceased to function. She would like to know how the State party strengthened due process in cases of deprivation of liberty, as well as how it ensured access to counsel and a fair trial for women journalists and human rights defenders. She wondered how the justice system dealt with those charged with crimes against human rights defenders, how the rights of human rights defenders and NGOs were guaranteed and how it was ensured that women enjoyed their rights to freedom of speech and association.

28. Recently, border tensions between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and the longstanding tensions in eastern Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province between the authorities and the Pamiri people had sparked an escalation of protests. She wondered whether the women and peace and security national action plan addressed women's leadership in the context of conflict prevention and peacekeeping in the region. Given the destruction of property in cross-border clashes, how were women represented at the highest level in reconstruction and conflict resolution?

29. The Committee congratulated Tajikistan for being the first country to open its borders to women and children fleeing Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover in 2021. However, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had raised concerns over the deportation from Tajikistan of Afghan refugee women who were at risk of persecution. Would the State party therefore consider reviewing its deportation policies?

30. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that, under the amended Criminal Code, the penalty for domestic violence could be up to 10 years' imprisonment, or more in the case of sexual violence.

31. Tajik women's extensive experience in the peaceful resolution of conflicts stemmed from the fact that they had been the driving force behind the ending of the civil war in the 1990s. In recognition of their achievements, four Tajik women had been among the 1,000 women who had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. The members of the women's peace corps, which had been set up in 2019, participated in peacekeeping operations and post-conflict reconstruction in Tajikistan. Women had also played an active role in ending the violence on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2021. There was a peacekeeping section in the Committee for Women and the Family, which comprised women from politics, education, science and civil society, whose activities were widely reported on television and in the social media. An interdepartmental group had drawn up a national plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) that would provide for measures to protect women's rights in armed conflict and promote the active involvement of women in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Outreach activities sought to reduce women's vulnerability to extremist and terrorist propaganda. The Academy of Public Administration ran courses for civil servants on fostering gender equality, preventing all forms of violence against women and promoting women's participation in the management of State affairs.

32. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that, as the State party's report had indicated, numerous workshops and training sessions had been held to improve awareness of gender policy and to prevent gender-based violence. During the reporting period, judges and court officials had made 425 statements on the subject in the media. In 2022, 90 women judges had studied the national action plan for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations as part of a programme that had received support from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In April 2023, women from Tajikistan had taken part in the first forum on the role of women in law enforcement and defence in Central Asia. In October 2023, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment had organized a round table on gender-based approaches in the work of the Office of the Ombudsman as part of the Spotlight Initiative. The Ministry had drafted an amendment to the Labour Code that would widen the definition of discrimination to cover sexual harassment and other forms of undesirable behaviour, including in the workplace. The Education Act would be amended in light of the national strategy for promoting the role of women mentioned by the head of delegation.

33. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that all the internationally recognized principles guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary were embodied in the Constitution. Article 10 made it clear that international legal standards could be relied on in court proceedings. Domestic legislation implemented those standards. Under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, between 2019 and 2023 the courts had heard over 1,000 criminal cases concerning domestic violence and had handed down well over 400 prison sentences. Over the same period, 516 criminal cases involving domestic violence had been considered in mobile court sessions and over 1,000 special court rulings had been issued in that connection. The media had published numerous articles on the courts' work to counter domestic violence.

34. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that in 2021 and 2022 the number of voluntary associations had fallen, mainly because their funding had ended, but the number of newly registered voluntary associations had increased in 2023. The Ministry of Justice had set itself the task of streamlining the registration procedure. Over the previous two years, only five Afghan women had been deported. While State policy sought to provide optimum protection of the human rights of all refugees, irrespective of their nationality, the Government made particular efforts to protect the right of Afghan women and girls to education.

35. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the legal provisions guaranteeing protection of the rights of female human rights defenders, journalists and activists were contained in the Bar and Advocacy Act and the Voluntary Associations Act. Participants in legal proceedings were protected by the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure. Article 23 of the Bar and Advocacy Act prohibited all interference in lawyers' work. Measures were taken to ensure the safety to parties to criminal proceedings. Article 166 of the Criminal Code prohibited the obstruction of journalists' work. Other legal provisions protected the confidentiality of sources of information. Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva had used social networks to incite public disorder and armed assault on law enforcement officials and she had revealed State secrets. The criminal group to which she belonged had blocked roads, thereby hampering the free movement of goods and persons. Firearms and Molotov cocktails had been used against military personnel. In the criminal proceedings against her, Ms. Mamadshoeva had been charged with membership of a criminal organization, carrying out terrorist acts, the unlawful possession and transport of weapons and treason.

36. **Ms. De Silva de Alwis** said that the Committee hoped to hear about the State party's plans to harmonize the new labour law and the Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and to further reduce the number of types of work that women were not allowed to perform.

37. **Ms. Morsy** said that the Committee would be grateful for information on the legal framework that defined the mandate of and the authority exercising oversight over the Committee for Women and the Family and on how it coordinated its work with that of the relevant ministries. She would like to hear about the mechanisms that were in place to ensure that women's organizations and civil society participated in the adoption and implementation of public policies and programmes. She wished to know how their input was incorporated in policy decisions. It would be useful to have an account of the process for monitoring and evaluating the national strategy for the promotion of women's role in Tajikistan for the period 2021–2030 and the outcome of the programme for building the capacity of women in

leadership positions. The Committee wished to know how that programme meshed with the work of the Committee for Women and the Family. It would be helpful to know the percentage of the national budget that was allocated to the Office of the Ombudsman and what impact that appropriation had on the enforcement and promotion of women's equality and gender empowerment. She wondered whether the legislative system provided for a review of laws to check on their compliance with the Convention. She wished to know how the State party assessed the impact of awareness-raising campaigns to promote gender equality and combat discrimination and whether they did change society's attitudes. She asked whether there was a time frame for introducing a confidential, gender-sensitive procedure for receiving and reviewing complaints from victims of gender-based violence. She would like to know whether a framework existed for cooperation between the Committee for Women and the Family and the Ombudsman.

38. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know how the new Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination was implemented. She also wished to know how temporary special measures were tailored to the needs of disadvantaged groups of women such as women with disabilities, ethnic minority women and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons. The Committee would appreciate information on any specific temporary special measures to assist women from vulnerable groups, including women with HIV, older women, widows and former prison inmates. What were the quotas for women in leadership and decision-making positions? She would be grateful if the delegation could elaborate on the State party's challenges and concerns with regard to temporary special measures. It would be useful to know what steps the State party had taken to demonstrate the value of temporary special measures to the relevant government officials, parliamentarians, the judiciary, employers, women's NGOs and the general public. Lastly, she would appreciate some information on any collaboration among relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, when implementing and evaluating temporary special measures.

39. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that her Government had already significantly reduced the list of prohibited categories of labour for women and would continue work to reduce it.

40. In May 2023, a unit responsible for implementing measures to promote equality and prevent discrimination had been established under the Office of the Ombudsman. No complaints had been received since the adoption of the Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination in 2022. The Government had adopted a policy outline to provide free legal aid throughout the country and to further enhance the State-run free legal aid programme, and a Legal Aid Centre had been created to oversee the implementation of the outline. A new law adopted in July 2020 gave residents of Tajikistan the right to free legal assistance. The Statistics Agency under the Office of the President, in collaboration with the Committee on Women and the Family and the United Nations Population Fund, was working to harmonize indicators relevant to gender-based violence.

41. Local police inspectors had examined reports and complaints of domestic violence as part of the Spotlight Initiative to provide timely legal and psychological assistance to victims. With the support of the country's development partners, the Committee on Women and the Family had launched a free hotline and a Resource Centre for Gender Equality and Prevention of Domestic Violence. In 2023, more than 2,300 complaints had been received relating to physical, economic, psychological and sexual violence, about 2,100 of which had been filed by women.

42. In order to attract women to the civil service, women were provided with financial aid during the employment process and, upon their appointment, they were granted three additional points. Consequently, nearly 900 women had been employed in the civil service and approximately 550 had been recommended for more senior positions. Gender-based quotas were in place, such as for parliamentary candidates and university students, and grants amounting to SM 2.5 million were available to support women's professional advancement, such as for women entrepreneurs. The Government aimed to increase the number of women in the civil service to 30 per cent, and the number in leadership posts to 25 per cent. A reserve list of 52 competent woman candidates for appointment to managerial and leadership positions had been established following a series of competitive examinations.

43. The working group on enhancing legislative acts to eliminate gender stereotypes had recommended that educational curricula and materials be reviewed through the prism of gender equality and non-discrimination. A draft law introducing amendments to the law on education had also been prepared, which included a proposal to make the analysis of textbooks by a gender expert mandatory.

44. Under the National Strategy to Promote the Role of Women in Tajikistan for the period 2021–2030, fundamental areas of national policy had been defined for the advancement of women, including a specific chapter dedicated to the prevention of violence against women. A new five-year programme to prevent domestic violence for the period 2024–2029 had also been developed, which would take into account the proposals made by ministries, departments and voluntary associations. To combat domestic violence, there were also 17 inspectors from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 110 advice and information centres, 22 medical and social rehabilitation rooms for women in facilities of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, 47 legal aid centres and 14 crisis centres, in addition to the Office of the Ombudsman, a centre for women's empowerment at Dushanbe town hall and a counselling centre for perpetrators of violence.

45. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the Committee on Women and the Family drafted proposals on gender equality in all areas of public and social life. It collaborated with other entities to coordinate interdepartmental programmes to prevent violence against women and girls, reduce gender inequality and enhance the role of women. Information on topics such as women's rights and gender equality was disseminated via the media. Legal acts adopted in the area of gender equality were monitored and citizen complaints were carefully reviewed.

46. Pursuant to article 9 of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, the Committee on Women and the Family and the competent bodies were responsible for designing and implementing programmes to prevent domestic violence. They took steps to identify and address the causes of domestic violence and to tackle antisocial and immoral behaviour within the family, such as through awareness-raising campaigns.

47. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the capacity of the Office of the Ombudsman was increasing. Two sections had been created: one to protect equality and eliminate discrimination and one to protect the provision of financial services and uphold the rights of entrepreneurs. Funding for the Office increased by roughly 15 per cent each year. As of 2024, the number of posts had increased to 53, made up of a universal Ombudsman and a number of specialized Ombudsmen. Between 2019 and 2023, the Ombudsman had received close to 1,000 complaints from women. Where necessary, the Ombudsman could refer complaints to government entities for further consideration.

48. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that he wished to clarify that the aforementioned deportation of five women from Afghanistan had taken place over a five-year period before the Taliban came to power.

49. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the national development strategy of Tajikistan for the period to 2030 played an important role in ensuring gender equality, empowering women and preventing domestic violence. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection had 12 offices that provided aid to victims of domestic violence and additional offices had been set up. Women and girls with disabilities were provided with free medical assistance and women with HIV had access to antiretroviral therapy and other treatments in centres located throughout the country. Preventive work to raise awareness about sexually transmitted diseases was also carried out, particularly among women and other vulnerable groups. Pursuant to Government Decision No. 271 of 14 May 2020, there were also targeted social benefits for low-income families amounting to SM 123.4 million. Benefits were also available for families in difficult situations or with a child with a disability. In the last year, payments of SM 4.7 million had been made for children with HIV.

50. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that, in accordance with article 11 of the Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, temporary special measures were taken to assist disadvantaged persons to ensure that de facto equality was achieved.

51. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that according to the most recent population census, there were more than 80 peoples in Tajikistan. Both men and women in those groups were granted the same rights as other Tajik citizens, such as with regard to education and career development.

52. **Ms. De Silva de Alwis** said that she wondered whether the Ombudsman would consider making a recommendation for the Government to accept the inquiry procedure under the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

53. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would be grateful if the State party could elaborate on how particular temporary special measures were customized for different vulnerable groups of women, and on how it collaborated with NGOs and civil society to map out gender gaps and vulnerable populations to ensure that temporary special measures were targeted effectively. It would also be useful to know how the State party raised awareness of the social value of temporary special measures among civil society so that the public did not perceive such measures as discriminatory against men or other parts of the population.

54. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that, through the Legal Aid Centre, free legal assistance was provided to vulnerable groups, including many women and girls.

55. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that measures had been taken to improve minority groups' access to education by ensuring that teaching was available in multiple languages, such as Tajik, Russian, Uzbek and English. More than 10,000 women were enrolled in a form of vocational training and women who wished to move from the informal economic sector to the formal sector were supported in doing so. A programme was also in place to protect the rights of migrant workers and their wives, who were often living in another country. In 2023, around 1,000 women benefited from the programme. Integration modules were available to help women with a low level of education to gain qualifications.

56. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the matter of accepting the inquiry procedure under the Optional Protocol to the Convention was under consideration as part of plans to implement the recommendations made during the previous universal periodic review.

57. Companies with 20 employees or more and local public authorities had a mandatory quota for hiring persons with disabilities. A law on social entrepreneurship which gave priority for grants to persons with disabilities was also being considered.

58. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that a number of policy outlines, national strategies and national programmes were being implemented to ensure equal and equitable access to medical services, including for women and children. Information centres were available across the country so that citizens could learn how to obtain access to State-funded medical services through the national programme on promoting healthy living. Priority care was given to households with children, persons with disabilities or anyone living in difficult circumstances.

59. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that representatives of the Committee on Women and the Family had taken part in around 300 television programmes and around 193 radio programmes in 2023, in addition to featuring in newspaper and magazine articles. Topics such as the fair division of housework, the importance of mandatory education for women and the need to ensure equal opportunities were covered.

60. Regarding the State programme on employment, in 2023, 14,400 women were employed through the quota system. Around 7,000 women received interest-free loans amounting to over SM 3 million, and over 9,900 women were placed in paid public works jobs, thus collectively receiving SM 2.5 million in addition to their wages. A total of 56.6 thousand women underwent a free vocational training course and over 1,000 unemployed women received employment benefits.

61. **Ms. Leinarte** said that she would like to know how many cases of domestic violence had been brought before the courts, how many convictions there had been exclusively for domestic violence under the articles of the State party's Criminal Code that established criminal liability for numerous forms of violence, and what the penalties had been for perpetrators. The Committee would welcome further information on the subjects of the administrative cases on domestic violence heard before the courts between 2021 and 2022,

and on the subsequent court rulings and penalties handed out. It would also be useful to know what the court rulings had been on the criminal cases concerning polygamy heard in 2019.

62. In the absence of a separate law on domestic violence, she wondered whether there was currently an established complaints mechanism in place for victims of domestic violence, to ensure the safety of women and children from the perpetrator. She asked what the procedure was for issuing protective orders and evicting perpetrators from the family house, how many protective orders had been given in cases of domestic violence, and what procedure was in place to ensure that victims received free medical assistance.

63. She wished to know why domestic violence had not yet been criminalized and whether the provisions of the draft Criminal Code on domestic violence covered all forms of violence, including economic and psychological violence and marital rape. She would welcome statistical data on victims of domestic violence, including data on complaints filed disaggregated by gender and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator. It was not clear why there were no specific provisions on sexual harassment in domestic law. Lastly, she wished to know whether the State party had a strategy for combating negative, especially patriarchal, stereotypes and gender-based violence.

64. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would like to know how the State party ensured that victims of trafficking in persons received comprehensive care and services. He wished to know how many shelters were managing the rehabilitation of victims and what efforts had been made to open new crisis centres and shelters to provide victims with medical, psychological, social and legal assistance. He would welcome data disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and geographical area on the number of victims and survivors of trafficking registered in the past five years; in particular, he would appreciate data on cases registered under court decisions for trafficking offences covered under articles 130-1 and 167 of the Criminal Code and on cases of women and girls subjected to forced labour in rural areas. He would like to receive information on measures taken to protect women migrant workers from exploitation, and wished to know whether the anti-trafficking hotline was free of charge and accessible throughout the country and in different languages. Information on organ trafficking would also be appreciated. Did the State party plan to ratify the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption and adopt further legislation on trafficking in persons?

65. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that a total of 2,135 criminal cases of domestic violence had been filed in the past five years. In 2019, there had been 439 such cases, involving 363 male and 77 female perpetrators, including 57 minors. In 2020, there had been 602 cases, involving 493 male and 109 female perpetrators, including 52 minors. In 2021, there had been 516 cases, involving 465 male and 50 female perpetrators, including 72 minors. In 2022, there had been 343 cases, involving 314 male and 29 female perpetrators, including 50 minors. In 2023, there had been 235 cases, involving 209 male and 26 female perpetrators, including 35 minors. In most cases, the perpetrator had been a close relative of the victim.

66. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the Statistics Agency conducted a demographic and health survey every five years. Of the 6,743 women aged 15 to 49 surveyed in 2017, 24 per cent had been subjected to physical violence, and 17 per cent had experienced physical violence in the previous 12 months. Regarding domestic violence experienced by married women, the perpetrators had been their husbands in 83 per cent of cases and their former husbands in 14 per cent of cases. Two per cent of women had been subjected to sexual violence, perpetrated by the women's husbands in 73 per cent of cases and former husbands in 27 per cent of cases. Some 21 per cent of the women surveyed had been slapped in the face, 14 per cent had been pushed or had had objects thrown at them and 7 per cent had been punched. Half had reported that they frequently felt at risk of violence from their husbands, 19 per cent had said that they sometimes felt at risk of violence and only 20 per cent had never felt at risk of violence. Around 2 per cent of women in 2012 had physically harmed their current or former husbands, compared to 0.4 per cent of women in 2017. Some 75 per cent of women who had experienced violence had not reported it to a third party or sought professional assistance, 15 per cent had reported it to a third party but had not sought professional assistance and 10 per cent had sought professional assistance. Most reports had concerned violence experienced in the home. Of those who had reported the abuse to a third

party, 11 per cent had contacted a lawyer, 8 per cent had informed a friend and 6 per cent had filed a report with the law enforcement agencies.

67. A team of methodologists and information technology experts had drafted guidance on how to identify and record violence against women and children and had developed a system to register cases of such violence in line with international standards. Experts from the Committee on Women and the Family and the Statistics Agency had received training in how to use the system.

68. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that 239 people had received assistance at the national social service centre for victims of trafficking in persons and domestic violence. In addition, 27 victims of trafficking and 162 victims of domestic violence had been referred to regional support centres, which provided social and rehabilitation services, access to lawyers and free legal aid. Victims could also receive free medical care, as provided for in Government Decision No. 600 of 2 December 2008, on the procedure for providing health care services to citizens of Tajikistan in State health-care institutions. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection had established an interdepartmental working group to combat domestic violence and operated a number of shelters for victims. The Government would examine the possibility of creating accessible facilities for persons with disabilities.

69. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that 42 government ministries and departments were implementing the National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Tajikistan for the period 2022–2024, and over SM 40 million had been allocated for that purpose in 2022 and 2023. The Centre for Combating Trafficking in Persons within the Ministry of Internal Affairs had more than 30 employees. In the last five years, the law enforcement agencies had identified 409 victims of trafficking in persons, of whom 158 had been women aged 20 to 30 and over 200 had been men aged 17 to 50. There had been no reports of trafficking for the purpose of exploitation.

70. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that, in the period 2019–2023, 1,861 criminal cases concerning domestic violence had been brought before the courts. A total of 439 perpetrators had received prison sentences, and most victims had been women.

71. A definition of sexual harassment had been adopted that covered all forms of ill-intentioned verbal, non-verbal and non-physical sexual behaviour that affronted a person's honour and dignity or left them feeling intimidated or insulted.

72. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that there was a unit within the Ministry of Health and Social Protection dedicated to matters involving organ transplantation. The Government had adopted several regulatory instruments on organ transplantation and trafficking, with due consideration for international best practice. In 2023, 344 organ transplants had been carried out in Tajikistan. Before transplant operations, all relevant legal documentation must be examined by hospital lawyers, who would refer suspicious activity to the law enforcement agencies. The Government had received a communication from the Office of the Ombudsman of Türkiye in 2023 regarding an organ transplantation case and had answered its questions in full.

73. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the Children's Rights Act, the Family Code and legislation on natural and legal persons had been amended on 30 January 2014 to prohibit the threat and use of violence against children and to grant children the right to be heard by the relevant authorities. Children could therefore lodge a complaint with the authorities, or have a parent, guardian or representative do so on their behalf, if they had been subjected to any form of violence.

74. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that several meetings on labour migration, including its impact on women, had been held with representatives of the immigration authorities, the Committee on Women and the Family, the Committee for Youth, Sport and Tourism, local authorities and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Over 20,000 people had attended more than 2,200 meetings held in 2023 to raise awareness of migration procedures, including the risks involved. The Migration Service Office in the Russian Federation served Tajik nationals working in that country and operated a dedicated reporting hotline. In August 2023, a delegation of government and civil society representatives had visited the Russian Federation to meet with Tajik migrants and learn about their lives. The delegation had visited

six cities and held more than 20 meetings on challenges relating to labour migration. The Committee on Women and the Family operated a free hotline that was accessible in Tajik and Russian.

75. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that a dedicated unit comprising representatives of relevant government bodies, including the Committee on Women and the Family and the National Coordinating Committee for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, had been established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs with a view to reducing the demand for prostitution. It had organized several events across the country, during which its members had took preventive measures such as interviews with women who turned to prostitution and, in exceptional cases, enforcement action such as fines under article 130 of the Code of Administrative Offences. Such women were screened for sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and those testing positive were referred for specialist medical care. Officials from the Ministry regularly delivered messages on State television broadcasts to discourage people from turning to prostitution and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

76. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the courts had handed down appropriate punishments in 290 criminal cases of domestic violence with a view to preventing reoffending among perpetrators. There was a strict deadline in place for the courts to consider reports of domestic violence. Courts could hand down additional measures if, for instance, a perpetrator regularly abused drugs or alcohol.

77. **Ms. De Silva de Alwis** said that she wondered whether the State party had considered adopting a regulatory framework on the use of technology for malicious purposes, such as doxxing, revenge pornography and the creation of deepfake content.

78. **Mr. Safarov** said that he wished to know whether shelters were exclusively accessible by victims of domestic violence, whether children were cared for separately from adults and how much money was allocated to shelters from the State budget.

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79. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she would welcome information on measures taken by the State party to ensure that women were represented on an equal footing in political and public life, on the political frameworks in place to enable women to stand for public office and on temporary special measures implemented to ensure that at least 30 per cent of positions in the legislature, executive and judiciary were filled by women. She wished to receive information on campaigns carried out to raise awareness of the importance of women's participation in decision-making at all levels and would like to know how their impact was evaluated. She would welcome information on measures taken to monitor derogatory language and stereotypes relating to women in public statements and media reports. Information on measures taken to protect civil society organizations from reprisal, intimidation, harassment and violence, and the effectiveness of such measures, would be appreciated. She would be interested in hearing about measures taken to involve female leaders in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and other resolutions on women and peace and security. It would be helpful to hear about any progress made towards the equal representation of female and male civil servants and the development of a comprehensive database of female leaders, including those from the provinces and minority ethnic groups.

80. She would appreciate information on measures taken to ensure the representation of women in the diplomatic services and in national delegations to international organizations. Information on the participation of women in international negotiations, peace processes and high-level discussions on climate change would also be welcome. Lastly, she would like to hear about opportunities for professional development available to women, and any obstacles to their taking up high-ranking positions in international delegations.

81. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she would like to know whether the State party planned to take action on the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. She would appreciate information on procedures for the deportation of stateless persons before their status had been determined, including on enforcement of those procedures and on safeguards in place to protect the rights of those individuals. She wondered whether the State party intended to extend or renew the

Amnesty Act to enable people who had not legalized their status to gain access to legal documentation. She wished to know how the State party would ensure that all births could be registered, regardless of the parents' circumstances, and address challenges faced by women and girls in rural areas in obtaining access to legal documentation. The Committee had received reports concerning the detention and deportation of Afghan women asylum-seekers and refugees in Tajikistan. She would welcome information from the delegation on that issue, including on steps taken to protect Afghan refugees in accordance with international standards and human rights obligations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.