



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Summary record of the 2077th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 24 May 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia (Vice-Chair)

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In the absence of Ms. Peláez Narváez, Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

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

Tenth periodic report of Rwanda (CEDAW/C/RWA/10; CEDAW/C/RWA/Q/10; CEDAW/C/RWA/RQ/10)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Rwanda joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Rwanda**, introducing her country's tenth periodic report (CEDAW/C/RWA/10), said that Rwanda had made significant strides in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment since the 1994 genocide. Promoting gender equality was recognized not only as a matter of justice, but also as a strategic imperative for sustainable development. The 2003 Constitution mandated a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women in decision-making positions. Currently, over 60 per cent of parliamentarians were women, as were over 40 per cent of Cabinet members and 30 per cent of mayors.
3. The Government had implemented policies ensuring equal rights to land ownership, access to financial products for women who ran small or medium-sized enterprises and the consideration of gender in public service recruitment. Nearly 80 per cent of women relied on agriculture for their primary source of income, and the Ministry of Agriculture had introduced a gender mainstreaming strategy in that sector. The labour force participation rate of women had increased from 46.2 per cent in 2019 to 48.8 per cent in 2023, but women still faced higher underemployment and unemployment rates than men. The Government had established a Gender Equality Seal Programme to recognize companies that promoted gender equality in the workplace.
4. Financial inclusion for women had increased by 11 per cent from 2019 to 2023, but a significant gender gap persisted in the awarding of loans, with men borrowing 3.5 times more than women. The Government was implementing actions under specific strategies such as the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa programme to support women's and girls' access to finance.
5. Rwanda was committed to universal digital access. Some 67 per cent of female-headed households had at least one member who owned a mobile phone. However, ownership of smartphones was still lower among women than among men. Gender-responsive budgeting, support for non-governmental organizations and regular meetings of the national gender machinery, which consisted of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office, the National Women's Council and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, kept Rwandan policies in line with international standards and national goals. The national action plan on women and peace and security enhanced women's participation in peacebuilding and ensured their protection in conflict situations.
6. The Bandebereho and Indashyikirwa programmes engaged men and boys in gender equality efforts, for example by encouraging them to serve as role models. Legal aid services and 48 Isange one-stop centres offered comprehensive services for victims of gender-based violence. Rwanda had a comprehensive policy to counter trafficking in persons and robustly enforced the related legislation.
7. The Government had implemented mechanisms to ensure equal access to education for boys and girls, including school feeding programmes and the establishment of gender-friendly school environments. In technical vocational education training, female participation exceeded 40 per cent and there had been an increase in girls' enrolment in subjects related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Life expectancy had increased, and access to antenatal care services stood at 97.7 per cent. Nearly 65 per cent of married women of childbearing age used birth control. The Government aimed to increase access to clean water and electricity from 80 to 100 per cent by the end of 2024.

8. **Ms. Akia** said that the Committee would observe a minute of silence to show solidarity with the survivors of the genocide of the Tutsi people and in recognition of the Kwibuka 30 memorial ceremonies recently held in Rwanda to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the tragedy.

9. *At the invitation of the Chair, a minute of silence was observed.*

Articles 1–6

10. **Ms. Akia** said that Rwanda was a champion in efforts to achieve gender equality and had obtained impressive results in ensuring high levels of representation of women in all branches of government. However, disparities and gaps reportedly remained, especially in education, employment, labour participation and climate change decision-making. Participation in family decisions was lower among women than men, and nearly three times more men than women had Internet access. The national action plan on women and peace and security, which had expired in 2022, had recognized that women were generally confined to relatively low-level positions in decentralized services.

11. She would like to know what steps the State party was taking to close existing gender gaps and address deep-rooted cultural stereotypes; whether the Government had evaluated the national action plan on women and peace and security and whether it had plans to renew it; and whether prosecutors, judges, the police and others involved in the justice system and law enforcement received mandatory training on the Convention and cited the Convention in their decisions and actions. Referring to a report that a high percentage of women victims of gender-based violence sought help from neighbours or family members, which could indicate underutilization of the formal justice system, she asked what the Government was doing to increase the use of the formal justice system and to train members of the judiciary and traditional and religious leaders to encourage access to justice, in line with the Convention.

12. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the Government had adopted laws supporting gender equality and, through the national gender machinery, constantly engaged with different stakeholders, including in the private sector, to ensure compliance with the Convention and bring about social change. Such efforts were a work in progress. The Government held gender accountability days to disseminate the Convention's principles relating to education, health and other matters. The Gender Monitoring Office ensured that gender was mainstreamed in a variety of sectors, and the Government implemented specific strategies to support social change, including actions to encourage engagement by boys and men in favour of women's empowerment.

13. Rwanda stood at the forefront of efforts to support peace and security in Africa. The Government was increasing the number of women in its peacekeeping contingents. It included information on the Convention in the training it gave to members of peacekeeping missions and encouraged them to provide the same training to community members once they were on the ground. The 48 Isange one-stop centres provided support to victims of gender-based violence, including legal advice and health services, and regularly held information sessions with local communities to discuss various topics, including gender-based violence. Such violence could be reported to the justice system either by the victim or by anyone with an interest in the case, and the authorities encouraged such reporting. That notwithstanding, victims were still often reluctant to bring incidents to the authorities' attention, either because they were given incentives to keep quiet or for other reasons.

14. **Ms. Akia** said that Rwanda had set a high bar for achievement in gender equality. Despite all the legislation and institutional machinery that had been established, the Government itself had acknowledged that some gender gaps had persisted. The Committee would like to know how the Government intended to address those gaps. She would appreciate a response to her earlier question about whether the Government intended to renew the national action plan on women and peace and security.

15. **The Chair** said that she would appreciate it if the delegation could describe any activities aimed at training traditional and religious leaders so that they could understand the principles in the Convention and dispense justice in line with them.

16. **A representative of Rwanda** said that a combination of legal provisions and efforts to bring about changes in social and cultural norms was needed to make it possible to bridge the remaining gender gaps. The Government must enforce the law and at the same time raise awareness of legal provisions and sociocultural factors. To that end, the authorities conducted training sessions for members of traditional and religious organizations. While the delegation could not provide a definitive answer to the question of the possible renewal of the national action plan on women and peace and security, Rwanda had consistently been committed to participation in United Nations peacekeeping and security activities. The renewal was currently under consideration.

17. **Ms. Morsy** said that, given the extensiveness of the country's gender architecture, she would like to know what strategies were employed to coordinate the work of the numerous bodies working in that field, to ensure the successful implementation of laws for women's empowerment and gender equality, and to involve women's organizations and take into account their inputs in such endeavours. The Committee would appreciate it if the delegation could provide information on gender equality strategies that had been successfully implemented and their impact on laws and policies aimed at closing gender gaps. It would be interesting to hear about the procedure for allocating budget resources to the national gender mechanisms, especially to help women to recover following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and about efforts to improve the collection of gender-specific data for monitoring the situation of women. How did the national gender machinery support the effective integration, economic recovery and rehabilitation of women migrants and refugees? She would also like to receive information on the institutional partnership between the National Commission for Human Rights and gender equality and women's empowerment bodies.

18. **Ms. Mikko** said that Rwanda had high percentages of female representation in government and administrative bodies, but, according to the Government, beyond the numbers lay a male-dominated structure where women were often kept in low positions in the executive branch. For example, the Government had reported in its reply to the Committee's list of issues that over two thirds of senior positions were held by men, and the electoral gender quota currently failed to ensure female representation at high levels in electoral lists. Public sector mandatory quotas alone were insufficient to bring about gender equality, as women faced obstacles to meaningful participation that could not necessarily be addressed by quotas. What strategies had the Government adopted to address such barriers and structural challenges? Was it considering amending the electoral law to raise the mandatory gender quota from 30 to 50 per cent? The Committee would like to know whether any voluntary quotas had been implemented in the private sector with a view to achieving gender equality, especially in high-level positions, and whether any other temporary special measures had been taken to address gender gaps, for example in education, employment and sports.

19. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the National Women's Council, the Gender Monitoring Office and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians all had distinct roles, and each oriented its work along the lines of clusters of issues that were of interest to women. For each cluster there was a steering committee, which consisted not only of representatives of those four bodies but also of a broad spectrum of civil society representatives. The cluster steering committees met regularly, received reports from various bodies related to the subjects in question and issued resolutions that guided and coordinated their activities, with a single mission and vision.

20. Information on the budget allocated for gender mainstreaming and recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic would be provided in writing. Budget allocations were the product of extensive consultations between the gender machinery bodies, and ultimately with the Ministry of Finance and Planning. That Ministry established priorities for the coming year, taking into consideration inputs from the grass-roots level and from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. Once the State budget was approved, the Ministry of Gender and Family Protection consulted with development partners, including United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and civil society organizations to mobilize additional funding, always in line with the set priorities. For

example, the Government had established an economic recovery fund in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the fund had received financing from the World Bank. The recovery plan included gender mainstreaming and addressed constraints faced by women. The Development Bank of Rwanda, working in collaboration with the Government, had been attentive to the need to integrate the gender perspective in financing.

21. The quota for women's representation in Parliament had been established in the Constitution and had been exceeded, and other quotas too had proven effective. However, action might be required to raise the standard for women's participation at the local level. The National Women's Council worked to mobilize further participation by women by building their skills and capacities to take on leadership positions. There was thus no urgency to amend the current law.

22. The Gender Equality Seal was an example of a programme aimed at fostering women's empowerment in the private sector. In May 2024, 19 companies, many of which were headed by women, had received certification. There was also a forum of women working in finance, which inter alia encouraged female students to consider careers in that sector, and a Rwanda Women Leaders Network, which mainly included women working in the private sector. The Government considered such bodies to be instrumental in motivating women and girls to take an active role in various parts of the private sector. The education policy, which encouraged studies in subjects related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, was designed to encourage women to work in private-sector industries that were dominated by men, such as mining.

23. **Ms. Mikko** said that the European Union had recently adopted a directive calling for 40 per cent of the members of private sector boards of directors to be female. It might be worth considering adopting a similar policy in Rwanda so as to encourage the private sector to take women's perspectives on board.

24. **The Chair** said that, aside from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, Parliament also had a gender caucus, which included both male and female members. What were the respective functions of the two bodies?

25. **A representative of Rwanda** said that Rwandans were well aware of the importance of quotas, but in order to make further progress it would be necessary to overcome social and cultural challenges, which was why the Government was, for example, concentrating on engaging men on gender issues. The Gender Monitoring Office, working under the Prime Minister's Office, monitored gender budgeting and the number of women in many different institutions. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians also monitored compliance with budget allocation requirements. The Forum and the gender caucus complemented each other in their work.

26. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know about the content of the various gender-transformative activities for training religious leaders and chief editors from media outlets and for engaging men and boys in gender equality efforts. It would be useful to hear about the duration, regularity, objectives and expected outcomes of the training of religious leaders and chief editors and the criteria for evaluation of such activities, and to learn to what extent they were human rights-based and made reference to the Convention. How did programmes to combat gender-based violence address its specific link with gender stereotyping, in particular in relation to women and girls with disabilities? The Committee would like to know more about the gender equality manual drawn up in 2020 by the Ministry of Gender and Family Protection. Did it address internalized acceptance of gender stereotypes?

27. Noting that conjugal rape was punishable by significantly lesser sentences than rape, she asked what accounted for that disparity and whether cases of conjugal rape were actually prosecuted. The delegation was invited to describe the penalties for and the constituent elements and scope of the crimes of sexual harassment and harassment of a spouse and to inform the Committee whether anyone had been convicted of those offences. The Committee would like to receive sex-disaggregated data on complaints, prosecutions, convictions and sentences for cases of sexual violence against women and girls with disabilities and migrant, refugee and displaced women and girls. It would like to know whether there was a specific

offence of domestic violence that addressed all its aspects and to hear a description of the legal process required for a woman to obtain a protection order from a court.

28. She would like to learn about the expertise, training and number of staff at each Isange one-stop centre and about the centres' material support, funding and functioning. Had the centres adopted a rights-based approach, and were their services monitored? It would be interesting to know how long women stayed at the centres. The Committee would also like to receive further information about the Safe Cities programme and its impact on ensuring the safety of women and girls.

29. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that the Committee would be interested to hear what measures had been taken to raise awareness of internal trafficking and to improve the identification of its victims. Would the State party consider adopting standards and training programmes for social workers at shelters so that they could identify victims of trafficking? A Rwandan law required the Government to support the identification of Rwandan trafficking victims in other countries and to cover the cost of their repatriation, but the relatively limited Rwandan diplomatic presence in other countries made it difficult to assist trafficking victims abroad. What measures could the Government take to improve such assistance? It was her understanding that prostitution had been decriminalized since 2018, but that sex workers were still considered deviant and subjected to detention. What would the Government do to stop such harmful and unlawful actions against sex workers?

30. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the training curriculum for religious leaders and chief editors was divided into modules and included guidance for discussion and learning exercises to encourage home study and more in-depth reflection. Longer training-for-trainer courses that covered the provisions of the Convention were also organized. Women and girls were encouraged to reject negative stereotypes through an inclusive approach that also involved men and boys, the aim of which was to foster discussion and understanding across all sectors of society of the impact of gender stereotypes and why they impeded gender equality. Particular efforts had been made to raise awareness of the Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence so that the relevant bodies knew how to address such violence and protect victims, and victims knew where to turn.

31. The one-stop centres provided a range of health-related, legal and other services. Their goal was not only to protect victims but also to provide support for their reintegration. An operating procedures manual, launched in 2009, was applied in all centres, and all health-care personnel, police officers, prosecutors and other partners involved in the centres' work had received training in its use. All services were delivered in the same place so that victims did not have to move from one office to another. There were close to 50 centres across the country as well as a regional centre of excellence on gender-based violence and child abuse in Kigali. If a service was not available in a given centre, or a victim was unable to reach a centre, the required services were provided directly through health centres, hospitals and the police and prosecution services.

32. If victims felt that it would not be safe to return home, they could stay in one of the four safe shelters available nationwide. For short stays, safe rooms were also available in the one-stop centres. Lengths of stay varied according to the circumstances but were not subject to a time limit; long stays were also possible. When it came to reintegration within the community, the centres engaged with the local authorities to arrange housing and ongoing support.

33. Although national legislation and policies for fighting trafficking in persons were in place, because trafficking was in many cases a cross-border crime, regional and international cooperation was often required and the Government frequently engaged with other States. The Rwanda-United Kingdom asylum partnership was intended to provide a solution to the risks associated with trafficking in persons and a means to protect those who might have fallen victim to trafficking in the course of their risky journey to Europe. The Government was aware that women and girls were especially vulnerable and was always ready to provide a safe environment.

34. **Ms. Bethel**, reiterating her earlier questions, said that specific details about the content and outcomes of the gender-transformative training programmes for religious leaders and chief editors were needed, including an indication of whether the training was human

rights-based and how it addressed the particular vulnerability of women and girls with disabilities. Since, according to a recent survey, 50 per cent of women in Rwanda believed that wife beating was justified in circumstances including a refusal of sexual intercourse, neglect of children or simply burnt food, she wondered what was being done to address the kind of socialization that women and girls had themselves internalized. She also wished to know whether adequate funding was available for the one-stop centres and whether their number might be increased, and what rationale lay behind the less severe sentence carried by conjugal rape.

35. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she would like more details of procedures for identifying victims of trafficking, including among asylum-seekers in Rwanda as a result of the Rwanda-United Kingdom partnership, women in safe shelters and detained sex workers. A national referral mechanism or special operating protocols were needed to ensure that victims of both internal and cross-border trafficking were duly identified.

36. **The Chair** asked whether the State party had targeted programmes tackling stereotyping to facilitate the required paradigm shift among men and boys, and what was being done to build resilience in women staying in safe shelters and mitigate their dependency on such shelters in order to ensure the sustainability of State services for women victims and survivors of violence.

37. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for repatriating victims of trafficking in persons, victims were able to communicate with the authorities through the relevant embassy or consulate and a dedicated budget had been established. Data would be provided subsequently. The training provided for religious leaders and chief editors covered the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, including relevant laws, available services, referral services and the reintegration of victims.

38. Breaking down stereotypes required a change in mindsets and society. As the laws and strategies in place to prevent discrimination against women began to bear fruit, a shift in mindsets should follow that would in turn make government action to address discriminatory behaviour more effective. The overall government strategy for addressing stereotypes and discrimination was based on an inclusive approach and the notion that mindsets changed when all sectors of society were engaged together; within that overarching strategy, there were specific programmes for men and boys and for women and girls.

39. Conjugal rape was difficult to prosecute and, owing to culture and stereotypes, was rarely reported. When victims did come forward, they were treated in the same way as victims of other forms of gender-based violence, in accordance with the established protocols for the operation of the one-stop centres. The centres were fully funded by the Government and provided all services free of charge in order to minimize access barriers. Although the support the safe shelters provided could create dependency, a graduation strategy involving training, discussion and mentoring was in place to address the issues pushing women to remain there. The graduation strategy also ensured that women who were in a hurry to return to their children did not leave before they were fully recovered.

Articles 7–9

40. **Ms. Ameline** said that she would welcome more information about the peace negotiations currently under way within the framework of the women and peace and security plan. Were women involved in high-level exchanges and given the opportunity to share their visions for peace and security in the region? And what role did women have in diplomacy more generally? She would like to know whether affirmative measures were in place to promote the appointment of women to diplomatic posts and positions in international organizations and whether women candidates were given precedence over male candidates with the same skill set to ensure gender parity, including in the world of international finance and in international negotiations on issues such as climate change.

41. Despite the State party's exemplary position in terms of women's representation in Parliament, concerns had been raised about a lack of gender parity at the decentralized level. Accordingly, she would like to know what was being done to boost women's representation in local government, address the patriarchal mindset that prevented their advancement and

give them the tools they needed to assume decision-making posts and effectively exercise authority. She wondered whether the positive masculinity initiative was being expanded across the country or remained in the pilot stages, and whether it was being, or would be, incorporated into educational programmes. She would also like to know about any training and awareness-raising initiatives focused on the importance of equal participation that specifically targeted non-governmental organizations and what was being done to promote gender equality among doctors and hospital specialists and in the public administration in general, where parity also seemed to be lagging. Lastly, she would appreciate the delegation's assessment of the innovative constitutional provision providing for the National Council of Persons with Disabilities to elect one member of the chamber of deputies. Were there any plans to reinforce that provision in order to enhance social inclusion more widely?

42. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she would like to know whether the 2020–2024 national action plan for eradicating statelessness had addressed the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls to de facto statelessness and, if so, how; whether any estimates of the number of women and girls experiencing statelessness in Rwanda were available; and whether a national action plan for 2025 and beyond was in the pipeline. She also wished to know how the State party kept track of progress towards its ambitious 2025 targets for birth registration and ensured that registration facilities were accessible specifically to women and girls. Disaggregated data on children under the age of 5 whose births had been registered with the civil authorities in 2023 would be appreciated. The State party might also indicate whether it had taken action to facilitate access, free of charge and in digital format, to essential civil registration documents such as birth and death certificates, national identity cards, passports, and marriage and divorce certificates, and to ensure that such documents were available to refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers. Information about steps being taken to improve asylum, reception, documentation and refugee status determination procedures, including by making legal aid services available at all stages, ensuring fast and efficient processing and providing training for stakeholders on regional and international agreements, would be helpful.

43. **A representative of Rwanda** said that women occupied various diplomatic positions and took part in discussions on peace and security nationally, regionally and internationally. The diplomatic appointment process followed the affirmative action strategy applied in all areas. However, work remained to be done, through training and empowerment, to convince women of their abilities and encourage them to put themselves forward. The Government was making great efforts to promote women's participation and ensure that they had the skills to participate on an equal footing.

44. The lower representation of women at the decentralized level was attributable in part to local working conditions. Unwelcoming environments in more remote areas might deter women from applying for positions. The authorities were therefore working to create more woman-friendly environments, in addition to building women's capacities, and had launched various initiatives to promote women's recruitment in schools, hospitals and other core services in difficult-to-access areas. In some cases, simply providing assistance with transportation made it easier for women to work, and motorcycles were therefore provided for those working in key sectors in such areas.

45. Education and awareness-raising on gender and stereotypes were included in university programmes and the secondary school curriculum. It was important to have at least one person with a disability in Parliament because, in order for laws to be inclusive, input from all social strata was needed. However, the promotion of inclusion was not exclusive to Parliament. In education, for example, women with disabilities were being recruited as teachers, and teaching staff received training on how to assist children with disabilities.

46. The Government was committed to combating statelessness and ensuring that no one was discriminated against or denied a service because of their status. Many services in Rwanda could now be accessed online; digitalization was key to resolving many issues, including processing delays and time management problems, and increased digitalization would help the Government to achieve its ambitious registration targets. Efforts to ensure that children were delivered in health-care facilities were also helping, since children could be registered at the health centre as soon as they were born. As a result, the number of children

registered at birth was increasing. Disaggregated data on registration would be provided subsequently, after the meeting.

47. Persons who were not registered were required to register at the nearest local office. Local authorities had access to the registration system and could register a person and have the registration approved at the central level. Registration was necessary to obtain any kind of service, such as health insurance, or any kind of official document. As the national registration system covered the whole country, internally displaced persons could easily be located within the system, provided that they had been registered and that their names and other identifying details were known.

48. **Ms. Akia** said that she wished to know what measures were taken to ensure that migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, could register and obtain access to services.

49. **A representative of Rwanda** said that all matters relating to refugees and asylum-seekers were handled by the immigration authorities. Refugees and asylum-seekers were given information on how to register and were supported by the local authorities if they encountered any difficulties. Most of the systems in Rwanda were interlinked, so a person who was registered in one system would be visible in a number of other systems.

50. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she wished to know whether a new national action plan for the eradication of statelessness would be established when the 2020–2024 plan expired.

51. **Ms. Akia** asked whether registration offices were accessible for persons with disabilities.

52. **A representative of Rwanda** said that all public buildings were required to be accessible for persons with disabilities. A bill that was currently being considered by Parliament would provide for greater support for persons with disabilities when it became law. Persons with disabilities also had the option of registering online.

Articles 10–14

53. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that, given the generally low levels of educational attainment in Rwanda, she would welcome information on any measures being taken to ensure the right to education for all persons. She wondered what was being done to build the technical capacities of teachers with a view to narrowing gaps in educational attainment between men and women and between the residents of rural and urban areas.

54. Given that girls were more likely than boys to drop out of school before completing their education, she wished to know what was done to support girls who were menstruating in schools and to enable girls who had given birth to return to school as soon as possible. The delegation might describe any measures being taken by schools to promote sexual and reproductive health, provide girls with safe spaces and eradicate bullying.

55. It would be interesting to know whether school curricula were being amended with a view to eliminating discriminatory gender stereotypes and whether efforts were being made to promote girls' and women's participation in science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. She would appreciate details of any measures being taken to promote access to education, including higher education, for women and girls with disabilities and women and girl refugees and asylum-seekers.

56. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the Government was implementing measures to increase access to education. In 2020 and 2021, 22,500 classrooms and 650 new schools had been constructed. Emphasis was being placed on building new secondary schools, as they were relatively scarce, particularly in remote areas. The Government was also forming partnerships with the private sector to increase the number of universities in Rwanda, including international universities.

57. The proportion of the State budget allocated to education had increased to 20 per cent in recent years. All schools in the country were required to set aside a room for girls where they could obtain sanitary towels, consult counsellors and receive guidance on sexual and reproductive health, which also formed part of the school curriculum. Girls subjected to harassment in schools could inform a school counsellor, who would refer the matter to the appropriate authorities. Girls who became pregnant received support so that they could return

to school as soon as possible after giving birth. Teenage mothers who did not wish to return to school could undertake short-term vocational training to acquire skills with which to support themselves.

58. There were no specific programmes to combat gender stereotypes in schools, but dialogues to counter such stereotypes were conducted at all levels of the education system and educational curricula were designed to be free from stereotypes. Refugee children could attend primary or secondary school but were not eligible for support to attend university. Nationals could receive a State scholarship to attend university but were required to pay it back once they had graduated. The Government partnered with various organizations, including private companies, to support refugees who wished to attend university. Private institutions such as Kepler admitted refugees to their higher education programmes.

59. **Ms. Haidar** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to eliminate the unadjusted gender pay gap and reduce horizontal gender segregation in the labour market. She asked how the State party would ensure that women received appropriate compensation for their work, including in the agricultural sector, and whether it would recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work and introduce a legal framework to protect the rights of women working in the informal sector.

60. The Committee would welcome information on any measures being taken to facilitate access to employment for women with disabilities, rural women, and refugee and migrant women. It would also be grateful for information on the 18 cases of sexual harassment of women that had been investigated during the reporting period, including the outcome of the investigations and any punishments handed down to the perpetrators. The delegation might also provide up-to-date information on any cases of workplace sexual harassment that had been reported since March 2021.

61. Given that about 150,000 children aged between 6 and 14 years were in employment, she would be interested to hear about any steps taken to implement laws and programmes aimed at eliminating child labour. In that connection, she wondered whether sufficient labour inspections were carried out and whether inspection services were adequately staffed.

62. **A representative of Rwanda** said that unpaid care work was a relatively new concept in Rwanda. Given its implications for the gender pay gap and gross domestic product, unpaid care work had been addressed in the bill governing persons and family that was under review by Parliament. Once the concept of unpaid care work had been recognized in law, measures would be taken to reduce the gender pay gap in different sectors.

63. Child labour was prohibited by law. The Government worked with stakeholders to raise awareness of the legal ban on child labour and the punishments for which persons who employed children were liable. Labour inspections were carried out regularly and punishments were handed down to anyone found to have employed children. Efforts were made to ensure that children removed from child labour were able to return to school.

64. **Ms. Haidar** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to help women to move from the informal sector to the formal sector, including women working in agriculture. She wondered what the State party was doing to protect domestic workers and ensure that employers who abused them were held accountable.

65. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the capacities of women were being built to make it easier for them to enter the formal sector of the economy. The Business Development Fund provided funding to women entrepreneurs, including women working in agriculture, to help them to develop their businesses. The Government also helped women to form cooperatives as a way of boosting their incomes.

66. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know how the State party ensured that women and girls with disabilities could obtain information on sexual and reproductive health and gain access to related health-care services without being stigmatized or subjected to discrimination. She wondered whether training was given to health-care providers, including training in sign language, to enable them to deliver inclusive care that took account of the sexual and reproductive health needs of women with disabilities.

67. The Committee would be interested to know whether any plans were in place to authorize mid-level practitioners to provide safe abortion services and whether the Law relating to Human Reproductive Health would be amended to define the organs competent to order mandatory screening for HIV/AIDS and the circumstances in which they could do so. The delegation might describe any measures taken to ensure that women asylum-seekers did not suffer any mental or physical harm on being deported from the United Kingdom to Rwanda in accordance with the agreement on the provision of an asylum partnership established between the two countries.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.