



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Summary record of the 2095th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 10 October 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

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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*)

Ninth periodic report of New Zealand ([CEDAW/C/NZL/9](#); [CEDAW/C/NZL/QPR/9](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of New Zealand joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of New Zealand**, introducing her country's ninth periodic report ([CEDAW/C/NZL/9](#)), said that civil society played a pivotal role in the community as advocates, service providers and partners in advancing gender equality. The new Government, which had taken office since the submission of the ninth periodic report, had expressed its ongoing commitment to protecting the human rights of all women and girls and promoting gender equality. In order to improve outcomes for women in employment, the Ministry for Women would focus on improving women's income, addressing the gender pay gap and maintaining women's equal representation on public sector boards. The Government would also strive to uphold women's safety and well-being, reduce gender inequalities in health and protect women and girls from all forms of violence.
3. Women made up 53.9 per cent of the members of public sector boards and committees and chaired 46.2 per cent of such boards. However, in the private sector, women held only 40 per cent of seats on company boards. An independent review published in 2019 had found that online harassment and abuse of Members of Parliament by members of the public was increasing, a situation that could have a negative impact on the engagement of women in public and political life. Netsafe, an online safety organization, was therefore developing an online toolkit to support women in leadership positions, for example on local government councils, where they accounted for nearly 46 per cent of the members.
4. A number of sports events hosted by her country over the previous two years had raised the value and visibility of women's sport and had shown that motherhood could be balanced with athletic careers. Nevertheless, in reality, women and girls still faced many systematic and societal barriers that impacted on all areas of their life.
5. Women's participation in the labour force had increased, to stand at 67.4 per cent in 2024, and their employment rate had reached 64.5 per cent. However, they still continued to earn less than men and experienced gender bias. In 2023, the gender pay gap had fallen to 7.1 per cent, its lowest level ever. The cumulative impact of the gender pay gap meant that women's retirement savings were 25 per cent lower than men's. To enable them to close that gap, the Government would ensure that all businesses had access to the gender pay gap calculation tool that was being developed for use with the entire workforce. Initiatives to support working parents to mitigate the effects of rising living costs included a 6 per cent increase in the parental leave payment and the introduction of a FamilyBoost allowance towards the cost of early childhood education. The Government intended as a matter of priority to pass legislation that would allow parents to share parental leave as they saw fit and ensure that mothers and babies were entitled to 72 hours post-partum care.
6. While women had a longer life expectancy, they spent more years in poor health than men, probably because they underwent more medical interventions and experienced higher rates of family violence. The largest health challenges were faced by Māori, Pacific, rural and disabled women. To improve health outcomes for women, breast cancer screening had been extended to those in the 70–74 age group. It was hoped that the option of self-testing for cervical cancer would result in a better uptake of screening among Māori, Pacific and rural women. *Te Puna Aonui*, the Interdepartmental Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, which had been set up in March 2022, had been tasked with providing a coordinated response to technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
7. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the high rates of family and sexual violence were a matter of concern. Women were three times as likely as men to experience intimate partner violence, and one in three experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. Children, young persons, Māori, Pacific peoples, persons with disabilities, older persons, LGBTQIA+ communities and ethnic communities were all likely to experience higher rates of sexual violence. *Te Aorerekura*, the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and

Sexual Violence, sought to deal with the underlying social conditions and norms that caused family and sexual violence, ensure that the community led, designed and delivered solutions, ensure that the workforce was skilled and culturally competent, and align primary prevention efforts and service delivery with real needs. Action plans had been devised to address six areas where progress was needed over a 25-year period. The first plan, spanning the period 2021–2023, had led to the development and implementation of new family violence workforce capability frameworks and training, expanded and integrated community-led responses, and new digital prevention and support initiatives, as well as to funding and support for building relationships and strengthening the community voice. To help translate the Strategy into measurable results, a new outcomes and measurement framework had been developed, focused strongly on evidence, and fresh surveys had been conducted. The next action plan, to be published by the end of 2025, was expected to prioritize improving multi-agency responses, strengthening evidence and evaluation to support investment, equipping workforces to respond to victims of violence, improving access to services and building effective interventions for people who had perpetrated violence. A new area of work would be that of identifying, preventing and responding to technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

8. **A representative of New Zealand** said that young Indigenous women in Aotearoa New Zealand were culturally confident, more knowledgeable about their histories, more aware of global issues and technologically proficient. The role of *Te Puni Kōkiri*, the Ministry for Māori Development, was to activate strategies that would promote equality and bridge the inequalities that continued to afflict Māori.

9. Significant work was under way in the public and private sector to support better outcomes for and with Māori women and girls. Notable achievements included a programme of research stemming from the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry on the systemic discrimination, deprivation and inequities experienced by Māori women as a result of breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi. Several reports would be published in the near future on the representation of Māori women in public sector decision-making roles and on disparities in justice, health, education, employment and socioeconomic well-being. That body of work would yield valuable insights into ways in which legislation and policy could combat intersecting forms of discrimination and would highlight the State party's commitments under the Convention with regard to Māori women and girls. A series of national strategies were driving better outcomes and equality for Māori women and girls in the fields of justice, child protection, family and sexual violence, maternal and infant health, living with disabilities, access to technology, housing, education, employment and equal pay. Lastly, Māori women were better represented in public sector decision-making roles and within Māori communities.

10. *Te Rōpu Wāhine Māori Toko i te Ora*, the Māori Women's Welfare League, which had been advocating for Māori women's rights since the 1950s, had been at the forefront of crucial initiatives to eliminate discrimination and improve outcomes for and with Māori women across a range of areas, including housing, health and education.

11. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Human Rights Commission of Aotearoa New Zealand was a national human rights institution with A-status accreditation. Although *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, (the Treaty of Waitangi) (*Te Tiriti*), the founding (constitutional) document of New Zealand, affirmed Māori women's Indigenous rights to sovereignty and self-determination, they continued to experience inequities in the spheres of health, justice, employment and housing. Some 67 per cent of women in prison were Māori, yet Māori made up only 20 per cent of the general population. The current Government's reform programme would further undermine Māori women's rights by disestablishing the body created to advance Māori health equity and self-determination and calling into question the role of the Waitangi Tribunal, the primary avenue for Māori to raise claims regarding Crown breaches of *Te Tiriti* and the entity that was undertaking a major inquiry into Māori women's rights. The Government had already halted all work on implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. She therefore urged the Committee to recommend that the Government should strengthen legal and constitutional protection of *Te Tiriti*; take meaningful action to implement the Declaration; ensure that all law and policy reforms met its obligations under *Te Tiriti* and the Committee's general

recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls; and provide gender-responsive, culturally and trauma-informed services, including mental health support, to women and girls in all places of detention, in accordance with the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules, where appropriate.

12. Although New Zealand had one of the highest rates of family and sexual violence in the member States of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and targeted online attacks on women and girls in private and public life were increasing, the Government had reduced funding to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and had ended a regulatory review of online services and platforms. A report by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State and Faith-based Care (1950–1999), which had been released in the current year, had revealed the grave extent of physical, psychological and sexual abuse that had taken place and which in some cases had amounted to torture, yet survivors still had no immediate prospect of compensation and rehabilitation. She therefore urged the Committee to recommend that the Government should implement an updated *Te Aorerekura* Action Plan and mainstream gender-specific goals; resume the regulatory review of online services and platforms, and bring in legislation to reduce online harm; and implement all the recommendations of the Royal Commission, in particular those pertaining to the Convention.

13. Despite the fact that, in 2019, the Welfare Expert Advisory Group had made recommendations on restoring dignity within the social security system, recommendations on indexing income support to wages and removing sanctions had been reversed. The social security system still did not allow people to retain their individual income if they were deemed to be in a relationship “in the nature of marriage”. That created the risk that women and their dependents might find it difficult to leave violent or abusive relationships. In 2018, in-work poverty rates had ranged between 9 and 12 per cent but were currently substantially higher if the main earner was a woman. In the period 2022–2023, 1 in 8 children in New Zealand had lived in poverty, although many of their parents or carers had paid work. Gender and ethnic pay gaps persisted, and women over 65 were among the persons with the highest risk of homelessness. The Government’s decision to develop a voluntary tool for reporting a gender pay gap lacked urgency and wilfully neglected glaring evidence that racism, ableism, migrant exploitation, bullying and sexual harassment in workplaces affected pay, promotion, income security and preparation for a dignified life in retirement, especially for women. For all those reasons, she urged the Committee to recommend that the Government should adjust income support rates to those recommended by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group; individualize income support entitlements; reinstate the Fair Pay Agreement Act; introduce appropriate temporary special measures and pay transparency legislation to ensure the right to work and equal employment opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or sex; amend the Equal Pay Act 1972 to secure equal pay regardless of ethnicity, disability or gender; ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190); and speedily introduce modern slavery legislation.

14. Contrary to the Committee’s recommendations in 2018, the budgets of the Ministry for Women and the Human Rights Commission had been cut and a partner in the government coalition had advocated abolition of the Commission. The environment for advancing women’s rights was currently a precarious one.

Articles 1–6

15. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that the Committee acknowledged the progress made since its consideration of the State party’s previous periodic report, notably the legalization of abortion in 2020 and measures to ensure that women in all communities had access to abortion and counselling. It was, however, concerned at some of the information received from the national human rights institution and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in relation to the Government’s reinterpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi, the disestablishment of the Māori health authority and the discontinuation of State support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It was difficult to reconcile the delegation’s account of the State party’s important work on behalf of Māori women and girls with, for example, NGO reports to the effect that Māori women and girls felt “unhoused, unnoticed and unsafe”. In that context, she wished to draw the delegation’s attention to the Committee’s

general recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, which was relevant to every article of the Convention. She also looked forward to hearing more about the State party's plans to implement the recommendations from the recent Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State and Faith-based Care, which had highlighted the harm inflicted on Māori children and families for generations.

16. Despite the measures taken to address family and sexual violence, including the Family Violence Act and the National Strategy and Action Plan, the rates of violence against women and girls in New Zealand were alarming. She was concerned about reports of reduced funding for initiatives to prevent violence against women and the premature termination of a regulatory review of the safety of online services and platforms.

17. The State party was to be commended on its implementation of many of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on the Christchurch *masjidain* (mosque) on 15 March 2019. She would be very interested to know more about the impact of that incident, particularly on women and girls, and whether there had been any increase in Islamophobia as a result.

18. While welcoming the dissemination of the Convention and the State party's reports through the website of the Ministry for Women, she wondered whether the State party had any plans to make them available in Pacific languages also, to enable all citizens to fully engage with the Committee.

19. Noting the lack of any specific mention of gender in the Human Rights Act, she would like to know whether there were any plans to amend the Act to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

20. The Committee had been concerned to learn of the discontinuation of legal aid funding for the cultural reports previously provided to judges as they prepared their sentencing decisions. Given that social inequities were associated with higher rates of incarceration, she would like to know whether the State party intended to propose a substitute for those reports.

21. She would welcome figures showing the number of gender discrimination cases brought before the courts in the previous five years and the number of times the Convention had been invoked.

22. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Government and the Human Rights Commission interpreted the Human Rights Act as covering discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity or sex characteristics. The Law Commission was currently reviewing whether the Act adequately protected persons who were transgender or non-binary or who had innate variations of sex characteristics. It had recently called for public submissions on a series of questions and options for potential reform and was due to report by the end of June 2025.

23. With regard to the accessibility of the Convention, she wished to draw the Committee's attention to the newly launched New Zealand Human Rights Monitor, a body whose mission was to track the implementation of recommendations from United Nations treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council. The aim was to enhance transparency and accountability, improve inter-agency coordination and promote efficiency in the event of overlap between treaties. The Government would give due consideration to the possibility of providing key documents in various languages.

24. **A representative of New Zealand** said that she took note of the question regarding cultural reports and would provide a reply in writing.

25. The threshold for eligibility for legal aid had recently changed, making 93,000 more people eligible for legal aid. The relevant resource allocation amounted to more than 140 million New Zealand dollars over four years, and the main beneficiaries would be Māori and Pacific women and women with disabilities, who accounted for a high proportion of those eligible.

26. Since 2018, six court judgments had made reference to the Convention. Details would be provided in writing.

27. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, since the Christchurch terrorist attack, the Ministry for Women had developed a strong working relationship with the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand. They worked together on a range of matters, including women's leadership, and had organized joint events specifically for women from that community. The Council had recently run a campaign in which Muslim women had told their stories. It had challenged certain attitudes held by others and had had a significant impact, both domestically and internationally.

28. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Treaty of Waitangi were not mutually exclusive. The Government had reaffirmed its commitment to the common objectives of both texts and the positive outcomes that each sought to obtain for Māori as Indigenous Peoples and citizens.

29. The Government acknowledged that Māori faced inequalities in areas such as health, law and order, employment, education, housing and the environment. Its focus was on delivering outcomes for families with the greatest needs and investing resources, time and energy in reaching targets set in nine key areas. It was taking a social investment approach, working alongside tribal groups and organizations.

30. The Government acknowledged that Māori were deeply affected and unsettled by recent legislative and policy changes. It was therefore encouraging that *iwi* and Māori organizations wished to remain at the table to work with the Government to address the inequities in the system.

31. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that, nearly a quarter of a century after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), it was an appropriate moment to evaluate the progress made with the women and peace and security agenda and envisage new directions. The State party's first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security had run until 2019. She hoped that the second national action plan would focus more on supporting women peacebuilders in the region than on increasing the number of women in the military deployed abroad.

32. Referring to the Committee's draft general recommendation No 40. on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems and to the State party's Gender Action Plan 2021–2025, which had focused on women's leadership in development cooperation, she would welcome more information on the Government's feminist diplomacy in development cooperation and its impact on women and peace and security in the Pacific.

33. The Human Rights Act prohibited discrimination on numerous grounds and took into account intersectional discrimination, but language was not one of the grounds specified. She hoped that that omission could be reviewed.

34. The 2023 budget had applied a gender lens for the first time, requiring agencies to consider the impact of their initiatives on women and girls, particularly Māori women and girls. She would like to know whether the gender analysis carried out in that context included an intersectional analysis, to take account of the fact that women with disabilities and women from religious minorities, for example, were disproportionately affected by gender-based violence of various kinds, whether physical, economic, psychological or structural.

35. She was glad to note that six recent Supreme Court judgments had cited the Convention. She would be interested to know whether members of the Waitangi Tribunal, established under the Treaty of Waitangi Act, had received training in the Convention and whether the Tribunal applied the Convention in reaching its decisions.

36. It would be useful to know how the State party understood its obligations and responsibilities under the Convention with regard to Māori data sovereignty and governance, particularly in relation to new technologies and e-commerce. In 2021, the Waitangi Tribunal had found that the Māori relationship to data was part of the Māori knowledge system, and that the way in which the digital domain was regulated had important implications for the integrity of that knowledge system. She was particularly interested to know whether the Data and Statistics Act of 2022 would recognize the interests of Māori in data collection, production and access, and how Māori women were included or taking the lead in data governance.

37. **Ms. Mikko** said that, whereas gender parity in Parliament had almost been attained for the first time in 2023, in the most recent general election the number of female Members of Parliament had fallen. She would be interested to know what temporary special measures the State party planned to introduce to achieve full gender parity in political representation. In the light of recent budget cuts that had affected key institutions, such as the Ministry for Women and the Human Rights Commission, she would like to know how the State party planned to safeguard women's progress in political participation.

38. The Committee was alarmed at recent defunding and austerity measures that undermined the fight against discrimination and efforts to enhance equity in representation. It was also concerned at the misappropriation of human rights principles in political and public discourse, illustrated most recently by the labelling of ethnic-specific special measures as discriminatory or akin to apartheid. She would like to know whether the State party would consider reintroducing temporary special measures to reduce discrimination against Māori women and girls. She also wondered whether it intended to improve political representation and leadership opportunities for Māori women and other minority groups in local government.

39. Lastly, she would like to know how New Zealand, long a global champion of women's rights, intended to continue its leadership on the international stage, particularly as an advocate for the rights of Indigenous women and other marginalized groups.

40. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, although the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security had expired in 2019, work continued along the lines of that plan. The Government was considering a second national action plan but had taken no decision as yet. New Zealand supported its partners in the Pacific region in implementing the women and peace and security agenda. In 2019 it had co-hosted, with Samoa, the Women, Peace and Security Summit in Apia, Samoa, one outcome of which had been the launch of a Pacific Defence Gender Network to promote the meaningful participation of women in Pacific defence forces through annual seminars and increased collaboration. Members of the network included the New Zealand Defence Force, the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, His Majesty's Armed Forces of Tonga, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, the Vanuatu Mobile Force and the Australian Defence Force.

41. Along with other Pacific Islands Forum leaders, New Zealand had endorsed the 2023 Revitalized Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration which included strong support for the women and peace and security agenda. It also supported cross-government mainstreaming of gender equality in Fiji, which had contributed to the development of that country's first national action plan on women and peace and security.

42. Domestically, initiatives in the New Zealand Defence Force included ensuring that the gender perspective was applied in all operations, in order to improve situational awareness and support better decision-making, resulting in increased operational effectiveness. There was also a gender focal point network in the Defence Force.

43. The New Zealand Police delivered eight overseas development assistance programmes to 11 police services in the Pacific region. They addressed prevention and the strengthening of core policing skills, and included mentoring, advice and training with the aim of bolstering the front-line response to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence.

44. As to official development assistance, the New Zealand Government firmly believed that gender equality and women's empowerment were key to effective and sustainable development. The Gender Action Plan 2021–2025 aimed to ensure that development cooperation supported the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls in the Pacific and beyond. Investment targets under the Plan included 64 per cent for gender equality activities. For 2024–2025, the focus had shifted to activities where gender equality objectives were mainstreamed, reflecting the move towards measures of quality or impact. An annual report was published, detailing the proportion of international development cooperation funding spent on priorities such as gender equality and women's empowerment.

45. **A representative of New Zealand** said, with regard to an intersectional analysis, that there were certain similarities in the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry for Women and

those of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and the Ministry of Disabled People. Each of those agencies was responsible for ensuring that the perspective of the population that it served was taken into account in the development of government policy and legislation. The agencies worked collaboratively on matters of common interest, and each ensured that its reports included references to issues specifically affecting the other population groups. In that connection, the Ministry for Women had developed the Bringing Gender In tool to facilitate the efforts of the three agencies, as well as of its other partners inside and outside the Government, to incorporate a gender perspective into their work.

46. In order to ensure the independence of the judiciary, the Government did not have a say in designing the specific content of the training received by judges or the members of the Waitangi Tribunal. However, judges were trained to operate in a gender-responsive manner. During the first phase of the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry, the Tribunal had received testimony from Māori women about their experiences and those of their ancestors, which were relevant to many of the issues covered in the Convention.

47. The Government had made only sparing use of temporary special measures. A target of 50 per cent had been set for women's participation in public sector boards and committees in 2018, and the New Zealand Defence Force had established its own goals for women's participation in leadership roles. Earlier in the year, Major General Rose King had become the first woman to be named Chief of Army, the most senior officer of the New Zealand Army. In 2018, Sport New Zealand had adopted a policy requiring partner organizations to ensure that a certain proportion of their board members were women. Only one organization had failed to fulfil the requirement and, as a result, Sport New Zealand had withheld a significant amount of its funding. Since women currently held only 31 per cent of director positions at private companies listed on the New Zealand stock exchange, the Government was eager to work with business leaders to increase women's participation in the private sector.

48. The Government was also aware of the ways in which male domination of software development was unintentionally facilitating certain forms of discrimination against women. It therefore intended to take measures to encourage more women and girls to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics with a view to increasing their future participation in the development of new technology.

49. Earlier in the day, the Minister of Defence, Judith Collins, had spoken out against misogynistic comments blaming a female captain for the stranding and sinking of one of the country's naval ships. The incident had served to illustrate that women in high-profile positions remained a target for negative discourse. It was therefore important for the Government to take action to address negative attitudes to gender and to ensure that women continued to ascend to leadership roles.

50. **A representative of New Zealand** said that her country consistently showed leadership on the international stage in advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment. That commitment was reflected in its participation in the development of resolutions on gender-related issues and its focus on universal periodic review recommendations on the protection of women's and girls' rights. New Zealand had regularly led the drafting of Human Rights Council resolutions on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights, insisting that the text should include language on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and that resolutions should be inclusive of all women and girls, including those belonging to Indigenous Peoples. It had advocated for strengthening the language on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Third Committee of the General Assembly and had launched a number of international initiatives to support women's access to justice in conflict and post-conflict settings.

51. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, owing to the fiscal situation in the country, the share of the government budget allocated to the Ministry for Women had been reduced by 7.5 per cent in 2024. The Ministry had been able to absorb those cuts, and she was confident that it would continue to fulfil its mandate and make a difference for women and girls in New Zealand, including by working collaboratively with other government agencies, the private sector, civil society and NGOs.

52. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she would appreciate it if the delegation could confirm whether the Government had applied a gender-responsive approach in the allocation of its budget for the year 2024. She would also be interested to know whether the current Government was pursuing the drafting of a national action plan to guide and connect all government actions for women, a project that had been initiated under the previous administration.

53. **Ms. Rana** said that she would like to know whether any steps were being taken to modify harmful social and cultural patterns of conduct and stereotypes, particularly in light of the results of the Gender Attitudes Survey for 2023, and if so, whether those measures took different cultural and linguistic practices into account. She asked what steps the State party had taken to address growing rates of family and intimate partner violence and to evaluate the impact of that action and ensure its effectiveness. She wondered what was being done to protect women who had left a violent partner, and she would welcome further information on any measures being taken to strengthen the reporting mechanisms available to victims of family and intimate partner violence, including sexual violence. It would be useful to know how the State party planned to strengthen the response of police officers to such incidents, specifically with a focus on trauma-informed care and sensitivity to gender-based violence, and whether it would consider implementing alternative methods such as specialized treatment courts or restorative justice programmes.

54. She wished to know what mechanisms had been put in place to assess the impact of the Aotearoa New Zealand Code of Practice for Online Safety and Harms, and whether the Government planned to introduce regulations governing the transparency and accountability of technology companies. She would also welcome further information on the new law criminalizing stalking, including the estimated time frame for its implementation.

55. It would be interesting to know whether current mechanisms for family violence education included units on economic harm, and whether there were any plans to raise awareness of the signs and impacts of economic harm as a form of family violence.

56. **Ms. Leinarte** said that the Committee would welcome statistical information on prosecutions and convictions in cases relating to all forms of trafficking in persons. She would also like to know what efforts were currently being made to combat modern slavery. The delegation might wish to comment on the reasons behind recent changes to the working conditions guaranteed under the Accredited Employer Work Visa and Recognised Seasonal Employer Limited Visa schemes, which appeared to have weakened the protection of migrant workers against slavery-like practices. It would also be useful to know whether the State party intended to ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). Lastly, the delegation might like to comment on the positive and negative impacts that the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 had made on society.

57. **A representative of New Zealand** said that a gender-responsive approach had not been adopted by the Government in its preparation of the budget for 2024, owing in part to constraints caused by the timing of the general election in 2023. However, government agencies had the opportunity to raise their concerns regarding the potential impact of the budget on particular population groups. The national action plan for women was not a current priority for the Minister for Women.

58. A number of initiatives had been taken to evaluate attitudes to gender and combat negative stereotypes. For example, the Ministry for Women provided funding for the Gender Attitudes Survey, which was conducted on a biennial basis by the National Council of Women of New Zealand. In addition, the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand had carried out a campaign entitled "Challenge Islamophobic Language and Loathing". The hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023 had marked a turning point in the level of visibility enjoyed by female athletes in the media. According to Sport New Zealand, coverage of women's sport had accounted for over 45 per cent of all sports news coverage during the tournament period. Furthermore, reporting increasingly focused on the athletes' training, preparation and results, and there were fewer and fewer sexualized images of sportswomen in the media. Indeed, the Broadcasting Standards Authority had recently issued new guidance for broadcasters in relation to the television and radio coverage of gender identity issues,

reinforcing the right of women to be free from discrimination in respect of how they were represented in the media.

59. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, thanks to the collection of disaggregated data, her country was more capable than ever before of determining the prevalence of sexual and family violence and understanding how those issues affected women and girls in different communities. Unfortunately, there had been an increase in rates of family violence and sexual assault over the previous two years, and the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey had revealed that the authorities faced a considerable challenge in bringing perpetrators to justice, not least because many incidents were never reported to the police.

60. Tackling family violence and sexual assault was a central component of the wider goal of reducing serious offending and violent crime, which had been adopted as one of nine major public service and government targets. The Government had started to publish quarterly statistics on victimization rates and had set a target for reducing the number of women victims of crimes over the following six years. Government and non-government bodies were working together to develop community-led solutions in order to support not just women and girls who experienced violence but also those who were responsible for the violence. The disaggregated data generated by the Crime and Victims Survey enabled the authorities to formulate adapted solutions for specific population groups, based on characteristics such as their geographic location, gender and ethnicity.

61. The current Government had pledged to pursue the National Strategy and Action Plan to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, and implementation was being overseen by the Interdepartmental Executive Board. Although cuts had been made elsewhere in the budget for 2024, the funding of the Interdepartmental Executive Board had not been reduced. It was working closely with the Social Investment Agency to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken to implement the National Strategy and Action Plan, and the funding it received in future budget cycles would partly depend on the results of those impact assessments. To facilitate the evaluation process, the Interdepartmental Executive Board had developed an outcome measurement framework based on various indicators and divided into different areas. The first report analysing the progress made under the framework would be published before the end of the year.

62. *Te Pūkōtahitanga*, the Māori Advisory Group, which had been created in 2022, advised the Ministry for Women on the issues of gender-based violence, family violence and sexual violence in the Māori community. The vast majority of the board members of the Advisory Group were women. It was currently in the process of testing a pilot framework on the health and social impacts of violence for Māori persons.

63. In spite of the efforts made by the police to improve its officers' handling of family violence, many such incidents continued to go unreported. The Backbone Collective had recently published a report containing testimony from survivors on their experiences of how the police had dealt with their cases. The police had expressed its willingness to use the report's findings to improve its procedures. In addition, New Zealand Police and the Department of Corrections were among the public institutions that had adopted a series of family violence workforce capability frameworks. Such frameworks defined the different competencies required by staff of all levels of seniority to address situations of family violence. The Interdepartmental Executive Board had received funding to recruit educators to support the implementation of the frameworks in the training of public sector employees. It was also working with NGOs to develop a new series of sexual violence workforce capability frameworks, which were scheduled to be delivered in 2025.

64. Following the adoption of the Family Violence Act 2018 and of the Sexual Violence Legislation Act 2021, the Ministry of Justice had been providing capacity-building support to justice officials and other stakeholders involved in the care of victims of such violence. Over the previous year, relevant training had been given to over 400 individuals.

65. Information on mechanisms to assess the impact of the Code of Practice for Online Safety and Harms would be submitted to the Committee in writing. The bill to criminalize stalking was under consideration, with an outcome expected by the end of 2024. The Government recognized the need to collect more data on, and raise awareness of, the pervasive issue of economic harm, which affected all sectors of society. Several institutions

and NGOs such as Good Shepherd and Women's Refuge were already exploring avenues for cooperation in that regard.

66. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, for some time, the approach of New Zealand had been not to ratify an international instrument unless domestic laws and practices were fully aligned with its requirements or the instrument itself allowed specific exemptions or reservations. The process of checking the consistency of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) with the domestic legal and policy framework was under way.

67. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, since 2015, there had been four prosecutions of trafficking in persons. Over the previous 12 months, there had been around 200 reported cases, of which 17 had been verified. There had been no new prosecutions or convictions during the review period. Under the Plan of Action against Forced Labour, People Trafficking and Slavery, which covered the period up to 2025, a broad package of initiatives had been introduced to reduce migrant exploitation, including the migrant exploitation protection work visa, improved reporting tools and the Worker Protection (Migrant and Other Employees) Act 2023, which provided for the disqualification of company directors convicted of exploitation or human trafficking. Training had been provided to 400 front-line officials, a trafficking in persons investigations pilot programme had been launched and, in May 2024, the first Government-run forum dedicated to trafficking in persons had been held in Auckland, bringing together a range of stakeholders to discuss opportunities and areas for improvement, including in respect of data collection, legislation and cooperation.

68. The Recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme remained open to applications. The Scheme, which was monitored to prevent exploitation or modern slavery, enabled employers in the horticulture and viticulture sectors to recruit workers from Pacific countries for seasonal work. Workers under the Scheme enjoyed the same employment rights as all other employees in the country. Accredited employers had to ensure good working terms and conditions, cover half of each worker's airfare costs, charge no recruitment fees, either directly or through an agent, and provide pastoral care. A policy review of the Scheme had been undertaken in 2023, the recommendations from which were currently being considered.

69. The Prostitution Reform Act 2003 had decriminalized the provision of commercial sexual services and aimed to safeguard sex workers' rights and protect vulnerable people from being trafficked or exploited for sex work. In accordance with section 19 of the Act, only citizens or certain residence-class visa holders could provide commercial sexual services in New Zealand, the idea being to remove incentives for vulnerable individuals to enter the country for sex work. Nevertheless, the Government acknowledged the Committee's recommendation to consider amending the section, and the petition by activist Pandora Black to have it repealed. While there was currently no work under way in that regard, a future review of the section was possible, though it would need to be balanced against other government priorities. In 2019, as part of wider efforts to combat exploitation, Immigration New Zealand had gathered information on challenges in the sex industry and had informed employers and workers about their rights and legal obligations.

70. **Ms. Hacker** said that she would appreciate information on the causes of the recent rise in gender-based violence in the State party; on the impact of the Minors (Court Consent to Relationships) Legislation Act 2018 and the Family Violence Act 2018; on the number of cases in which Family Court judges had permitted child marriage; and on efforts made to uncover child or forced marriages.

71. **Ms. Rana** said that it would be interesting to hear about the work carried out with perpetrators of violence and the impact of the good practice guidelines produced by the Intersex Clinical Reference Group. Annual statistics on complaints filed by intersex persons would also be welcome.

72. **A representative of New Zealand** said that no in-depth research had yet been carried out into the recent rise in gender-based violence. However, possible contributing factors included the cost-of-living crisis, inequitable access to mental health services and high rates of revictimization and recidivism, which pointed to a need for greater multi-agency cooperation. The situation was complex and part of a broader picture of increasing prevalence of certain crimes, including youth offending.

73. Information on the impact of the Minors (Court Consent to Relationships) Legislation Act 2018 and the Family Violence Act 2018 would be submitted in writing. The Crimes Act 1961 criminalized conduct that caused harm to people, including coerced marriage or civil union. Steps taken by New Zealand Police to combat harmful practices were detailed in paragraphs 113 and 114 of the periodic report.

74. Services for perpetrators were funded by three agencies and included court-mandated programmes offering up to 52 hours of support. The purpose of the services was to promote an acknowledgement of the harm caused and a sense of accountability. Consideration was being given to changing the manner in which the services were delivered, in order to further discourage reoffending. The Ministry of Social Development had adopted a “no wrong door” approach that focused on driving positive behaviour change in a group setting. A particularly noteworthy initiative was the She Is Not Your Rehab movement, which sought to generate new pathways for men to address their trauma and become role models. The Interdepartmental Executive Board had recently agreed a two-year partnership with *Te Kupenga*, the National Network of Family Violence Services, with which it would work to understand barriers and find solutions.

75. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Interdepartmental Executive Board brought together government officials and the leaders of partner agencies to deliver an integrated and innovative approach to tackling family and sexual violence that drew on the expertise of all participants. Through the Whānau-Centred Facilitation Initiative, the Ministry of Māori Development and experienced NGO providers cooperated to develop family-focused support services based on a Māori world-view.

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76. **Ms. Mikko**, noting that, according to data from 2022, women remained underrepresented in leadership positions in the private sector, including in companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange, said that she would be glad to receive information on the measures taken by the Government to tackle online violence against women politicians and on the support provided to incentivize women’s participation in the political arena, such as free day-care services. She wished to know whether the State party intended to introduce legislated gender quotas for all political parties, and what programmes were in place to encourage women to enter the foreign service or apply for international civil servant positions. She would be grateful for up-to-date statistics on women’s representation in the foreign service, including the number of ambassadors, in the judiciary and in minister-appointed public sector boards and committees.

77. **Ms. Reddock** said that, since 2006, individuals born in New Zealand had been entitled to nationality only if, at the time of their birth, at least one of their parents had been a citizen or permanent resident of New Zealand, Australia, the Cook Islands, Niue or Tokelau. She would be interested to know whether there were plans to remove that requirement, bearing in mind the many hardships faced by stateless women and girls born in New Zealand, including in access to education, employment, health and legal documentation. In the same vein, she would appreciate an update on the status of the bill to repeal the Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982 and on efforts to establish a mechanism, in consultation with Samoan communities, to provide redress for the intergenerational and other harm caused by the Act’s implementation. Lastly, she wished to know whether the State party would consider ratifying the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and establishing statelessness determination procedures, in order to avoid the delays caused by the lack of statutory time frames for the granting of citizenship in special cases under section 9 (1) of the Citizenship Act 1977.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.