



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

Distr.: General  
31 October 2024

Original: English

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-ninth session

### Summary record of the 2105th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 17 October 2024, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Peláez Narváez

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(*continued*)

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

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

*Ninth periodic report of Japan (continued)* ([CEDAW/C/JPN/QPR/9](#); [CEDAW/C/JPN/9](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Japan joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation of Japan to continue replying to Committee members' questions.

*Articles 7–9*

3. **A representative of Japan**, responding to questions under articles 7 and 8, said that, in September 2024, the Government had formulated guidelines to address issues stemming from the ageing of the country's population. The aim was to establish an economy and a society where people could work regardless of their age and where due consideration was given both to givers and receivers of care.

4. **A representative of Japan** said that the Reconstruction Agency was leading efforts to recover from the great east-Japan earthquake. Information on the situation of women in the affected areas had been provided to municipalities and other stakeholders to guide actions on urban development and healthcare.

5. **A representative of Japan** said that the Development Cooperation Charter had been revised in 2023 to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through gender mainstreaming at every stage of development cooperation. The Government was committed to promoting gender equality as one of its major foreign policy issues. During its presidency of the Group of Seven (G7) in 2023, Japan had stressed the importance of integrating policies to promote gender mainstreaming in all issues and had held a wide range of discussions on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at G7 ministerial meetings. In the G7 Leaders' Communiqué, gender had for instance been mentioned in the context of development, food security, labour issues, education, digital matters, human rights, terrorism and regional affairs.

6. The Government strongly promoted women and peace and security by encouraging women to take up leadership positions in conflict prevention and in humanitarian and reconstruction efforts, while also taking action to protect vulnerable people, including women, in situations of conflict. As part of its role as co-chair of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network in 2025, Japan hoped to lead international discussions on the expansion of women's role in peace negotiations, the application of the women and peace and security concept to areas such as disaster management and the establishment of concrete measures to further ensure women's participation.

7. **A representative of Japan** said that, in accordance with the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality, numerical targets had been set at universities to encourage more women to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects). In 2023, the proportion of female students in the STEM subjects had risen to 18.1 per cent. Universities were provided with resources to support women studying STEM subjects; scholarships and reduced tuition had been made available to male and female students since 2021, and the support system had recently been expanded to provide assistance to households with multiple children or mid-level incomes. A selection method was being promoted to ensure diversity in student bodies. A committee had been established to identify good practices in the university admissions process, and its findings had been published.

8. The measures introduced to increase the number of women employed in university faculties included the awarding of subsidies and grants. Universities had been instructed to hold awareness-raising events on gender equality to encourage the hiring of women in senior positions, in addition to providing training for faculty members. The number of female faculty members had steadily increased, although many female lecturers were unable to work full-time or had been unable to develop sufficient research track records to be employed on a full-time basis. Under the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality, the Ministry of Education,

Culture, Sports, Science and Technology had been taking steps to build the capacities of female researchers and to help them to return to work after childbirth and balance their work with childcare.

9. In 2018, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology had conducted a fact-finding survey of all universities with medical courses. It had found that there had been cases of potential misconduct at 10 universities, 3 of which involved gender-related mistreatment. A 2019 follow-up survey, including a site survey, had confirmed that the admissions process had improved; an expert panel had been established within the Ministry on the basis of the survey results and a report had been issued. Under the revised university admissions guidelines, differentiated treatment of women and men was considered inappropriate and was prohibited under most circumstances.

10. Japanese textbooks were produced by private sector publishers, in line with the national teaching guidelines issued by the central Government. All creative decisions, including on gender-related issues, were left to the publisher, but textbooks were written and edited with the National Curriculum Standards as a framework. At all levels of schooling, the curriculum promoted mutual respect and cooperation between boys and girls in a gender-equal society. In order to verify the historical accuracy of the content of textbooks, publishers were legally required to submit drafts to academics and other experts for review. A publication schedule was in place for textbooks that were approved following review. For example, textbooks authorized in 2023 had been published in 2024.

11. Under domestic legislation, teachers did not receive specific payments for overtime, but instead received an adjusted salary payment, in line with the system in place for the assessment of working hours. The Government was making efforts to optimize the work and responsibilities of schools and teachers and to highlight the qualitative targets set by boards of education. It was hoped that teachers' working hours could be reduced by increasing the number of teachers in the workforce and allocating additional support resources.

12. At the ministerial and legislative levels, it was considered essential to ensure respect for human rights in teaching and education, and the subject was covered in the relevant guidance. Teacher training addressed how to respond to children's psychological trauma and meet the needs of students of diverse backgrounds. If teachers lacked the necessary expertise to deal with children's trauma, experts, such as school counsellors, were posted to help the teachers respond.

13. A standard number of hours of teaching was allocated for each school subject, including sex education, which was taught for three hours, in accordance with the comprehensive policy on school education.

14. **A representative of Japan** said that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, boards of education and society as a whole agreed that bullying must never be tolerated. The Ministry took steps to ensure that children did not become perpetrators, victims or bystanders of bullying, including children with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identities. In October 2023, the Ministry had put together an emergency anti-truancy and bullying package for the early detection of bullying. Under the package, school counsellors and social workers were assigned to combat bullying, and severe bullying incidents were reported to the central Government, with support teams dispatched to schools if necessary. The package could be used to analyse situations on the ground in order to revise the relevant guidelines to prevent bullying. The Ministry was working with local governments to improve implementation of the package and with the Children and Families Agency to strengthen anti-bullying measures.

15. **A representative of Japan** said that, regarding artificial intelligence in the context of violence against women, deep-fake pornography was addressed under the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality and a stringent policy had been adopted to respond to related illegal activity.

16. **A representative of Japan** said that under the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, it was prohibited to recruit candidates on the basis of their weight, height or physical strength, and such recruitment was considered indirect discrimination.

17. The number of persons with disabilities in employment had increased following the establishment of a quota for the proportion of persons with disabilities within an entity's workforce. Through the government employment service centre, the personal attributes of potential employees were taken into account to match them with a job. Subsidies were provided to businesses that hired persons with disabilities.

18. While there were no measures specifically supporting the employment of Indigenous women, businesses were encouraged to be inclusive and hire on the basis of talent. During recruitment processes, employers were advised not to ask potential employees about their background or beliefs, as such questioning could lead to discrimination.

19. One of the causes of the gender-based wage gap was unconscious bias in the workplace. In order to raise awareness, the Government conducted seminars for men in managerial positions, among other employees. In 2019, a project had been implemented to promote diversity in the workplace and improve understanding of sexual identity and gender orientation. In that context, a survey had been carried out and its results had been published in publicly-available leaflets to raise awareness among businesses.

20. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare encouraged businesses to actively engage with women and provided certification and incentives for women presenting feasible business plans. In public procurement, priority was given to companies certified as actively engaging with women. In 2024, such companies also received preferential tax incentives.

21. **A representative of Japan** said that, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Government had extended assistance for women's employment. The Liaison Conference for Promotion of Gender Equality had developed a basic plan aimed at providing women with assistance in finding jobs in the digital sector. The Government aimed to ensure that flexible working arrangements could be put in place in the digital sector to accommodate women unable to work full-time. Such measures were being promoted among companies and organizations in order to expand them nationwide through partnerships between the public and private sectors.

22. **A representative of Japan** said that the number of people prosecuted for insulting others online had risen from 42 in 2021 to 73 in 2023. The number of defamation cases had increased from 244 in 2021 to 278 in 2023.

23. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she wondered whether the Government would amend the Equal Employment Opportunity Act and other legislation to cover additional forms of indirect discrimination. She commended the inclusion of the concept of "power harassment" in the law on sexual harassment. Harassment was about power and control. Equal gender representation at work thus remained the best means of combating sexual harassment.

24. The Committee was concerned about structural discrimination in the workplace. The extension of the reporting requirements on the gender pay gap to smaller companies was a positive step. She encouraged the Government, in its training on ways to counter unconscious bias, to include real-life stories of female computer engineers and video-game developers as examples of women working in technological fields.

#### *Articles 10–14*

25. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she wished to know when the Government would close single sex schools, which perpetuated differences between the sexes and stereotypical gender roles. She wondered what was being done to ensure non-discrimination in relation to admissions, facilities, personnel and outcomes in the education system. It was still not clear what measures were being taken to ensure that women sitting examinations for admission to medical schools were treated fairly. She would welcome information on any measures taken to raise literacy rates among learners with disabilities and learners belonging to ethnic minority communities. It would be interesting to know what the Government would do to ensure that disapproving comments made about sexuality education by senior officials did not restrict the teaching of such education.

26. **A representative of Japan** said that the Government would consider the possibility of amending the definition of indirect discrimination to include a broader range of grounds for discrimination, taking into account the social consensus. The Government organized

seminars for senior managers and business owners as part of its efforts to tackle unconscious gender bias.

27. **A representative of Japan** said that most single sex schools were at the secondary level. The board of education in each prefecture was responsible for determining which students could be admitted to a school. No plans were currently in place to eliminate single sex education. It was important to ensure gender equality in education, but it was not necessary to eliminate single sex schools in order to achieve that goal. The question of whether a school was co-educational or single sex depended on its characteristics and history, among other factors.

28. Appropriate action was taken to deepen students' understanding of matters relating to sex and puberty, depending on their stage of development. Sex education covered areas such as fertilization, pregnancy, childbirth, family planning and the physical and psychological effects of abortion, as well as the importance of respecting the opposite sex and making appropriate decisions in relation to sexual matters. Classroom teaching was complemented with approaches taking into account the specificities of individuals.

29. **A representative of Japan** said that the Osaka Kansai Expo would be held in 2025 to showcase the initiatives taken by Japan, including the situation of women's empowerment in the country. The Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry would collaborate with selected participants and the event would feature a women's pavilion.

30. **Ms. Stott Despoja**, noting that emergency contraception was difficult to obtain in Japan, said that she wished to know whether the Government would make such contraception available to girls under 18 years of age who were not accompanied by a parent or guardian. She wondered whether the Government would consider eliminating the requirement for a woman to obtain her husband's or partner's consent in order to have an abortion. Given that surgical abortions and abortion pills were expensive and were not covered by national health insurance, she would be interested to know whether any steps would be taken to increase access to abortifacients and whether any plans were in place to change the law so that women could take abortion pills in their homes without fear of legal consequences. Would the Government ensure that age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education was taught in schools as part of the national curriculum, and not just for three hours?

31. Under the Eugenic Protection Act, 25,000 persons with disabilities had undergone forced sterilization between 1948 and 1996, while article 3 of the Gender Identity Disorder Act of 2003 established that transgender individuals who wished to change their identity marker must undergo sterilization. The Supreme Court had declared the Gender Identity Disorder Act to be unconstitutional. In view of that situation, it would be interesting to know what reproductive rights had been established for women with disabilities in Japan and whether victims of sterilization carried out under the Gender Identity Disorder Act would have access to compensation similar to that allocated to women with disabilities sterilized under the provisions of the Eugenic Protection Act. She asked whether it had been determined that water utility companies should introduce stricter controls on perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking water in order to protect pregnant women against the harmful effects of such substances.

32. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would welcome information on any steps taken to expand women's access to business opportunities, loans, financing, credit guarantees and high-value supply chain and public procurement contracts. She wondered whether legal and policy measures prevented bias and stereotypes from curtailing women's economic opportunities and whether private companies were required to comply with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, exercise due diligence and provide effective remedies to persons whose rights had been violated.

33. She wished to know whether women entrepreneurs, including owners of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, had the opportunity to participate in the artificial intelligence, robotics and metaverse sectors. It would be interesting to learn whether the gender skills gap in information and communications technology, e-commerce, energy, infrastructure and manufacturing could be narrowed and whether financial literacy programmes were appropriate, accessible and effective for women in rural areas and women on low incomes.

How did the Government incorporate the gender perspective in its efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and the new Global Digital Compact?

34. The Committee would be grateful to hear what percentage of the social security budget was allocated to indigent, vulnerable and marginalized women. It would welcome gender-disaggregated data on the allocation of social security benefits, pensions and healthcare benefits to older women, women in non-traditional or part-time employment, widows, women with disabilities, female foreign students and women workers in rural areas.

35. She wondered whether measures had been taken to ensure women's access to employment and social benefits, to establish a minimum guaranteed pension for all persons, to address gender-based discrimination in the pension system and to provide family benefits to women whose children were classified as illegitimate. It would be useful to have information on any steps taken to increase the number of women leaders of sports and cultural organizations and to enhance women's participation in recreational and cultural activities. Did the Government plan to increase the funding allocated to women's sports and cultural programmes?

36. **A representative of Japan** said that the emergency abortion pill had been made available on a pilot basis in 2023. Information would be gathered to determine whether, and on what terms, the pill should be made more widely available.

37. **A representative of Japan** said that any woman who wished to have an abortion was required to obtain her partner's consent unless his identity was unknown, he had died or he had subjected the woman to domestic violence.

38. **A representative of Japan** said that guidance issued by the World Health Organization on abortion had been shared with relevant organizations, following which the oral abortion pill had been made available. In 2023, a project to conduct research into the use of the abortion pill had been initiated and the pill had been approved for use in hospitals and clinics. In September 2024, a meeting had been held to discuss the results of the research. Consideration would be given to the conditions governing its use.

39. **A representative of Japan** said that values relating to sex education differed from country to country. In Japan, sex education was subject to the national teaching guidelines and the content that was taught depended on children's stage of development. Students enrolled in special education schools were taught in accordance with the curricula for such schools. Students with disabilities other than intellectual disabilities followed the same curricula as students in mainstream schools at all levels of the school system. Children with intellectual disabilities were taught about their physical and mental development and their sexual characteristics.

40. **A representative of Japan** said that efforts were made to increase women's incomes and to promote their financial independence. The Government had developed a plan to help women acquire digital skills, with a view to enhancing their access to jobs in the digital economy. Grants were issued to local regions to promote women's participation in the labour market. Funding was also allocated to women entrepreneurs.

41. **A representative of Japan** said that all the Government's targets took gender equality and capacity-building for women and girls into account. In May 2024, the eighteenth round-table meeting to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals had been held. About half the members of the round table had been women.

42. In September 2024, at the Summit of the Future, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida had delivered a speech addressing his Government's intention to lead the world in areas such as the promotion of universal health coverage, quality education and the empowerment of women, girls and young people, among others. He had also announced the launch of a next-generation capacity-building programme and had called for the strengthening of multilateralism.

43. **A representative of Japan** said that women accounted for only about 20 per cent of information technology engineers. Efforts were being made to enhance the digital skills of girls and women at all levels of the education system. The priority policy formulated in 2024

to promote gender equality and women's empowerment addressed education in computer programming skills.

44. The Japan Finance Corporation allocated loans to promote entrepreneurship among women, young people and older persons. The Small and Medium Enterprise Agency gathered statistics on women's start-ups. The municipalities, with the support of the Cabinet Office, organized a number of initiatives to foster entrepreneurship among women. In 2023, the Government had hosted a seminar on capacity-building for women entrepreneurs. A total of 19 public agencies engaged in initiatives to promote women entrepreneurs with funding provided by the Cabinet Office.

45. Following the establishment in 2020 of an action plan on business and human rights, the Government had in 2022 published cross-sectoral guidelines on respect for human rights. Seminars and dialogues with stakeholders were held with a view to raising awareness of issues surrounding business and human rights.

46. **A representative of Japan** said that the regulations established under the Eugenic Protection Act and the Gender Identity Disorder Act were completely different. For that reason, measures taken under the former Act had no relation to the latter Act or to the fact that the Supreme Court had declared the latter Act to be unconstitutional. The Ministry of Justice, other government bodies and the legislature would continue to consider the various issues raised by questions of gender identity.

47. **A representative of Japan** said that, from the end of 2022, the average pensions provided by the National Pension Fund had been 58,700 yen for men and 54,426 yen for women. Although the average for women's pensions was lower, the system did not provide for any difference in men's and women's pensions. The size of the pension that a person received depended on the contributions that he or she had paid into the system. In order to increase women's access to pensions, the payment period for pension contributions would be reduced from 25 to 10 years, and short-term and part-time workers would be granted entitlement to pensions on a broader basis. Older women on low incomes would also be provided with financial support.

48. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she would be interested to know the specific timeline for trialling the sale of the emergency contraceptive pill in pharmacies. She wondered whether the Government might consider amending the Gender Identity Disorder Act of 2003 to eliminate the requirement for individuals wishing to change their gender identity to be sterilized. She would like the delegation to comment on reports that divorce or spousal death were the only exemptions to the obligation for spousal consent for pregnant women to obtain an abortion. If that was the case, she found it astonishing that such a modern country as Japan would have such provision. She would urge the Government to take account of the Committee's previous recommendations on the subject, as expressed in its prior concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8](#)). The Committee had received information indicating that women could undergo voluntary sterilization only if they already had children and their partner gave consent. The delegation was invited to clarify whether that information was correct.

49. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would like to know whether the Government had gender-responsive procurement policies. The Committee would like to find out what proportion of credit loans from the Japan Finance Corporation were awarded to women, and in what average amounts. While she welcomed the Government's efforts to protect women's rights and entitlements in the pension system, she wondered how it intended to tackle the prevalence of poverty among women. Had it considered adopting the social protection floor approach advocated by the international Labour Organization (ILO) to provide coverage for all vulnerable groups?

50. **A representative of Japan** said that a specific timeline for the introduction of the emergency contraceptive pill trial could not currently be provided. However, in recognition of the high demand witnessed during the trial, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare was endeavouring to give the matter its swift consideration.

51. **A representative of Japan** said that, under the Maternal Protection Act, there were a number of exceptions to the requirement for women seeking voluntary sterilization to obtain spousal consent, including when the woman was a victim of domestic violence.

52. **A representative of Japan** said that it was true that the poverty rate was higher among older women than among older men. Support was provided to economically vulnerable older women in the form of pension benefits. Other measures included the provision of supplementary benefits for low-income households and premium reductions for persons with low incomes.

53. **A representative of Japan** said that various measures were being taken to promote opportunities for women in sport, taking into account gender, age and other characteristics. Support was provided to female athletes and efforts were made to enhance governance and ensure integrity in the sports industry. The Government's second five-year plan on the promotion of culture and the arts had been adopted in 2023.

54. **Ms. Rana** said that she wished to know what specific policies and programmes the Government was implementing to realize the goals set out in the Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas and the Family Management Agreement, including to create more accessible work environments for women, reduce the care burden, challenge stereotypes regarding traditional gender roles and facilitate rural women's land ownership, and how it was assessing the progress made. She wondered what measures were taken to ensure that rural women had access to adequate social benefits, such as maternity and sickness benefits, and eliminate the geographical and other barriers that prevented rural women from gaining access to public assistance.

55. With reference to the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees, she would like to know what mechanisms were in place to monitor the working conditions of migrant women, including domestic workers, and what steps were taken to protect those women from discriminatory practices, such as the threat of repatriation in case of pregnancy.

56. The Committee would be interested to learn whether the Government had any plans to explicitly prohibit intersectional discrimination against women and what mechanisms had been set up to protect women with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, from discrimination in accessing reproductive health services and to hold medical institutions to account for denial of care.

57. She would welcome information on the specific actions taken to increase the participation of women in decision-making on climate change mitigation and disaster management and on the mechanisms in place to ensure that investments by Japanese companies in extractive industries abroad did not contravene the State's extraterritorial obligations or violate women's rights. She was concerned about the extraterritorial impacts of the Government's decision to discharge nuclear-contaminated material into the ocean. How was it monitoring the effects of any potential nuclear contamination and ensuring compliance with international standards, in particular to safeguard the rights of Pacific Islander women?

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

58. **Ms. González Ferrer**, noting that married couples were legally required to have the same last name and that, in 95 per cent of cases, wives adopted their husband's last name, with attendant negative impacts on their identity and professional life, said that she wished to know what progress had been made by the Government to evaluate the issue from a gender perspective, in accordance with its Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality. In the light of increasing public support for changing the name system, it would be of interest to the Committee to hear whether the Government would consider amending the law to allow husbands and wives to keep their last names when marrying. She wondered what the Government was doing to address the impact of persistent discriminatory practices against girls and boys born out of wedlock; what steps were taken to protect the rights of married women, particularly when it came to the economic inequalities they faced and their impact on divorce proceedings and the division of property; what training and awareness-raising had been carried out to ensure gender-responsive justice was dispensed by the courts; and whether



a programme had been established to provide affordable and adequate legal advice to women seeking a divorce. She noted that there were plans to introduce in 2026 a new system of joint parental authority and mandatory visitation rights in the event of divorce and said that she would like to know what measures were envisaged to protect women and children who were victims of domestic violence under the new system. The Committee would like to find out whether specialized training was provided to judges and other legal professionals on family violence dynamics and to hear about their impact on custody decisions. The delegation might also indicate whether the Government had plans to increase the budgets and resources of the courts for that purpose.

59. She would be curious to know whether there were any specific policies to support single mothers and eliminate sexist stereotypes about them; whether the Government intended to legally recognize same-sex marriages and de facto unions and allow the adoption of children by same-sex couples; and whether it might give consideration to amending the Imperial Household Act to ensure equality between female and male heirs in the royal succession, in accordance with the Convention.

60. **A representative of Japan** said that candidates standing for election in Japan were required to pay a deposit, the purpose of which was to deter those who sought only fame. An excess of such candidates would make the cost of subsidies to political parties prohibitively high.

61. Certain roles in the civil service, such as positions of public authority, could be held only by Japanese nationals. Depending on the specific responsibilities of the job, some posts could be held by foreign nationals.

62. **A representative of Japan** said that the rules concerning technical intern trainees outlined the steps to be taken in case of non-compliance, which included the conduct of joint inspections of workplaces. On the basis of suspected violations of the rules, a number of joint inspections had thus been carried out in 2022. Forced labour, non-fulfilment of contract conditions and physical abuse were illegal, and complaints of such offences also triggered on-site inspections.

63. **A representative of Japan** said that 50 per cent of the members of a subcommittee that had been set up under the Central Environment Council to deliberate on important environmental conservation matters were women. The Ministry of the Environment was actively promoting women's participation in such matters, including to achieve the goals set out in the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality.

64. **A representative of Japan** said that the discharge of water into the sea referred to by Ms. Rana was not nuclear contaminated and that it had been sufficiently purified, treated and diluted to prevent any impact on people or the environment. The decision to discharge the water in a planned and safe manner had been taken on the basis of six years of evaluation and monitoring by experts. A rigorous review by the International Atomic Energy Agency had concluded that the radiation impact of the discharged water was negligible. The Government of Japan had shared information on the matter with the international community in a highly transparent manner, putting forth scientific evidence, and would continue to do so.

65. **A representative of Japan** said that a public survey conducted in 2021 had revealed mixed views on the issue of married couples' last names. Respondents had indicated that a change in the system would require broader understanding by society. For that reason, the Government had published information on its website to deepen public and political debate on the question.

66. In the Civil Code, it was stipulated that the best interests of the child were paramount when it came to visitation and other forms of contact between parents and children. The system had been reviewed to ensure safety. It was untrue that the amendments to the Code would result in increased parental visitation rights that would be detrimental to the interests of the child. Concerning the division of property in divorce proceedings, the revised Code provided for greater fairness, such as by increasing from two to five years the period in which a party could make a claim. The aim of the amendments was to address imbalances and ensure a fairer distribution of property among separating parties.

67. **A representative of Japan** said that systems such as the Imperial House of Japan and the royal families of other countries were based on the respective history and traditions of the nations in question, supported by their people. In Japan, the succession to the throne, as stipulated in the Imperial House Law, was a matter related to the foundation of the State. In the light of the purpose of the Convention, which concerned the elimination of discrimination against women, it was not appropriate for the Committee to raise the issue.

68. **A representative of Japan** said that, regarding the unfair treatment of applicants taking the entrance examination for medical school, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology had instructed the universities concerned to take appropriate measures with regard to the individual students who had been affected.

69. **The Chair** said that she wished to point out that the Committee's mandate concerned equality between women and men and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, which included issues such as discriminatory royal succession laws. The Committee had raised similar issues with other States parties too. Any and all gender-discriminatory laws were of direct relevance to the Committee and its remit under the Convention.

70. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that, in the light of the declining rate of marriage and a recent policy, which had thankfully since been terminated, that aimed to encourage women to marry and ease congestion in Tokyo by offering them financial incentives to move away, she wondered to what extent women were involved in policymaking and decision-making on issues that affected them.

71. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that, like the Chair, she wished to emphasize the Committee's mandate to raise questions and make comments on any aspects related to the issue of women's equal rights and opportunities. She wondered whether the Government might further reflect on certain traditional practices, including the legal requirement for married couples to have the same last name, which had negative impacts on various aspects of women's lives.

72. **A representative of Japan** said that, while negative impacts on health as a result of drinking water containing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances had not been confirmed, the Government would continue to assess the situation and consider stricter criteria for water utility companies, as necessary, to ensure the health and safety of the population.

73. **A representative of Japan** said that various training courses were provided to judges by the Legal Research and Training Institute. For example, lectures were given by psychological experts on topics such as domestic violence. The family courts were considering a number of training initiatives, and the Government was engaged in relevant awareness-raising.

74. **A representative of Japan** said that to prevent women being inconvenienced by the requirements concerning their married name, their maiden names were allowed for use on official documents such as passports and land titles.

75. She wished to thank the Committee for what had been a fruitful and constructive exchange. Every effort had been made to answer questions effectively, including with regard to challenging issues.

*The meeting rose at 5 p.m.*