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# **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

**Twenty-ninth session** 

## Summary record of the 618th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 8 July 2003, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Açar

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

Fourth and fifth periodic reports of Japan

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued) (CEDAW/C/JPN/4, CEDAW/C/JPN/5, CEDAW/PSWG/2003/II/CRP.1/Add.3 and CEDAW/PSWG/2003/II/CRP.2/Add.2)

Fourth and fifth periodic reports of Japan

- 1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Japan took places at the Committee table.
- Ms. Bando (Japan), continuing to reply to the Committee members' questions, said that the current Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims applied to physical violence only. Other forms of violence, such as sexual psychological violence, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), were dealt with in protection orders. A proposal to regard threats as a form of violence was still being deliberated. Trafficking of women was punishable under the Employment Security Law and Anti-Prostitution Law; prior to the adoption of that legislation, it had been punishable under the Penal Code, Child Abuse Prevention Law and Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act.
- Mr. Onizuka (Japan), representing the National Police Agency, said that, in 2002, there had been 2,091 cases of prostitution and 1,366 arrests. The Japanese Diet had recently adopted legislation banning prostitution over the Internet. There had been 16 cases in 2002 of foreign women engaging in prostitution, leading to 28 arrests and involving 55 victims. Although there was no specific law relating to trafficking, it was regarded as a very serious problem and was punishable under a number of laws, including the Penal Code, the Anti-Prostitution Law, the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and legislation regulating the adult entertainment business, which was strictly applied. The latter stipulated prison terms of up to 10 years and required adult entertainment business owners to confiscate false passports from foreign women in order to facilitate the work of law enforcement officers. Japan cooperated with other Asian countries, including Thailand, to control dispatch-style prostitution services and provided substantial resources to finance such measures under the Manila budgetary process. The procedures for ratifying the United Nations Convention

- against Transnational Organized Crime had been completed in the Japanese Diet; the next step would be ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.
- 4. Every effort was made to assign female police officers to carry out investigations and provide medical services and counselling to victims. Where crimes involved financial exploitation, employers were urged to compensate victims. Penalties against persons attempting to enter Japan illegally were determined by the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. Penalties were also laid down in the Law for Punishing Acts Related to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and for Protecting Children.
- 5. **Ms. Asada** (Japan), speaking in her capacity as Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, said that, everyone in Japan, including victims of sexual harassment had unimpeded access to hospitals and clinics. Under the Medical Practitioners Law, doctors could not deny treatment to anyone, even persons who had violated the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. Medical treatment was provided free of charge or for a very low fee at 256 clinics for indigent persons throughout Japan. In fiscal year 2002, 46.53 million people had benefited from such services. Treatment for foreign nationals was provided at emergency centres and, if necessary, subsidized by the Government.
- Ms. Bando (Japan) said that, under the Law on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (the "Equal Employment Opportunity Law"), employers were required to take measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and to respond appropriately when such incidents occurred. Her Ministry also provided administrative guidance to that end, particularly to small and medium-sized enterprises, which seemed to be most in need of it. In 2002, government-subsidized counselling had been provided in 7,682 cases. Additionally, the Ministry of Education provided instruction and guidance to universities and educational institutions on the prevention of sexual harassment, stressing that it was a serious violation of women's human rights. Employees in the public sector were subject to National Personnel Authority Rule 10-10, which the Government had just begun to implement. Female victims of trafficking were entitled to legal aid. The Civil Legal Aid System was operated by the Legal

Aid Association, for which significant resources had been allocated in fiscal year 2003.

- 7. Replying to a question concerning minorities, he said that the current situation was being assessed. A full account of action taken would be provided in the next periodic report.
- 8. Judicial training schools offered lectures on sexual harassment and gender equality to prospective and practising judges and prosecutors. Concerning the definition of discrimination in domestic legislation, article 14 of the Japanese Constitution stipulated that, everyone was equal under the law without discrimination on grounds of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin. That provision, based on the Convention, was echoed in the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society. It was to be hoped that the Human Rights Protection Bill would be more effective than current legislation on relief and administrative measures, which was not enforceable.
- 9. **Ms. Asada** (Japan) said that statistics on the number of female disabled persons were provided on page 102 of the fifth periodic report. Of 3.24 million persons with physical disabilities, 1.4 million were female; of 330,000 persons with mental disabilities, 130,000 were female.

## Articles 7 to 9

- 10. **Ms. Gaspard** commended the State party's determination to implement the Convention and its achievements thus far, but noted that progress was slow in many areas. She wondered whether the electoral system accounted for the low percentage of women elected to the House of Councilors (the upper house of the Diet) and whether the State party contemplated changing to proportional representation, in which female candidates generally fared better. She also wished to know whether the Diet had a commission on equality between men and women, in keeping with the trend in many countries.
- 11. Expressing concern at the low percentage of female attorneys and judges, she enquired about campaigns to encourage women to choose those professions. The very small number of female police officers cast doubt on the police force's ability to provide effective assistance to female victims of violence. How were police officers recruited? In general, would the Japanese population be receptive to

temporary measures to increase the number of female attorneys, judges and law enforcement officers?

- Ms. Popescu Sandru expressed satisfaction at significant of non-governmental number organizations (NGOs) attending the meeting, reflected great awareness of and concern for women's issues in Japanese society. She wondered whether the very low percentage of women in decision-making posts in both the public and private sectors was due to the persistence of stereotyping. Did reconfirmation of gender roles — namely, that the husband went to work and the wife did the housework and child-rearing during a period of robust economic growth (CEDAW/C/JPN/5, p. 39) paradoxically imply that gender equality and shared responsibilities were more effectively promoted in a context of economic recession and poverty? The delegation should describe concrete measures taken to achieve the ambitious longterm goals contained in the draft guidelines on increasing the recruitment and promotion of women, formulated in May 2001. Were any mechanisms in place to monitor progress in ensuring that at least 30 per cent of all leadership positions were occupied by women in the year 2020? She wondered whether the target ratios and dates referred to in the replies to the list of issues were actually quotas. What was the Japanese population's attitude towards temporary measures to enhance women's participation in political life? Lastly, she enquired about the conclusions and recommendations contained in the final report of the Equality, Council Gender entitled "Measures to Support Women's Challenges" (CEDAW/PSWG/2003/II/CRP.2/Add.2, p. 30).
- 13. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** expressed surprise that Japan, a member of the Group of Eight, was lagging in the promotion of women's participation in political life for lack of resources. If political parties were financed by the Government, sanctions could be imposed on those which did not promote equality. Perhaps the Japanese Government could impose quotas or positive discrimination measures in the legislative branch or appoint more female judges and high-level civil servants to offset the poor election results.
- 14. **Ms. Kapalata** said that the State party's full compliance with its reporting obligations thus far attested to its firm commitment to implementing the Convention. She noted, however, that Committee members' comments at the current session virtually echoed what they had said to the State party nine years

earlier, namely, that it must take specific measures to increase the number of women in decision-making posts. She expressed dismay, in particular, at the results of the 2001 survey on female representation in town and village assemblies, about half of which had no women members at all. She hoped that the State party's next periodic report would reflect an improvement in the overall number of women, including minority women, in high-level political posts. In conclusion, she praised Japan for amending its legislation on foreign service personnel, a major stride in achieving equal numbers of male and female diplomats.

- 15. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** noted the discrepancy between the high level of women's participation in political parties and interest in public life and their weak representation in top decision-making positions. Japanese women held only 1.3 per cent of public office positions at or above the director level. The reporting State should explain why so few women become judges and prosecutors despite their high success rate at the bar exam, a contradiction that the report did not adequately address.
- 16. **Ms. Gnacadja**, referring to article 7, enquired why Japan continued to restrict the voting rights of Japanese citizens of Korean descent, particularly women, and to discriminate against women, especially minority women such as the Buraku, and deny them access to senior public decision-making positions. Efforts should be stepped up to improve women's education and working conditions, distribute the burden of domestic work more equitably and make childcare more accessible to enable women to participate fully in public life. Concerning article 9, it was difficult to understand the discriminatory practice by which a newborn child was denied citizenship if a Japanese man with a foreign national wife refused to recognize the child as his own during her pregnancy.
- 17. **Ms. Bondo** thanked Committee members for their kind words and said she shared the frustration voiced at the slow pace of progress: only four of the 18 members in her Government's cabinet were women; today there were only four women governors, the first having been elected in 2000; six mayors were now women, up from one four years ago; and women made up 1.4 per cent of all section chiefs.
- 18. Changes in the electoral system accounted for a decrease in the representation of women in Government, which had dropped from 17 to 15 per cent

- in the upper house of Parliament. Women fared better under the system of proportional representation, by which parties submitted their lists of candidates, than under the current direct popular voting system for individual candidates. In the latest elections to the lower house, where both systems were used, women candidates had gained only 4.3 per cent of the popular vote and 12.5 per cent through proportional representation. Although Japan's major parties said they advocated gender equality, none favoured a quota system. The subsidies that her Government gave to parties depended on the number of each party's members in Parliament. She regretted that unlike the French Japanese society was not easily convinced that the Government should use subsidies to advance equal representation. Government officials largely viewed quotas as a form of reverse discrimination. The Gender Equality Bureau, however, had launched an affirmative action study group to consider the question of quotas under the current law.
- 19. Stereotypes against women persisted among men older than 50 and women older than 60. Slow but steady progress was being made, however, to dispel such stereotypes, especially among young people.
- 20. The low number of scientists, lawyers and managers in the private sector also limited the share of potential women candidates for political office. Japan's high growth rate had allowed women to enjoy greater educational opportunities and independence since the 1960s, but change remained too slow. Because reconciling the demands of family life with public life was difficult, women were reluctant to run for public office. Judges and prosecutors were required to travel around the country for two to three years, for example. It might be asked whether women themselves had a vision of what should be done. Still, one quarter of all successful candidates to the bar each year were women, and the growth in their numbers in the legal profession would advance the status of women.
- 21. Her Government had taken steps to increase recruitment of women in the public sector and set a target of 30 per cent of women in top management positions by 2020. The period of some 15 years that was required to become a section chief had been an obstacle to women, but increasing recruitment now and creating the proper working conditions for preserving private life would mean greater representation of women in decision-making positions in the future. Whereas some 30 years earlier almost no women had

held diplomatic posts, today 16 per cent had passed the foreign service exam. Many more women than before worked in various Government ministries, although they were too few in number compared with the Group of Eight countries.

- 22. Women made up only a small proportion of police officers, but their numbers were growing and measures had been planned to improve training and the workplace environment for women and monitor their implementation.
- 23. Concerning voting rights for non-Japanese, only Japanese nationals who were at least 20 years old had the right to vote.
- 24. Ms. Khan said she wondered whether the prevalence of women in part-time jobs was owing to the burden of family duties, lack of qualifications or discriminatory hiring practices in the public and private sector and whether there were laws against discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. It would be interesting to learn whether part-time workers retained their seniority after a leave of absence. Additional information would be welcome on any measures planned to replace the remedial education programme for the Buraku people, which was being cut out of the budget. That was particularly important for Buraku women, many of whom remained illiterate because of past discrimination. She urged the Government of Japan to support the provisions of article 12 to ensure women's access to health care throughout their lifetime. More details on the special health needs of elderly women, including nursing homes, the longevity rates among ethnic minority women and violence against older women, would be useful.
- 25. **Ms. Achmad** enquired whether the programme for educational reform referred to on page 60 of the fifth periodic report (CEDAW/C/JPN/5) included measures to eliminate persistent stereotypes, to educate children, particularly boys, on the need to share the burdens of domestic work and other family and parental responsibilities, and to train teachers to provide such an education.
- 26. **Ms. Morvai** commended Japan's report for having acknowledged, on page 24, that "violence from husbands or partners, sexual crimes, prostitution, sexual harassment and stalking behaviour are grave violations of women's human rights ...". She urged the Government of Japan to recognize that, globally and

historically, women had been treated as less than human beings, as was the case with Japan's comfort women. She challenged the report's characterization of stalking, on page 25, as "acts to 'satisfy love or other favourable feelings towards the person', or to 'work off grudges resulting from the failure to satisfy these feelings'," and said that stalking was a matter of power and control. The police should not act as victims counsellors, which was incompatible with their role. Lastly, she would appreciate further information on when and how prosecutors initiated proceedings for violent crimes.

- 27. Ms. Patten, acknowledging the efforts of the Government of Japan to eliminate employment discrimination through its equal employment opportunity legislation and labour standards, wished to know how employers were implementing those guidelines. It was unclear to what extent staff of the Gender Equality Bureau who provided administrative guidance to employers who violated those laws were adequately trained in gender issues and the Convention. More information was needed on the Japan's labour policies towards part-time and dispatch workers, many of whom were women. It would be useful to have information on the steps being taken to address the wage differentials mentioned in the report and the criteria for justifying such gaps, such as being the head of a household. Additional data on the Ministry of Labour's career system, which had been established to enhance the professional capacity of women, would be useful. Lastly, concerning the equal employment departments of the prefectural labour bureaux, she would welcome additional information on the system of dividing employees into career and clerical tracks used by financial, insurance and trading companies to determine promotions and wages.
- 28. Ms. Gabr expressed concern that although Japan was an economic giant, women did not seem to be playing their rightful role in society and the economy, evidenced the relevant United as by indicators Nations Development Programme (CEDAW/C/JPN/5, p. 49). The Gender Equality Bureau must study that problem and do more to convince society as a whole of the need to ensure the economic empowerment of Japanese women, who represented 51 per cent of the population. The Government should also promote equal opportunity and representation for women in the public and private sectors. She wondered whether reform of the

agriculture sector would have any effect on women, for example, on farms managed by women, or on job opportunities in that sector. She also requested information on the health insurance status of older women.

- 29. Ms. Schöpp-Schilling wondered whether the forum on indirect discrimination would examine the management categories allowed under the Equal Employment Opportunity Law as a possible form of indirect discrimination, whether the study group on the wage gap between men and women would take up the issue of equal pay for work of equal or comparable value and whether the Government and unions had taken any steps to ensure pay equity. Information would be appreciated on the number of part-time workers who were usually the young, the old or dispatch workers, not covered by the employment insurance scheme. She would also welcome more information on the number of hours needed to qualify for employment insurance. With regard to dispatch workers, she asked whether training opportunities were available to them in order to help them find full-time work. Although she recognized that there was an economic crisis in Japan, the country's business sector should see the crisis as an opportunity for restructuring which would include increased opportunities for and empowerment of women.
- 30. Ms. Shin said that despite progress made, as evidenced by the revision of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, serious problems remained, for regard example with to women's economic participation rate and the wage gap between men and women. She requested more information on what penalties could be imposed on employers for violating the law as well as statistics on any enforcement actions taken. Data should also be provided giving the point of view of women workers who might be the victims of discrimination or sexual harassment. Marriage, childbearing and stereotyping remained obstacles to women. She noted that, although the number of daycare centres had increased slightly, their capacity had actually decreased (CEDAW/C/JPN/5, table 84, p. 165). Different types of childcare should be available and should be subsidized by the Government and, although parental leave payments had recently been increased they were still inadequate. It was essential to ensure that women had adequate access to childcare.

- 31. **Ms. Gnacadja**, referring to article 10 of the Convention, said that there seemed to be many activities and proposals with regard to women's rights but wondered whether there had been any concrete results. School textbooks containing stereotyping images of women were still being used and she wondered whether revised materials existed. There must be greater effort to increase awareness of the need to promote real equality and demarginalize women. Some material compensation should also be provided to the comfort women and society should be educated about that issue, although the war context should certainly be taken into account as a contributing factor.
- 32. With regard to article 11 of the Convention, she expressed concern at situations in which, as a result of marriage, pregnancy or taking parental leave, women were forced to give up their jobs or become part-time employees. More attention should be given to the social security needs of women single parents and she expressed concern in that context at the cost of public services and the implications of privatization of childcare. She also expressed concern at reports of elderly women still working and of forced abortions.
- 33. **Ms. Tavares da Silva**, stressing the important role played by the educational system in promoting gender equality, enquired whether co-ed education was the rule and whether boys and girls followed the same curriculum. Noting the increase in teen pregnancies, she stressed the need for sex education to ensure responsible behaviour as part of an overall educational health policy and asked whether there was an effective sex education programme in the schools.
- 34. **Ms. Bando** (Japan), said she recognized the need to make women full economic partners. However, owing to the current economic slowdown and restructuring, when women left the traditional lifetime employment system about three quarters of them had difficulty finding anything more than poorly paid part-time positions upon returning to work. There were therefore a large number of women in their thirties starting over in the workplace, even though the low birth rate and rapid ageing of society made it all the more essential to take advantage of women's potential.
- 35. Women's average lifespan was 85 years, 10 more than for men; elderly women had full health insurance coverage and since 2000 had full access to nursing home care. The situation of women single parents with regard to social security was currently under discussion

within the Government. Turning to childcare, she said that the decrease in the birth rate meant that fewer places were needed in childcare centres and there were usually waiting lists in the large cities only. Concerning the educational system, some 95 per cent of schools were co-ed, with the handful of single-sex schools being mostly private schools. There were sex education programmes as well as efforts to change attitudes towards gender roles, encourage men to assume greater responsibilities in the home and enable women to play more important roles in the public and private sectors. It was, however, difficult to change attitudes, including those of educators and employers, and continued effort was necessary.

- 36. **Ms. Asada** (Japan), speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, said that women who left full-time employment and then wished to return to the workplace generally had to accept part-time employment, although in time some returned to full-time employment. Some women also chose part-time employment because it made it easier to juggle work and family obligations. She stressed that part-time employees had the same right to protection against sexual harassment as full-time employees. Her Ministry was working to ensure that employers did not discriminate against the Buraku ethnic group.
- 37. Turning to the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, she said that the family and childcare authorities in all prefectures were well staffed by experts who monitored implementation of the provisions of the Law and protected women's rights with regard to family responsibilities and parental leave. Her Ministry stressed to employers the need to ensure equal treatment of men and women as a basic principle in the workplace. Indirect discrimination was currently being studied with a view to developing a definition. As for the question of pay equity, although progress had been slow, there had been a gradual closing of the wage gap between men and women. The Labour Standards Law provided guidance in that area. The issue of part-time workers' entitlement to unemployment insurance was also under study.

#### Articles 13 to 16

38. **Ms. Kwaku** wondered whether the Civil Code had in fact been amended with regard to surnames of married couples, minimum age for marriage and elimination of the waiting period required before divorced women could remarry.

- 39. **Mr. Flinterman** pointed out that prevailing public attitudes could not be used as an excuse for failing to implement the State party's obligations under the Convention or revise the Civil Code. For example, provisions that made a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children upon registration of a birth were not compatible with the Convention or with international law. He would welcome more information on how Japanese law dealt with such cases, which also implied a discriminatory attitude towards the mother.
- 40. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** said that the discrimination against so-called "illegitimate" children and their mothers must stop. She enquired whether a girl's full consent was required for marriage. She also wondered how, in the event of divorce, assets were divided, which parent had custody of the children, whether the wife could keep the family home and whether alimony was paid.
- Ms. Simonovic said that in 1994 the Committee had requested Japan to change discriminatory laws related to marriage and family relations, in accordance with article 16; it might be wondered whether the Government had the political will to comply with the Convention. The requirement that women should wait 100 days after a divorce to remarry was discriminatory, in particular since there were other means of determining paternity, such as DNA testing. The Government of Japan had argued that it could not amend laws regarding surname choice and children born out of wedlock because the public opposed such changes. She wondered whether Japan had used the concluding comments of the Committee, and of other treaty bodies, to raise public awareness, and to inform legislators that such laws contravened international law.
- 42. **Ms. Shin** said she would like to know the scope of the law on spousal violence, in particular whether it covered domestic violence involving other members of the family, and whether it covered former spouses and couples that were in the process of separating.
- 43. The broad participation of non-governmental organizations in implementing the Convention should not mean that the Government waived its responsibilities under that instrument.
- 44. **Ms. Morvai**, noting that the term "fatherless families" fostered a negative stereotype, enquired about the literal translation of the term used in Japanese. She would also like to know the current

status of legislation regarding the use of surnames by married couples.

- 45. **Ms. Patten** said she urged Japan to equalize the marriage age for boys and girls, since early marriage for girls had an adverse impact on their education and health. She also exhorted the Government of Japan to eliminate discrimination against children born out of wedlock.
- 46. **Ms. Gnacadja** noted that in prosecuting the crime of rape, judges required victims to give proof that they had fiercely resisted and had been severely intimidated, and evaluated the victim's sense of virtue. It also seemed that judges were chosen on the basis of their experience and age. The question arose whether the oldest judges might also be the most conservative. She enquired what were the means of proof in cases of adultery, whether the same standards applied to men and women, and how murderers of adulterous wives or their presumed lovers were dealt with under the law.
- 47. The provision of the Civil Code establishing that children born out of wedlock were accorded only one quarter of the inheritance that legitimate children received must be abolished. She enquired what legal provisions governed the distribution of assets when a marriage was dissolved.
- 48. Lastly, she pointed out that the law requiring that foreign wives of Japanese men must reside with their spouses in order to remain in the country forced such women to endure violence against them. The comments of the delegation would be welcome.
- 49. **Ms. Manalo** enquired whether, in the light of the Convention, the Imperial household and the Japanese Government had considered changing the law of succession to allow Princess Aiko to become an empress.
- 50. **Ms. Bando** (Japan) said that, in Japan, there was concern that the use of different surnames by husband and wife would disturb the harmony of the family and cause juvenile delinquency. In addition, it was feared that, if permitted, a large number of couples would choose to use different surnames. The notion that judges might review a couple's reasons and qualifications for the use of different names was being considered. That was a controversial matter, and the relevant law had not been changed.
- 51. With regard to children born out of wedlock, under a recent Supreme Court decision an illegitimate

- child would now receive half the inheritance of a legitimate child. The court had taken the view that that distinction was a reasonable one. Japan would, however, continue to listen to the Committee's views, and she was certain that the matter would continue to be debated.
- 52. The Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims covered only the current husband, but the view was widely held that former husbands should also be included in its provisions.
- 53. The term in Japanese for "fatherless families" was "families headed by single mothers and widows". Ninety per cent of all Japanese divorces were settled through mediation; very few went to court. In most cases, the assets assigned to a wife were small or minuscule.
- 54. The code governing the Imperial household stipulated that only a male could inherit the throne. However, the Goddess of the Sun was an ancestress of the imperial family, and there had been seven empresses in Japanese history. There was, however, no possibility that Princess Aiko would one day become an empress.
- 55. **The Chairperson** said the discussion had been a frank, complex one; she appreciated the presence of non-governmental organizations during the debate. Japan had made significant progress. The Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society and the Equal Employment Opportunity Law were important achievements. Their implementation, however, left much to be desired. In the next report, the Committee would like to learn of the impact of such legislative changes on education, employment, health and decision-making. Government should redouble its efforts to eliminate stereotypes, increase training for public officials, especially judges and law enforcement officials, and work to raise awareness among persons holding public office. Efforts should also be made to increase the number of women in decision-making posts, to diminish the wage gap between men and women, to integrate the gender-segregated employment market and to improve the situation of part-time workers.
- 56. The Committee had been impressed by the gender sensitivity that had developed in Japan in recent years, especially among young people, and encouraged the Government to provide resources and build infrastructure for the promotion of women's rights. It had asked Japan to conduct studies on the multiple

discrimination suffered by women belonging to minorities, and looked forward to learning more about the situation of rural women.

- 57. Lastly, she said that the Committee urged the Government of Japan to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention.
- 58. **Ms. Bando** (Japan) said that her delegation was pleased that the Committee recognized the efforts Japan had made to achieve gender equality. Steady progress was being made. Legislation should change attitudes, although change could not occur from one day to the next. The concluding comments would be translated into Japanese and widely disseminated; they would also be posted on the Government web site.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.