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Experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Commend the Dominican Republic on its Progress in Education and Ask about Trafficking and Poverty in Rural Areas

18 February 2022 Meeting Summaries

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women today concluded its consideration of the eighth periodic report of the Dominican Republic, commending the State on significant progress made in education and asking about trafficking and poverty in rural areas.

A Committee Expert commended the Dominican Republic for the significant progress made in education in the last two decades, saying that 2022 had been declared the year to end illiteracy, which would benefit many women. One Committee Expert raised the subject of trafficking, asking what the Government was doing to protect girls who were being trafficked. Had a new plan on trafficking been implemented? Another Expert asked about the measures being taken to reduce poverty in rural areas, questioning whether health services for women in rural areas would be improved.

Responding to the questions on trafficking, Mayra Jimenez, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said this was a high priority for the State. A specialised care service had been established to provide care and support to victims of trafficking. An inter-institutional organization had been created to combat trafficking, which had led to the strengthening of the capacities of public officials. A special prosecutor dealt with trafficking issues, and shelters to provide differentiated support to victims of trafficking had been set up. The delegation said that the Dominican Republic had great interest in eliminating the scourge of trafficking and would continue to move forward in that area.

On the topic of rural poverty, the delegation said that the Ministry of Women's Affairs was striving to empower women in border regions. Entrepreneurial women were able to participate in government procurement and receive funding and training, while the Government was implementing several initiatives to improve the financial position of women. A programme called "Go Further" had been launched to overcome poverty. A project had been developed which aimed to bolster and provide support and care to households suffering from extreme poverty in rural parts of the Dominican Republic.

Ms. Jimenez, in her opening remarks, said the COVID-19 pandemic had widened the gaps which existed in terms of gender, economics and social measures. Women and the most vulnerable populations had been the most affected. The Dominican State, anticipating the pandemic's impact on women, had taken specific measures to mitigate it through the launch of several programmes and women were made a priority. A telephone line was kept in operation during the lockdown to respond to victims of violence, with shelters declared essential services and kept open. Ms. Jimenez said huge efforts had been made to strengthen mechanisms to provide access to justice for women, using an intersectional approach. This gave priority to the most vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities, women of Haitian descent and elderly women.

The delegation of the Dominican Republic was comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Women; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of the Presidency; the Ministry of Public Health; the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development; the Ministry of Public Administration; the Ministry of Agriculture; the Ministry of Labour; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Industry and Trade; the Ministry of Defence; the National Institute of Migration; the Central Electoral Board; the Attorney General's Office; the National Bureau of Statistics; the National Police; the National Council of Persons with Disabilities; and the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

In concluding remarks, Ms. Jimenez said the Dominican Republic was committed to making progress towards the advancement of the rights of women and girls in the country.

Gladys Acosta Vargas, Chair of the Committee, thanked the delegation for the constructive dialogue, and commended the State party for progress made. Ms. Vargas encouraged the Dominican Republic to take all necessary steps to address the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's eighty-first session is being held from 7 to 25 February. All the documents relating to the Committee's work, including reports submitted by States parties, can be found on the session's webpage. Meeting summary releases can be found here. The webcast of the Committee's public meetings can be accessed at http://webtv.un.org/ .

The Committee will next meet in public at 5 p.m. on Friday, 25 February to adopt its concluding observations on the reports of Gabon, Panama, Senegal, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Peru, Lebanon and the Dominican Republic, which were reviewed during its eighty-first session, and close the session.

Report

The Committee has before it the eighth periodic report of the Dominican Republic (CEDAW/C/DOM/8)

resentation of Report

VIRGILIO ALACANTARA, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva, said that the Dominican Republic would continue to work to overcome the challenges it faced. In the context of the dialogue with the Committee, it was hoped the Dominican Republic would carry out satisfactory and productive work.

MAYRA JIMENEZ**,** Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said the Dominican Republic came before the Committee in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had widened the gaps which existed in terms of gender, economics and social measures. Women and the most vulnerable populations had been the most affected. The Dominican State, anticipating the pandemic's impact on women, had taken specific measures to mitigate it. This included the Stay at Home programme, the distribution of food, and a programme targeting independent workers. A telephone line was kept in operation during the lockdown to respond to victims of violence, with shelters declared essential services and kept open. The pandemic had highlighted the major structural gaps which affected women.

Since the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1992, the Dominican Republic had experienced sustained process. Ms. Jimenez outlined some of the key achievements of the Government, including the national statistics system, which ensured that gender was mainstreamed in data gathering. This ensured that a gender approach was used to generate statistical information, following the established methodology. Among other systems, a national system on gender-based violence was available and had been used as a statistical basis to devise the "Life Free of Violence" strategic plan. In 2019, the national survey of multi-purpose households had been carried out, providing timely information on girls, adolescents, and women of childbearing age. The Government had been able to identify families with women at the head of the household to receive aid they needed, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first gender report had been published which showed that women were lagging behind men in terms of bank credit and savings. Progress had been made in improving the tenth housing census, with inclusive language embodied in the questionnaire and questions on disability being incorporated. The regulatory and legal framework of the Dominican Republic identified equality as a fundamental right and criminalised discrimination. Discrimination against women had resulted in the enactment of policies to achieve equality for women and girls. Legislation permitting girls under 18 to be married had been amended.

Ms. Jimenez said huge efforts had been made to strengthen mechanisms to provide access to justice for women, using an intersectional approach. This gave priority to the most vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities, women of Haitian descent and elderly women. More than 100 lawyers provided psychological support, advice, and legal representation for free to victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. Barriers were being addressed to make the justice system more inclusive for women with disabilities. A training programme on disability was being implemented, with 41 legal interpreters in sign language working in the courts. The national police had trained more than 9,000 officers on issues relating to femicide and positive masculinity.

A national plan on gender equity and equality coordinated the State's policies and served as a tool to mainstream gender through all the Dominican Republic's policies. This had become the State's national gender policy. The Government was working to monitor the mainstreaming of gender in public institution systems. Progress had been made in developing a guide for the mainstreaming of gender in the institutional strategic plans. One hundred and fifty institutions had been targeted and they would be able to use the guide as a framework for developing their own plans. A tool was being developed to trace public expenditure, where new categories would be included for the 2023 budget. This would show how much was being spent on countering violence against women.

Ms. Jimenez said that a 26 per cent budgetary increase had been provided to the Ministry for Women's Affairs in 2021. The Ministry had made significant efforts to train staff and strengthen their technical skills. The 45 public entities that had gender-equality units were also strengthened. The certification process "Equality Seal" was also enlarged. Gender stereotypes represented a major issue for the country and efforts had been made to overcome this, including a nation-wide publication called "Breaking down stereotypes", which included actions for people to carry out. The publication would be broadly disseminated. Workshops were being held with young people on gender-based violence and positive masculinity. A law had been adopted to prevent children under 18 from getting married under any circumstances. A cabinet on childhood and adolescence had been established to serve as a coordinator for the policies to prevent pregnancies in adolescents and early marriages. A strategic plan aimed at reducing violence against women had been created.

Ms. Jimenez concluded by saying that the Dominican Republic was ready to listen to the Committee's recommendations with the view of improving the lives of women and girls in the country.

Questions by a Committee Expert

A Committee Expert welcomed the delegation of the Dominican Republic and said that she understood the challenges faced by the State to implement the Convention. Women and girls needed to be placed at the centre of the efforts to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Committee would like to hear from the delegation in that regard.

Could the delegation elaborate on the principle of equality in the Constitution? Was a comprehensive definition of discrimination included? What was being done to ensure compliance with the Paris Principles? On access to justice, the Committee Expert asked what measures had been taken to ensure that all women in the State party, including vulnerable women, were aware of their rights under the Convention, and were able to invoke them. Was legal aid available? Were there statistics on gender discrimination cases? Had judges and other personnel been given training on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women? Was civil society consulted in the preparation of the State party report? How did the Dominican Republic ensure that women human rights defenders were supported?

Responses by the Delegation

MAYRA JIMENEZ, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said that women, adolescents and girls were at the forefront of all public policies which had been implemented in the Dominican Republic to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Special funding programmes had been established. In the legal and normative framework of the Dominican Republic, equality was established as a fundamental right, and any discriminatory conduct was behaviour that was punished.

A member of the delegation addressed questions on the judiciary, saying that prosecutors and others who worked closely with victims of violence were trained on issues relating to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The delegation said that the public defender's office did everything it could to operate in accordance with the Paris Principles. A member of the delegation said the national police had implemented measures to ensure that discrimination against women was dealt with. Training was provided to male police officers on topics of positive masculinity.

MAYRA JIMENEZ, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said a draft law on equality and non-discrimination was still being reviewed. The objective of the law was to eliminate all forms of discrimination against any group, in line with the provisions of the Convention. The draft law classified behaviour and practices which were considered discriminatory.

The delegation highlighted that programmes implemented during the pandemic had created a social floor and a minimum level of revenue for vulnerable groups, with a special focus on women heads of households. This was a mechanism for supplementary protection, providing additional resources to women heads of households and people with disabilities. This policy was continued after the peak of the pandemic. Refugees, both men and women, enjoyed the same rights as nationals in the country. When refugees presented their request for asylum, interpreters were provided for those who did not speak Spanish.

Women were operating in the armed forces of the Dominican Republic and could attend military academies. Plans were being carried out to ensure that women were present in all operational structures, including in the office of the President of the Republic. The drafting of the report to the Committee had involved whole consultation days with civil society organizations.

Follow-up Questions from a Committee Expert

A Committee Expert noted that breaches of equality counted as a criminal offence and asked how many people had been prosecuted. The Expert reiterated the question on human rights defenders, asking if they had the resources to fulfil their functions.

Responses by the Delegation

MAYRA JIMENEZ, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said that the State funded several civil society organizations, and the funding had been increased in recent times. A member of the delegation addressed the question on criminal cases, stating that criminal cases for discrimination were currently not registered, citing this as a challenge. The State needed to see how this would be done and to see why discrimination was not being reported as a crime.

Questions by Committee Experts

A Committee Expert said the Dominican Republic had achieved much compared to their previous report and noted the provision in the Constitution which was devoted specifically to gender equality. Was the State planning a merger between the ministries, which would weaken the Ministry for Women's Affairs? To what extent had the advancement of women's rights reached the grassroots? What was the difference between the rural populations and the urban populations? Were there specific bodies for women's empowerment in rural areas?

One Committee Expert noted that the State had adopted new measures geared towards ending discrimination in the country. However, it seemed that women of colour had not been properly integrated in election processes. What measures had the State taken to ensure that the political parties were made aware of the need to implement the 40 per cent quota for women? Could the State ensure that all the rules that existed were consistent with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women?

Responses by the Delegation

The delegation said that several international studies had highlighted the impact of COVID on the political participation of

women. Parity was a priority over quotas, with a bill being submitted which included the training and education of women.

MAYRA JIMENEZ, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said the Dominican Republic had committed to achieving the enactment of the law and it would not stop until it had met that challenge. The greatest support had been given to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and it had been given an additional budget and funding. The Dominican State was committed to strengthening its mechanism for the empowerment of women. A cabinet comprised of girls and adolescents had been created. The State was doing the best that it could to reach all areas of the country and all rural women, in spite of limited resources.

Questions by Committee Experts

A Committee Expert asked about the elimination of gender stereotypes, saying that while progress had been achieved, gender stereotyping of women in the family and in society was still dominant. The high prevalence of violence was a harmful response to this situation. Would the National Plan on Gender Equality address the elimination of gender stereotypes in society? How would the portrayal of women in vulnerable groups be included? Would all main forms of gender-based violence be criminalised? The Committee Expert noted that child marriage was condoned, with research showing that 60 per cent of men in rural areas were in a union with an underage partner. How would the gender equality strategy provide solutions to these problems? The Committee Expert said that the law on marriageable law had recently been changed, asking how this and other laws were enforced. It was noted that 130 women were killed, with 66 of those cases femicides. What was the number of femicides from last year? How would this phenomenon be addressed? Would systematic analysis on the cases of femicide be provided?

Another Committee Expert said that the legal structure on trafficking in the Dominican Republic was not up to standard. What was the Government doing to protect girls who were being trafficked? Had a new plan on trafficking been implemented? Had the new methods of trafficking online been implemented in the National Action Plan? It was noted that traffickers lured Dominican women to work in nightclubs in the Middle East and overseas. Were there measures in the National Action Plan that prevented Dominican women from going abroad and being exploited through prostitution?

Responses by the Delegation

The delegation said that special courses were being implemented with a view to promote a strategy with a focus on rights and gender. These classes were prepared for children in the formal school system between the ages of 5 and 18. The State worked closely with young people in workshops to break stereotypes on discrimination. Monthly events both virtual and in real life on questions related to the rights of women were held.

A cross-cutting approach was ensured in the preparation of statistics. A course was being launched on the cross-cutting nature of the gender perspective and statistics. A national survey had been carried out to see how women working for a variety of companies dealt with the pandemic.

MAYRA JIMENEZ, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said the draft law on violence against women would create an entirely new system and would involve budgetary implications for several institutions. The President of the Dominican Republic would be submitting the draft law to congress, where it would undergo an institutional procedure. A member of the delegation spoke about the draft law, which established a system of comprehensive reparation in cases of violence for the first time. It highlighted four types of crimes associated with femicide, all with a view to cover the damage which had been inflicted on women because of violence.

Ms. Jimenez said fighting human trafficking was a high priority for the State. Recently, a specialised care service had been established, providing care and support to victims of trafficking. The delegation said that trafficking was a violation of the rights of women and men. The State had taken steps with a view to combat this scourge. The National Action Plan had been launched, which included work on the illegal trafficking of migrants. This plan involved the prevention of the crime, the prosecution of those responsible and support for the victims. An inter-institutional body had been created to combat trafficking, which had led to the strengthening of the capacities of public officials. Investigative mechanisms had been bolstered. A special prosecutor operated to deal with trafficking issues. Special shelters to provide differentiated support to victims of trafficking had been set up. A project had been launched to implement a programme for capacity building in the main border areas. The Dominican Republic had great interest in eliminating the scourge of trafficking and would continue to move forward in this area.

The delegation said major investigations on people trafficking had been carried out in order to provide a State response. The lives of people before and after trafficking had been analysed. Practical training had been given to people working in the field as a result of this research. The investigations had been crucial for developing effective public policies and results-based plans around trafficking. The Dominican Republic had trained 100 lawyers to be specialised in trafficking to provide a first response to victims. Training had also been provided to female psychologists.

The Dominican Republic was working with relevant institutions to provide an update to the Trafficking Act. This dialogue was very important, and the bill needed to be adopted as quickly as possible. The bill included an expansion of the definition of trafficking. Currently the bill was being studied from a technical point of view and would then be submitted to the Presidency and then Congress. The specialised prosecution service, together with other institutions, had worked on mitigating cyber violence and the means of trafficking through technology.

Femicide, which described a woman who died at the hand of a spouse or former spouse, was not yet criminalised. An

emergency telephone line to provide help for women at risk had been set up and 68,000 women had been helped through the line.

MAYRA JIMENEZ, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said that two additional shelters for victims of domestic violence had been opened. Victims were given temporary shelter, food, health care and legal advice.

A law had been enacted prohibiting child marriage and a national policy on combatting early unions and teenage pregnancies had been agreed, with the coordination of 20 institutions. A pilot project had been launched in six towns with a high rate of teenage pregnancy. The Government would set aside additional funds to coordinate this new prevention and care policy. Girls' clubs had been established, which trained girls on reproductive health, with the involvement of their families and local authorities. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was working to build more centres to focus on comprehensive health.

The poverty rate among women was 27 per cent, compared to 24 per cent among men. Forty per cent of women carried out unpaid work at home. Despite the growth in the Dominican Republic, women still experienced worse poverty than men. A pilot project was designed to put women at the heart of public policies and increase their living standards. The innovation proposal was focused with the coordination of State institutions. Rural territories were a focus, with a goal to decentralise services.

Questions by a Committee Expert

A Committee Expert acknowledged the steps taken and the research-based policy to tackle trafficking, asking if there was change in the law that made it possible to prosecute traffickers of minors without needing proof of fraud or coercion. The Expert asked about unions with underage girls: what was the age of consent and had there been prosecutions of statutory rape. Was systematic analysis conducted on cases of femicide, in order to take preventative measures and eliminate the phenomena? Was the data published?

Responses by the Delegation

The delegation said that a bill was being worked on which contemplated penalties to punish cybercrimes, with more protection provided if the victims were girls or adolescents. Investigations were carried out on femicides with the participation of non-governmental organizations.

Questions by Committee Experts

A Committee Expert noted that the number of women in decision-making positions was weak. The denial of citizenship due to lack of documents was detrimental to migrant women. The lack of identification cards excluded women from formal work, strengthening their stigmatisation as a social burden. Had the number of women in management posts increased? Had something been done to change these attitudes? What was being done to ensure that identity documents were provided to refugee women, allowing them to access services without exclusion? Would the State party provide automatic restitution to all those who were denationalised? Did legal restrictions remain on obtaining citizenship to children born to foreign mothers?

Responses by the Delegation

The delegation spoke about children born to a Dominican father and a foreign mother, stating that if the Dominican father acknowledged paternity, the child would receive nationality. Training and outreach connected to empowering women had been given. Processes had been reviewed in connection with political violence. Men and women were equal before the law. Without women, there was no democracy and women's participation had been mainstreamed. Any behaviour which inhibited this participation was met with a penalty. The issue of statelessness was still being studied. Some 4,500 students had been trained on gender issues in the judiciary. Lectures had been held within the school of the judiciary, with a continuous theme on gender. Concerning victims of acid attacks, a number of these women had had access to justice, with sentences ruled for the perpetrators. The Dominican Republic was providing comprehensive support on a psychological and health level for these victims.

Questions by Committee Experts

A Committee Expert commended the Dominican Republic for the significant progress made in education in the last two decades, saying that 2022 had been declared the year to end illiteracy. This would benefit many adult women. Encouraging data had been shown as to the number of girls in schools which was greater than the number of boys; however, this number had dropped, possibly due to teenage pregnancy. What was being done to ensure that girls were receiving appropriate sexual health education? One Committee Expert complimented the Government on advancements on employment. However, it was noted that some questions remained. Women worked more than 20 hours more of unpaid work a week compared to men, which was to the disadvantage of women and limited their economic independence. The Committee Expert asked what measures had been taken to remedy the gap. It was noted that the State party had listed difficulties regarding implementing a minimum wage for domestic workers. The Committee Expert asked what was being done to overcome this.

A Committee Expert noted that the pandemic had exacerbated problems connected to women, girls and adolescents which required urgent attention. What was being done to address the high level of maternal deaths in the Dominican Republic? Were figures available and what were the three main causes? What were the immediate measures being taken to avoid

the high levels of teenage pregnancy in the Dominican Republic? What was the content of the draft bill to decriminalise abortion? Were there steps to decriminalise the absolute penalty of abortion? How many women were deprived of their liberty for undergoing abortion. Concerning access to contraception, what steps had been taken to facilitate this access? What steps had been taken to eradicate prejudice and stereotypes for those with different sexual preferences? What was being done to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, particularly in pregnant women?

One Committee Expert congratulated the State party on a fast-growing economy, stating that social spending was low compared to the rest of the region. Could the delegation provide information on the expenditure of the Dominican Republic on family benefits? What was being done to ensure women had access to those benefits? The Committee Expert acknowledged initiatives to strengthen women's economic empowerment, which included the dispersion of loans to women owning small enterprises. What other measures were being taken to ensure that women had equal access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of credits? What were participation rates of women in sport, leisure and other aspects of cultural life?

A Committee Expert said the Dominican Republic was driving forward to ensure the Convention was properly implemented in the country. How did the authorities consult disadvantaged and rural women to know what their needs were? What were the measures being taken to reduce poverty in rural areas? Would access to health services for women in rural areas be improved? Would services be scaled-up to counter gender-based violence? Would literacy training to disadvantaged women be provided? How would the effective participation of rural women and disadvantaged groups in the design of the policies which affected them directly be ensured? The Committee Expert noted concern about discrimination and the deportation of Haitian women. What measures were being taken to harmonise refugee policies? How would access to basic health services for Haitian women be guaranteed? How many women in the Dominican Republic had a disability, and how were these women given access to justice? The Committee Expert asked what measures were being taken to combat hate speech against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women? What was the State doing to guarantee freedom of expression and appropriate protection for human rights defenders?

Responses by the Delegation

The delegation said that the Ministry of Women's Affairs was striving to empower women in border regions. Entrepreneurial women were able to participate in government procurement and receive funding and training. A project was finalised on female business development, designed to improve the business skills of entrepreneurial women, with capital provided for them to launch their entrepreneurial activities. The Government was implementing several initiatives to improve the financial position of women. A programme called "Go Further" had been launched to overcome poverty. A system had been set up to identify women who did not have bank accounts to allow them to be involved in entrepreneurial schemes. On access to justice for women with disabilities, the delegation said that disability was mainstreamed in everything to guarantee equality in judicial services and ensure justice was more accessible. Surveys had been carried out to ensure no physical barriers prevented women from participating in justice. A service had been implemented for people with physical disabilities for mobile centres to bring the services to people in need.

MAYRA JIMENEZ**,** Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, said that the judiciary had implemented a training programme on disability, designed to certify judges and public defenders in sign language. Forty-one sign language interpreters had been trained so far. The legal and psychological support teams were also trained in sign language, as were the staff running the 24/7 hotline for complaints. A strategic plan was developed based on the pillars of justice for all, providing timely and effective judicial assistance and initiatives to break architectural barriers. Rural poverty had increased, with local care plans to be established. This would identify needs and develop the regional strategy in step with these needs, as well as the groups that would benefit. There were huge challenges for the inclusion of women in rural areas within the labour market. A series of options were being developed to strengthen local areas, with a special fund established to reduce poverty and inequality. A project had been developed which aimed to bolster and provide support and care to households suffering from extreme poverty in rural parts of the Dominican Republic.

Ms. Jimenez said freedom of expression was a constitutional right in the Dominican Republic and was respected by the State. What had happened during a demonstration was an isolated event which was not endorsed by the State. The various women's organizations had set up camp for 73 days. The Dominican Republic needed to continue to think about how the efforts of the Government could be strengthened. The State guaranteed the right to demonstrate and protest. Ms. Jimenez said that the Dominican State fully guaranteed the rights of all its citizens and employed steps to train all those who carried out care, to ensure that their responses were always appropriate and complied with the human rights of women. Challenges remained, but the State party remained willing to achieve civil and harmonious existence within the Dominican Republic.

Questions by a Committee Expert

A Committee Expert congratulated the State party for removing the State's category for children born out of wedlock. It was noted that the problem of child marriage continued and was closely linked to poverty. What were the plans of the State party to address the factors that facilitated child marriage? Did the Criminal Code still allow for crimes against children to be avoided if the perpetrator married their victim? The Committee Expert was concerned about the loss of human rights for thousands of denationalised Haitians and said pregnancy should not be a basis for discrimination. Could the State party ensure that all deportations were organized within the appropriate legal proceedings? Could women challenge a deportation order, and would they be able to access public defence funds? What mechanisms existed through which Dominican fathers were asked to acknowledge their children, and how was this recorded? Could figures on this be provided? What incentives were there to encourage fathers to recognise their children and register their status in the

Dominican Republic?

Responses by the Delegation

The delegation said that discrimination was not tolerated as a State policy. The Migration Directorate was establishing a protocol to improve coordination and guarantee appropriate treatment depending on the situation, with a view to guarantee due process. Eight hundred migration officials had been trained in human rights. The national institute for migration provided 30 different courses, which included elements on the protection of human rights. Early marriage was defined in the Criminal Code. Any adult who had relations with a minor could be prosecuted.

Concluding Remarks

MAYRA JIMENEZ**,** Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic and Head of Delegation, thanked the Committee Experts for their professionalism and comprehensive approach in their review of the report. This represented a great deal to the women of the Dominican Republic and to the State. The Dominican Republic was committed to making progress towards the advancement of the rights of women and girls in the country.

GLADYS ACOSTA VARGAS, Chair of the Committee, thanked the delegation for the constructive dialogue, which allowed the Committee to gain a better understanding of the situation of women in the Dominican Republic. Ms. Vargas commended the State party for progress made and encouraged the Dominican Republic to take all necessary steps to address the recommendations of the Committee.

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