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rights. That had been in line with the efforts of the All-China Women's Fed. and its subsidiaries to set up legal advisory services on a nation-wide scale. It was believed in China that to realize equality between men and women it was not enough to legislate, but also to obtain the support of the whole society and determination and efforts of women themselves.

176. Finally, the representative of the State party outlined the scope of activities of the All-China Women's Federation, which mobilized, organized and educated women to enable them to participate in the political life of the country. The Federation could initiate discussions, propose new laws and make recommendations on national policy; it also had the right to supervise the implementation of such policies. It had 400 staff members and it was supporting local federations at other levels. It maintained international contacts with 230 women's organizations in 126 countries.

177. The Committee thanked the representative of the State party for the complete answers furnished and the comprehensive explanation on the family planning program of China. Several questions were asked regarding divorce and whether women could initiate divorce proceedings. With regard to the name of a child, experts inquired whether there was a choice or did the child carry the father's name. Clarifications were requested on the term "freedom to marry", and whether unilateral consent existed. As to selection from a genetic point of view, it was asked whether diseases prevented marriage.

178. One expert inquired whether the family planning policy did not contradict article 16 of the Convention, which ensured the freedom of choice and number of children.

179. The representative of the State party explained that freedom to marry had been a breakthrough for women in China who had been subjected to pre-arranged marriage in the old society. Neurosis or mental insanity was considered one disease for which marriage was prohibited. The parents decided on the name of the child. However, once the child reached adulthood he or she could choose whatever name was wished. The family planning programme was not compulsory. Only 40 per cent of couples had complied with the one child per couple policy; the other 60 per cent were cases in which a second or third child had been born.

180. She indicated that other answers would be provided in the next report and she was willing to establish an informal dialogue on any other question of interest to the experts desired more information.

Egypt

181. The Committee considered the initial report of Egypt (CEDAW/C/5/Add.10 and Amend.1) at its 34th and 39th meetings, held on 30 March and 3 April 1984 (CEDAW/C/SR.34 and 39).

182. In her introduction, the representative of Egypt stated that there was no discrimination against women in her country, and remarked that there had been discrepancies in the translation of the amendment to the report, which the Secretariat was urged to correct. She added that Egypt believed in equality between men and women, and considered that the discrimination against women was a violation of the principles of respect for human dignity and an obstacle to full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their country.
183. Islam, she stated, attached great importance to the protection of women and guaranteed their rights and responsibilities as daughters, sisters, mothers and wives. The Egyptian Constitution enshrined equality of citizens regardless of sex, race, or religion; article 11 assured proper co-ordination between the duties of women towards the family and their work in society, considering them equal with men in the fields of political, social, cultural and economic life without prejudice to the prescriptions of Islamic law (Shari'a). The right to equal pay for equal work was recognized as well through the Labour Law.

184. Women exercised their civil and political rights by becoming members of legislative councils and trade unions, professors in universities, ministers, judges, diplomats, not to mention other occupations.

185. The Government of Egypt had ratified the Convention while registering reservations on article 9, paragraph 2, concerning the granting to women of equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children; article 16, concerning the equality of women and men in all matters relating to marriage and family relations during marriage and at its dissolution "which shall be without prejudice to the rights guaranteed by Islamic Religious Law"; and article 29, paragraph 2, concerning the right of a State signatory of the Convention to declare its commitment to paragraph 1 of that article concerning submitting to arbitration any dispute among States regarding the interpretation or application of the Convention. She drew the attention of the Committee to amendment 1 of the report where more details were given in those respects.

186. Several progressive measures had been initiated by her Government with regard to guaranteeing the principle of equality in all spheres of life. As examples, she stated that 30 seats in the National Assembly were allocated to women, as well as at least one or two seats in local councils. In addition to that, women had the right to compete with men for the other seats. A National Commission for women and a General Department for Women's Affairs in the Ministry of Social Affairs were created and, among others, vocational training centres were opened up to young women.

187. The Egyptian woman enjoyed from birth exactly the same legal rights as a man; she kept her own patrimony and was free to administer her own finances and inheritances independently from her husband upon marriage.

188. Finally, there had been a marked increase in the number of women attending educational institutions and universities. At the present time, the proportion of female students was 40.7 per cent of the total number of students. Secondary schools' enrolment of women was also on the increase - 160,000 at the present, as against only 106,000 in 1973-1974. It was to be noted that there were in Egypt at present 11 universities while there had been only 4 in the past.

189. The Committee thanked the representative for her introduction of the report. Several experts expressed their appreciation for the additional information submitted under amendment 1 and commended the efforts made by the Government to comply with the Convention's articles. Since it was the first report which the Committee was examining from an Islamic country, clarification regarding secular and religious law in Egypt would be pertinent and educational. Some members were particularly gratified to note the number of changes that had been introduced by the Government and it was commended.
190. Referring to an earlier discussion in the Committee, one expert requested an opinion from the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat with regard to reservations. The expert remarked that reservations incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention were not permitted according to its article 28. Articles 2 and 16 laid down principles of equality, which were fundamental to the Convention. In the case of Egypt, for instance, the wording its reservations gave no guidance as to what extent the applicability of the Convention was limited for Egypt. With regard to reservations, other experts referred to article 16 and the Government's comments in the report. Clarificati were requested regarding the sacred character of marital relations, the issue of complementarity and the obligations of Islamic law on that subject.

191. Several experts questioned the difference between Islamic religious law and its interpretation and secular law; as well as what areas of law each governed. For example, one expert cited the problem of polygamy and repudiation and asked what way that was compatible with the articles which stipulated that practices based on the idea of inferiority or superiority of either sex should be eliminated and with article 16 of the Convention. It was also asked how the Convention had been incorporated into the judicial system of the country, how it was applied in what recourse women had in case of discrimination.

192. Other experts requested more information on how the Government of Egypt intended to reconcile the requirements of the Convention and Islamic law, while others asked for the specific texts of the Islamic law so that a better understanding might be gained. Another expert inquired how Islamic law affected non-Muslim women.

193. With regard to the concept of equality enshrined in article 2 of the Convention, a few experts asked if that concept was a formal legal concept and if there was any specific article in the Egyptian Constitution expressly forbidding discrimination against women. It was remarked that there seemed to be a basic assumption by some Governments that harmony was equated with equality. It was known that that assumption was held by male-dominated societies.

194. It was remarked that the establishment of targets or quotas for parliament and council seats was a good idea, and more information was requested on how the measure was implemented, whether the quota system pre-empted women from occupying or being elected to more seats than the allotment, what proportion of women were on the ballot lists, how many men and women were elected and to what seats. As the quota system could be interpreted as tokenism it was necessary that equality be observed in practice and not in theory only. It was pointed out that 30 out of 392 seats was still a very low figure.

195. In regard to the above, more statistical information was needed on what percentage of women were in the foreign service at ambassadorial levels, in ministerial and decision-making positions, in the judicial system other than in juvenile courts, as social service employees, and in the trade unions both as members and as directors of employees.

196. The subject of employment and restriction on certain kinds of occupations was noted. It was inquired why women were not allowed to work in bars or in casinos (gambling establishments) as long as those establishments were legally run and allowed by the State. There also seemed to be differences in employment practice regarding maternity leave between the public and private sectors as, for example
women workers in the government administration were granted up to two years' leave without pay while the private sector granted one year's leave without pay. It was asked what the consequences upon the women's return to work were in either case. Also, since there were restrictions on the frequency with which such leaves were granted, what would happen to women with more than three children.

197. It was mentioned in the report that the Government monitored the employment conditions of women in the private sector, yet a few experts requested information on how that monitoring system worked in relation to foreign private enterprises.

198. Also, in connection with employment patterns, it was pointed out that women lawyers had recently begun entering the Police Academy. In many countries the educational level for admission into the police force was a baccalaureat or high school diploma. More information was requested on that issue.

199. The traditional occupations of women received lower remuneration than men, and it had been the observed phenomenon that once many women entered a particular occupation the salaries were lowered. Experts inquired how such a problem was handled by the Government of Egypt under the law of equal pay for equal work.

200. The Committee noted several provisions made with regard to the pension system, and one expert asked what was the age of retirement and if pensions were collected by the widower as well as by the widow. It was also remarked that day-care centres had been established, but experts inquired whether they were co-educational and free of charge.

201. In general, it was agreed that in spite of lack of statistical information, there seemed to be a larger number of women entering the labour force, and according to the introductory statement of the representative, more women were attending educational institutions. It was asked whether girls were being encouraged to enter scientific and technical institutions to study engineering, physics and natural sciences rather than the more segregated disciplines such as nursing, home economics, hotel management and social services, etc. It was also asked what was the literacy ratio level of males and females and whether there had been literacy campaigns; also, whether women in the rural and marginal areas benefited from the overall educational effort and what programme had been designed for them. Elitism would have to be avoided in education, it was remarked, since it should reach all classes and all levels of society.

202. Other experts displayed interest in the increase in women entering vocational training centres and statistical information was also requested on that matter. The Government's initiative to examine the curriculum and eliminate traces of stereotyping and prejudices as to the inferiority of women was commended. If education was not co-educational a few experts asked how the system worked and what plans were there for integration.

203. As to provisions regarding the family, several experts requested more information on divorce, family planning programmes, pre- and post-natal counselling, abortion and assistance to working mothers. In that regard, it was asked whether the Government understood the dual function or the double burden of women and whether it had provided measures to equalize the situation at home.

204. If the Ministry of Social Affairs was responsible for the family planning policy, experts inquired about the programmes and measures that had been taken.
Also, more details were needed on divorce procedures, guardianship or custody of children and property. More explicit details as to nationality laws affecting children upon the marriage of mother or father were requested, as well as the nationality of the woman upon marriage.

205. The role and co-ordination of the Department for Women's Affairs, as well as the National Commission for Women, was an item that many members of the Committee questioned. It was also asked what budget and human resources those departments had to carry out their programmes.

206. Interest was also expressed in the campaign carried out by the National Commission for Women and it was asked whether that campaign was still being carried out.

207. With regard to women's organizations and clubs, experts asked whether there were formal and/or working relations with the National Commission for Women or the General Department for Women's Affairs. Out of the experience of those clubs and the two departmental bodies the Government must have learned what obstacles and barriers it had encountered and information was requested about them and the measures being taken to combat them. Finally, in that context, it was asked whether a National Women's Association existed in Egypt.

208. The report stated that 25 institutions had been created to care for girls exposed to moral dangers. It was inquired what were those moral dangers, who was to determine them and what functions did those institutions perform.

209. There was no reference in the report to the incidence of prostitution or rape and questions were asked as to rehabilitation of victims and sanctions for those offences.

210. The representative of Egypt, in replying to some of the questions, stated that she was pleased by the interest that had been aroused. Most of the questions would be answered at a later session, but she made certain observations.

211. She explained that the Shari'a preceded the Convention, and it embodied many precepts which protected women and guaranteed their equality with men.

212. She stressed that there was no difference between the law and the practice in the subjects dealt with in the report. In reply to one question, she said that the age of retirement was the same for men and women, namely 60. Furthermore, the Shari'a applied only to Muslims and not to people who practised other religions. Other general comments would be forwarded to the Government to be taken into account in the preparation of its next report.

213. In her replies at the 39th meeting of the Committee, the representative of Egypt explained that the provisions of the Convention were in compliance with the Constitution and other legislation valid in her country and that any contravention of the Convention was treated like a contravention of Egyptian legislation and was equally punishable.

214. Referring to a question whether discrimination against women was forbidden in her country, she stated that under the Constitution all citizens were equal irrespective of their sex, origin, language, religion or belief.
215. With respect to the prescriptions of Islamic religious law (Shari'a) and its effects on a reservation made on article 16 of the Convention, she explained that Islamic law had given a prominent position to all women and liberated them from any form of discrimination.

216. Except for certain rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution, Islamic law had given to women all the necessary rights even before the ratification of the Convention. The equality between the sexes corresponded to the provisions of the Constitution as much as to the principles of Islamic law and that equality applied to all civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights and to rights connected with the financial independence of women. Article 16 of the Convention was fully compatible with Islamic law concerning the right to enter into marriage and the right to choose a spouse. With regard to rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution, a certain difference existed between the Convention and Islamic law.

217. Under Islamic law, the marriage was entered into by contract, and it was obligatory for the spouses to abide by its terms. The husband had the primary responsibility for all financial expenditures. That provision was even discriminatory against men, as women were allowed to spend their own money freely. Under Islamic law, a woman had the right to divorce her husband at any time if such a stipulation was made in the marriage contract. In addition, a woman could divorce her husband under certain conditions. Some of those conditions were that her husband had married a second wife, he was concealing a first marriage, he did not give his wife any money or that he was in a prison for a period of three years. With regard to the granting of the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution, Egypt had made a reservation on article 16 of the Convention. In that connection, some experts wondered whether it was even necessary for Egypt to make a reservation in respect of article 16, and they wanted to know what percentage of women inserted into the marriage contract the stipulation that they could possibly divorce their husbands. Furthermore, it was asked what happened if the woman did not want to terminate the marriage and whether she had to accept another wife of her husband.

218. With regard to polygamy, the representative of Egypt explained that it was retained in Islamic law with definite restrictions because, at the time the message of Islam was first introduced, women did not work and outnumbered men because of war casualties. Such a solution was the only way to provide women with financial resources and to preserve their dignity.

219. With reference to the Personal Statute Law, she explained that the provisions of the Islamic law were applicable only to Muslims and that non-Muslims were governed by other laws and subject to other tribunals.

220. In accordance with the provisions of the Egyptian Personal Statute Law of 1979, in divorce, custody of a child up to the age of 10 for the son and 12 for the daughter was given to the mother. The Judge could prolong that custody up to the age of 15 for the son and for the daughter up until her marriage. The mother's right to custody did not affect the rights and responsibilities of the father and in all cases the interests of the children were paramount.

221. As to the question of who had the right to keep the home in case of divorce, she stated that it was the person who had the custody of the children, be it the mother or the father, provided that that person had no other abode. The paramount aim consisted in looking after the interests of the children.
222. Concerning the role of women in the legislative and political fields, it was explained that there were 31 constituencies in Egypt and that each constituency had to have at least one female member. Through free elections women could acquire more seats. The same was valid for the local councils. It was hoped that, following the next elections, the number of women would be doubled.

223. Although only 81 women occupied posts in the diplomatic service, compared with 1,000 men, that was not a matter of discrimination, but merely a lack of interest among women in such posts, which could be obtained through examination.

224. Women had the same rights as men to enrol in the faculties of engineering science, medicine, etc., and more and more women availed themselves of those rights.

225. As far as the police force was concerned, originally only men could enrol in the police academy where they studied law and police science for four years. Women had taken the initiative to apply for entrance to the police academy. In order to accommodate that desire, the authorities decided that those women had to have a university degree in law in order to be able to join the police academy, where they had to study police science for one more year to become police officers in the same way as men.

226. As regards the acquisition by a child of the father's nationality, it was explained that if an Egyptian mother married a foreign husband and thereby agreed to give the father's nationality to the child, the child nevertheless could opt for Egyptian nationality, subject to a decision by the Minister of the Interior.

227. It was further stated that, under Article 9 of the Constitution, the family was the basic element in society. Under Article 10, the State guaranteed the protection of children and mothers and under Article 11 the State guaranteed that women combined the duties inside and outside the family in accordance with the provisions of Islamic Law. To a comment made by one expert that, as a consequence of the above facts, all the burden was placed on the women's shoulders, the representative replied that the responsibilities were shared between husband and wife. The State further guaranteed sanitary conditions, medical services, retirement benefits and guaranteed and supervised the different stages of education. With a view to eliminating illiteracy, the State guaranteed education at all levels free of charge. Reference was made to the extensive progress in schooling; since, in 1982, 40 per cent of all students were women and 33.8 per cent of post-graduate registrations were women.

228. Nurseries were provided by the State and by private enterprises and the retirement age was 60 years for both men and women.

229. In addition to her own pension, a widow was entitled to a part of her husband's pension after his death; a divorced woman with no financial resources was entitled to a part of her deceased father's pension.

230. In the public sector, women were entitled to two years' unpaid leave for looking after their children, against one year only in the private sector because they received other benefits. After that time, women could assume their former posts and enjoy the same rights and privileges.

231. The Department for Women's Affairs had been created a long time ago. She had, however, no information on its budgetary situation. The National Commission on
Women consisted of representatives of many ministries, the parliament, the mass media, research institutes, trade unions and other associations and bodies.

232. The lapidation of a woman did not exist in Egypt. Under the Penal Code, any man or woman who committed adultery was imprisoned for two years. As regards the question asked about repudiation, the representative replied that there was a misunderstanding and that, according to the Egyptian legislation, there were restrictions on the unilateral right to divorce.

233. Referring to another question, she said that the 246 women's clubs were state-owned. They were placed under the Ministry of Social Affairs to train women in productive skills, but there were also some clubs established by women themselves.

234. The institutions for the protection of girls in moral danger were public institutions.

235. She concluded by saying that any questions unanswered would be taken up in the next report, which would also furnish more statistical data.

Rwanda

236. The Committee considered the initial report of Rwanda (CEDAW/C/5/Add.13) at its 38th and 41st meetings, held on 2, 3 and 4 April 1984.

237. The report was introduced by the representative of the State party who said that it was short because it had been prepared a long time before the general guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports had been adopted. She stressed that her country had been the first country from sub-Saharan Africa to sign the Convention and it had ratified or adhered to other international instruments dealing with the status of women.

238. Since the signature and ratification of the Convention, no legal or other measures had been adopted in her country because all the relevant measures were already in existence before the Convention had come into force. In Rwandese society, women had always played an important role in the survival of the family. However, as in other countries, women were victims of stereotyped attitudes and prejudices, which gave them a status inferior to men. In addition to that and because of the critical economic situation of the country, women and men in Rwanda were more preoccupied with the question of survival than with their legal status. The primary concern of the Government was to improve the living conditions of women in order to make them more receptive to the idea of equality with men.

239. Within the third five-year development plan, further integration of women in development was foreseen through an improvement in equality in the fields of education, employment and equal opportunities and through further research, in order to add greater value to the role of women in development.

240. Some progress had been made in the status of women under the provisions of the 1978 Constitution compared with the previous one. She also referred to certain articles contained in the Criminal Code and the Civil Code which protected women's rights. Prostitution and abortion were illegal and the husband was penalized if he abandoned the family. However, the Code contained a measure discriminatory against women in cases of adultery. She further enumerated the civil rights of women and
sex-role patterns in education, including preferential treatment for the under-represented sex in admissions to schools and universities. She asked what form that preferential treatment took and whether it was also applied when it was boys who were under-represented.

With regard to article 11 of the Convention, she said that the report was frank about the number of complaints the Commissioner had received; it would be interesting to know to what extent women were aware of those problems and of violations of the regulations in force. She would welcome information on how the Norwegian authorities defined the Commissioner's mandate, how the Commissioner settled disputes and how complaints were processed. With respect to article 15 of the Convention, she said that although detailed information was provided on regulations to prevent discriminatory practices in certain employment sectors, the legal status of women and the degree of real economic independence that they enjoyed were not indicated clearly. Could women take economic decisions independently? Did the law differentiate in any way between women's and men's legal status?

The report noted that one of the objectives of the Children's Act was to strengthen the rights of children to self-determination and to participation in the decision-making process. Did the Act establish any age of reason or puberty after which a person was no longer considered a child? The concept of self-determination should also be clarified: did it refer to decisions adopted within or outside the child's family? What sort of decisions, and on what matters?

With reference to articles 5 and 12 of the Convention, she endorsed the questions raised by Ms. Regent-Lechowicz. The fact that the report dwelt at length on violence was noteworthy; could it be inferred that violence against women in their homes was common? Was violence considered a crime? Had studies or research been done to determine the causes of violence? Might one of them be a high level of alcohol consumption? The lack of references to the personal status of women was also noteworthy: for example, the rules governing matrimonial relations were not mentioned. There was also a lack of information to judge how article 16 of the Convention was being applied, how the equality of political rights was implemented and what Norway's current position was with respect to article 7 of the Convention.

Mr. NORDENFELT explained that when he had asked that the Legal Counsel should be consulted on the compatibility between the reservations expressed by Governments and the provisions of the Convention, his request had been prompted not by the fact that the report of Egypt was at that moment being considered but rather by the Committee's discussions, during which a number of experts had expressed an interest in having such information. He had had to make a formal request because he had not received confirmation from the Chairperson that such a request would be transmitted to the Legal Counsel; in fact, he had still not received such confirmation. He had mentioned the case of Egypt by way of example because neither the wording of the reservations of the Government of Egypt with respect to article 2 of the Convention nor the report of Egypt contained any indication of the extent to which the reservations limited the implementation of the Convention.
The CHAIRPERSON informed the Committee that Mr. Nordenfelt's request had been transmitted to the Legal Counsel, who had transmitted his reply to the Committee.

Miss EMARA (Egypt) said that she welcomed the opportunity to reply to the important questions raised by the members of the Committee, which demonstrated their interest in the implementation of the Convention in Egypt. She particularly welcomed the question asked by Mr. Nordenfelt during the consideration of her country's report. In answer to the questions of several Committee members on the reservations made with respect to the Convention and the validity of the provisions of the Convention before Egyptian courts, she explained that the provisions of the Convention, with the exception of those subject to reservations, coincided with the legislation and the Constitution of Egypt at all levels. Therefore, any violation of the Convention was also a violation of Egypt's legislation and Constitution and was a punishable offence. Furthermore, article 151 of the Constitution of Egypt stipulated that treaties had the force of law after they had been concluded, ratified and published.

With regard to Ms. Smith's question as to whether the Constitution expressly prohibited discrimination against women, she said article 40 of the Constitution stipulated that all citizens were equal before the law and enjoyed the same rights and duties, without distinction of sex, origin, language, religion or belief. That article was cited in the report, as she had clearly stated in her own introduction.

Many of the experts had asked for explanations of the provisions of Islamic law and the consequences of her Government's reservations with regard to article 16 of the Convention. In Islamic religion, women had a sublime position as mothers, sisters and wives and Islam recognized their human dignity, granted them rights in all areas and relieved them of the burden of discrimination. Aside from matters relating to equality between men and women in connection with marriage and with family relations during marriage and after divorce, it could be seen that Islamic law had guaranteed to women all the rights and all the kinds of equality provided for by the Convention. That had happened hundreds of years before other States had thought of drafting the Convention and before the enactment of positive law by any State in the world. Egypt, as an Islamic country, had adopted the principles of Islamic law as the main source of the country's positive law. With regard to Ms. Ilie's question on whether positive law or Islamic law had priority or precedence, she expressed the view that positive law prevailed. She reaffirmed that equality between men and women was provided for in the Constitution in conformity with Islamic law and was applicable to civil and political rights, which included, for example, equality of educational opportunities. The financial independence of women, whether married or single, was also provided for. Such independence was important because it allowed women to enjoy the same rights as men and dispose of goods and property.

Replying to the question concerning the force that Islamic religious law (Shari'a) and the Convention had in Egypt, she said that article 16 of the Convention was, except for paragraph 1 (c), was compatible with the principles of the Shari'a. Concerning paragraph 1 (a), she said that the Shari'a granted women the same rights as men to enter into marriage. Concerning paragraph 1 (b), she explained that Islamic law, like the Convention, gave both men and women the same right to choose a spouse and contract marriage of their own volition and with their
(Miss Emara, Egypt)

full consent. It should be made clear, regarding the aforementioned reservation to paragraph 1 (c), that under the Shari'a, marriage was a contract, and that contract contained clauses which had been agreed to between the contracting parties before the marriage and were binding on both spouses. Those clauses stipulated that the husband had to provide for financial expenses and the wife did not have to do so if she did not wish to. Actually, such discrimination worked in favour of women rather than against them because under that arrangement the wife was financially independent and had the right to spend her money freely.

As concerned divorce, the Shari'a granted women the right to divorce, provided that marriage contract so stipulated. The Personal Statute Law stipulated various cases in which women had the right to sue for divorce: specifically, if the husband contracted a second marriage, if he had concealed the fact of a previous marriage or if he refused to comply with the obligation to provide for his wife's financial support. The other paragraphs of article 16 of the Convention were perfectly compatible with Egypt's Personal Statute Law, which gave women rights they did not enjoy in other parts of the world. With regard to polygamy, Islam permitted a man to contract marriage with more than one wife but imposed certain conditions. Egyptian legislation also imposed certain restrictions on the practice of polygamy. There were fewer and fewer men in Egypt who contracted marriage with more than one wife. The next report of Egypt would provide more statistics on the question.

Some members of the Committee had asked whether the Shari'a was applicable to both Moslems and non-Moslems; she said that it was applicable only to Moslems. The provisions applicable to Moslems were those taken by Egyptian legislation from the Shari'a, which was one of its sources. The Shari'a was not applicable to non-Moslems; with regard to the Personal Statute Law, there were special courts for non-Moslems in Egypt.

As for Ms. Mukayiranga's questions regarding the tradition of stoning women, she stated that stoning absolutely did not exist in Egypt. The punishment for adultery, applicable to both men and women, was imprisonment for two years.

With regard to children, the Personal Statute Law of 1979 stipulated special treatment in the case of divorce. The Law gave the mother custody of her sons until the age of 10 and of her daughters until the age of 12. After that, boys could remain with their mothers until they were 15 years of age, and girls until they married. Although boys were in their mothers' custody, their fathers could visit them and had an obligation to be fully concerned with them. The Law stipulated that the parent who had custody of the children in case of divorce should occupy the family home.

Regarding the role of women in legal and political affairs, she said that there was a woman on each list of candidates in the 31 electoral districts of the People's Assembly. That was the minimum level of participation by women in each district, but the number of women representatives in each district could be higher, depending on the results of the elections. Similarly, in the local councils, a minimum number of seats, usually one or two, was allocated to women. There was thus a minimum of 31 women in the People's Assembly, and that number was expected
to double at the next election. As for women in diplomatic careers, she said the fact that there were only 81 women in diplomatic posts was due not to discrimination but rather to the lack of interest on the part of women in taking the necessary examinations.

With regard to Ms. Bernard's question on the participation of women in scientific fields, it should be noted that the number of women registered in scientific courses of study at the universities was steadily rising. The entrance requirements were exactly the same for men and women, and everything depended on the results of the entrance examinations and on the secondary-school records. As for the questions raised by Ms. Patiño and Ms. Macedo de Sheppard, she said that women had to have a law degree from a university in order to enter the Police Academy and were required to take a one-year course of police studies at the Academy.

In answer to the questions asked by several members of the Committee about the transmission of nationality, she said that children's acquisition of their father's citizenship did not constitute discrimination against the mother. When a woman married a foreigner, she could agree to have her child assume the foreign nationality. However, if the child of an Egyptian mother and a foreign father so desired, he could acquire Egyptian nationality by making an application to the Ministry of the Interior.

In connection with a number of questions on the role of women in the family and society, she cited certain articles of the Constitution: article 9 stipulated that the family was the foundation of society and was based on the religious and moral principles which sustained it. Article 10 stipulated that the State guaranteed the welfare of children and mothers and would assume responsibility for children in order to develop their potential. Under article 11, the State ensured that women could combine their work obligations within the family with their social, economic and cultural activities, without prejudice to the terms of the Shari'a. Article 16 stipulated that the State provided social, health and educational services, with preference given to the inhabitants of rural areas. Article 17 stipulated that the State provided health and retirement services. Under article 18, the State guaranteed the right to primary education. The State also supervised all levels of education and assumed responsibility for the necessary facilities. Under article 20, the State guaranteed that education was free of charge at all levels. Article 21 stipulated that special services to eliminate illiteracy would be provided. Her delegation would submit new statistical data concerning the Egyptian educational system in the next report.

The report stated that the first girls' secondary school in Egypt had been established in 1924, and that since then, the State had become increasingly interested in the education of women. In 1983 there had been more than 13,000 primary schools. Approximately 47,000 women graduated from universities annually. Education was free in Egypt and no distinction was made on the basis of sex at any level of education. The report stated that women accounted for 40 per cent of all students. In 1982 and 1983, 33 per cent of all students enrolled in doctoral courses had been women.
There were private and State nursing schools. Labour legislation required employers in some cases to establish child-care centres. A pension was given to men and women at age 60. A divorced woman was entitled to receive part of her former husband's pension. Women could thus receive two pensions, which meant that they had more benefits than men in that respect. Unpaid maternity leave was granted to women for a period of two years in the public sector and for one year in the private sector. Following their period of leave, women returned to work with no loss of rights.

The National Commission for Women was related to a number of ministries. The Commission was an adjunct of the Ministry of Social Affairs and included representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice; it also included representatives of the People's Assembly, the press, television, radio, trade unions and some leading national corporations. It drew up plans for women at the national level and co-ordinated the efforts of the various organs active in women's affairs. She concluded by emphasizing that all the measures contained in the report were being rigorously implemented in Egypt.

Ms. CARON expressed her appreciation for the clarifications which had been given concerning the relationship between Islamic law and positive law; however, she wondered why the Government had decided to formulate reservations with respect to article 16 of the Convention. She asked whether women could seek divorce only when that possibility had been specified in their marriage contract. She asked whether the fact that husbands must assume responsibility for all their wives implied that polygamy was a widespread custom, particularly among certain social classes.

Ms. SMITH asked, in connection with article 11 of the Convention, what was meant by the statement that the State guaranteed harmony between women's family duties and their activities in society. She wondered whether that measure really promoted equality between men and women or whether it gave women the sole responsibility for domestic tasks.

Ms. MUKAYIRANGA said that no answer had been provided to her question about a husband's unilateral renunciation of his wife. She asked why women were kept in such a state of dependency vis-à-vis their husbands, especially in view of the fact that household expenses were the husband's responsibility.

Ms. CORTEZ said that the custom of renunciation, widely acknowledged in literature, did not indicate equality between men and women in marriage. She asked what happened if a woman did not wish a divorce when her husband took a new wife. She also asked what the percentage of women in the People's Assembly was and how many women there were altogether in the legislative branch of government.

Ms. BERNARD asked whether the 246 women's clubs which had been established were independent or were organized by the Government; she also wished to know the functions of the institutions which cared for girls exposed to moral danger. She also asked what the exact meaning of "moral danger" was.
Ms. MACEDO de SHEPPARD asked once again why a law degree was required of women entering the police force and whether that requirement was also applied to men.

Miss EMARA (Egypt) said that formerly, only men had been allowed to enter the police force; they had studied law and criminology for four years. Subsequently, when women, as a result of their own initiative, had been given the opportunity to enter the Police Academy, the competent authorities had decided that they needed to hold a university degree in law to do so.

With regard to the women workers' homes mentioned in the report, she said that they were governmental institutions intended to train women to engage in productive activities in order to increase the family's earning capacity. There were also clubs associated with women's organizations. The institutions for the protection of women came under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs. With regard to article 11 of the Convention, she said that a form of co-ordination between spouses existed within the family and that not all responsibilities fell to the woman. What the State was trying to achieve was a balance between women's family and social obligations. For example, the Labour Code stipulated that kindergartens or nurseries must be established to care for the children of working women.

With regard to Ms. Caron's question about women's right to divorce, she said that there were different cases. In general, grounds for divorce were included in the marriage contract; however, there were some cases in which women might institute divorce proceedings even though the contract did not mention that specific situation — for example, when a husband contracted marriage with another woman, served a term of imprisonment or withdrew financial support from the family, or when the wife no longer wished to live in the family home.

In reply to Ms. Mukayiranga, she said that there had been a misunderstanding; she had thought she had referred to "stoning" rather than "renunciation", to which Ms. Cortés had also referred. While the Shari'a was the source of much of Egyptian law, the latter did not necessarily reproduce all the provisions of Islamic law. That was the case with renunciation, which, while provided for under the Shari'a, was not included in Egyptian law. Egyptian law accorded equal rights to men and women in the matter of divorce.

Some members of the Committee had asked questions about polygamy, a notion which must be viewed within a historical context. Centuries ago, as a result of unfortunate social circumstances, there had been a much higher number of women than men in the population; since at that time women had not been employed, marriage had been the sole institution capable of offering them an honourable and secure life. Consequently, the institution of polygamy had been established; it should be stressed, however, that while it was admitted under Islamic law, it was subject to significant restrictions, the most important one being that equality, justice and equity must be guaranteed to both spouses. Egyptian law also imposed severe limitations on men's right to marry more than once, so that many men refrained from taking new wives and the number of persons living in polygamy was continually declining. Specific data on that subject would be added in the next report.

With regard to the manner in which household expenses were paid, Egyptian
wives were in a privileged position. They had the right to dispose freely of their own finances; on the other hand, the husband was required to bear household expenses. Many women did, of course, spend their money on their own families, but that was entirely voluntary, and they were under no obligation to do so. In that respect Egyptian women held an advantage, and one might wonder whether there was reason for Egyptian men to demand equal conditions.

Concerning representation in the People's Assembly, the law stipulated that for each of the 31 districts there must be at least one woman. That number was a minimum, which meant that it could be increased without limitation, contingent only upon women's ability to secure more votes in free electoral contests.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ proposed that in order to accelerate the work, the time for statements concerning the item should be limited.

After an exchange of views, in which Ms. BIRYUKOVA, Ms. CORDES, Ms. OESER, Ms. PATINO, Ms. BEHNARD and Ms. EL-FETOUH took part, with regard to the question of limiting the time for statements during the consideration of the item entitled "Organizational and other matters", the CHAIRPERSON suggested postponing the decision until the following morning's meeting, when it could be decided whether a time-limit was required, bearing in mind the progress that had been made in the work of the Committee.

The CHAIRPERSON informed the experts that various sections of the Committee's report had been circulated, and she requested them to communicate to the Rapporteur any difficulties they found with regard to the wording.

Statement by Mrs. Leticia R. Shahani, Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women

Ms. SHAHANI (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women) said that it gave her great pleasure to have an opportunity to address the Committee, a body composed of distinguished experts who had spent many years working for the advancement of women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had entered into force only three and a half years earlier and had been ratified by 56 States parties, was considered one of the major international events of the United Nations Decade for Women. The General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session had expressed satisfaction about the status of the ratification of that instrument and at the fact that many countries had set in motion the machinery for according women their rightful place in society. However, in various instances, resistance to change was strong, and it was not possible to improve women's condition owing to prevailing socio-economic circumstances and cultural traditions.

During the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), Governments and