



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

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National statement delivered by

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THIRD COMMITTEE

Item 25: Advancement of Women

Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences

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Ms. Alsalem,

My delegation wishes to thank you for your interesting and much-needed report. Up to 38 years ago, Belgium too had gender discriminatory nationality legislation. Before 1985, a child born from the marriage between a Belgian woman and a foreign men was, for instance, automatically assigned the nationality of the father, not the Belgian nationality of the mother. With the nationality reform of 1985, and the introduction of the new Belgian nationality code, these laws were changed so that they are no longer discriminatory, not towards women or their children, and not towards same-sex couples.

You rightly put the spotlight on the importance of the right of women to confer nationality on a non-citizen spouse or to acquire, change or retain nationality on an equal basis with men. Not only for the sake of gender equality itself, but also to avoid wide-ranging and multilayered forms of human rights violations that are a consequence of losing one's nationality, both in the civil and political domain, as with regards to economic, social and cultural rights.

Belgium regrets that over 80 countries still have nationality laws that are considered discriminatory. And this more than 40 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which contains in art. 9 the obligation of States parties to uphold women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and to confer their nationality on their children on an equal basis with men. Unfortunately, a relatively large number of States parties have made substantive reservations to this article. Such substantive reservations to a fundamental provision of the Convention significantly limit the obligations undertaken by the reserving states and in this way clearly undermine the object and purpose of the Convention. Belgium regrets the existence of such reservations and encourages the States parties concerned to review and withdraw their reservations.

Thank you, President.