



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Thirty-third session

Summary record of the 701st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 22 July 2005, at 4 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Manalo

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The meeting was called to order at 4.35 p.m.

Adoption of the report of the Committee on its thirty-third session (CEDAW/C/2005/II/L.1 and CEDAW/C/2005/CRP.3 and Add.1-9)

1. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, introduced document CEDAW/C/2005/II/L.1, containing sections of the Committee's draft report, and documents CEDAW/C/2005/II/CRP.3 and Add.1-8, as amended, containing the Committee's concluding comments on the eight States parties whose reports it had considered during the session.

2. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the sections of the draft report contained in documents CEDAW/C/2005/II/L.1 and CEDAW/C/2005/II/CRP.3 and Add.1-8, as amended.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Working Group of the Whole contained in document CEDAW/C/2005/II/CRP.3, Add.9, as amended. The report contained details of the Committee's decisions, including draft decision 33/I requesting the General Assembly to extend the Committee's meeting time, and a report on activities carried out under the Optional Protocol, action taken by the Committee in implementation of article 21 of the Convention, and actions taken by the Committee on ways and means of expediting its work.

5. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft report of the Working Group of the Whole contained in document CEDAW/C/2005/II/Add.9, as amended, which would constitute the Committee's report on agenda items 5 and 6.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt its draft report on the thirty-third session in its entirety and to entrust the Rapporteur with its finalization.

8. *It was so decided.*

Provisional agenda for the thirty-fourth session

9. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, drew attention to the provisional agenda for the thirty-fourth session contained in

Chapter VIII of document CEDAW/C/2005/II/CRP.3/Add.9 (Part I).

10. *The provisional agenda for the thirty-fourth session was adopted.*

Statement by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

11. **Ms. Mayanja** (Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that, in considering reports from eight very different States parties, the Committee had identified concerns common to many or all of them. They included violence against women, trafficking in women and girls, women's under-involvement in public life, limited resources for national machinery, lack of data disaggregated by sex, persistent stereotypical attitudes and behaviour, disadvantages for women in the labour market, the education of women and girls and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women. However, the Committee's vibrant and constructive dialogue with Government representatives would improve implementation of the Convention not just in the States under review, but also in the rest of the States parties.

12. In addition to examining States parties' reports, the Committee had discussed enhancing its own working methods, especially in the light of the backlog of reports awaiting consideration; taken part in discussions with other human-rights treaty bodies and with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and contributed to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and to the Secretary-General's study on violence against women.

13. The Committee's session had coincided with the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, which had considered a report of the Secretary-General on gender mainstreaming and held a panel discussion to mark its receipt of the declaration of the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The declaration had emphasized the synergy between the Convention and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Statement by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women

14. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) congratulated the Committee on its close attention to its own working methods, from

refining the constructive dialogue with States parties to examining the format of its concluding comments. Its efforts continued to focus on effective implementation of the Convention at national level, and thus to the realities of women on the ground.

15. At the current session, the Committee had examined the relationship between the Convention and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, through discussions with Millennium Project Task Force 3 (Education and Gender Equality) and by calling States parties' attention to that link during its dialogue with them and in its concluding comments. Also during its dialogue with States parties and in its concluding comments, the Committee had continued to pay attention to Government action to follow up the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As the Organization prepared for the 2005 Summit, Governments would be reminded of their legal obligation to protect and promote women's human rights.

16. The session had once again confirmed the Convention as a powerful accountability mechanism, which complemented intergovernmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women. The Division for the Advancement of Women was committed to ensuring that the policy frameworks and operational frameworks of the Member States, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations built more effectively on the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the synergies between them.

Statement by the Chairperson

17. **The Chairperson** said that three of the eight States parties reporting to the Committee at the thirty-third session had done so for the first time. While some of the eight had adhered to the schedule for submission of reports, others had lagged behind. She hoped that all of them had found the process of preparing and presenting their reports an important part of their ongoing efforts to realize equality for women, and encouraged them to use the Committee's concluding comments as a basis for concrete and comprehensive follow-up, bringing them to the attention of the public, Government officials and parliamentarians.

18. The Committee appreciated the presence of non-governmental organizations, which had presented their own assessment of States' shortcomings in complying

with the Convention. For the first time, it had also received information from a national human rights body and would welcome further such contributions in the future. It also looked forward to stronger and more consistent involvement of United Nations entities to support compliance with the Convention at national level. Because the Committee engaged in constructive dialogue, it always identified positive aspects before pointing out areas of concern and recommending how the State party might accelerate implementation of and compliance with the Convention.

19. In keeping with its custom, the Committee had raised the issue of the reservations which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ireland, Israel and Lebanon maintained in connection with the Convention. It considered some of those reservations to be incompatible with the Convention's object and purpose and urged States parties to keep them under review, reduce their scope and establish timetables for withdrawing them.

20. In all the countries examined, the Committee had found discriminatory stereotypical attitudes and persistent customs, practices and traditions which placed women in a position of inferiority. Much more awareness-raising and sensitization of officials and the public at large must take place, and education must be improved to foster an understanding of gender equality which conformed to the letter and spirit of the Convention. The Committee had also found that certain groups of women encountered multiple forms of discrimination: migrant and refugee women, women belonging to ethnic, racial or religious minorities and rural women had consistently lower levels of education, employment, health and participation in decision-making. It had urged the States parties to take targeted action, as the Convention must be implemented for the benefit of all women.

21. During the current session, the Committee had decided to request the General Assembly to extend its meeting time: although it considered the reports of 16 States parties per year, it received many more than 16 reports per year, as was only to be expected with 180 States parties to the Convention. It hoped that all Member States would support its request for three sessions per year from 2006. As a two-year temporary measure, the Committee also proposed to meet in parallel working groups for parts of its sessions in order to eliminate the backlog of reports awaiting consideration.

22. She was pleased to note the Committee's positive experience in using country task forces, in which groups of experts took the lead in the constructive dialogue with a State party. That approach — which should continue — had helped to establish a more focused dialogue, with better coordination among the experts and more complementarity in analysis and in the issues raised with the delegations. Also at the current session, the Committee had issued a statement reflecting its concern about women's equality in the drafting of Iraq's constitution and reminding that State party of its obligations under the Convention.

Closure of the session

23. **The Chairperson** declared the thirty-third session closed.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.