



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

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

Summary record of the 702nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 16 January 2006 at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Manalo

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06-20803 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the thirty-fourth session of the Committee.

2. **Ms. Myanja** (Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the review of implementation of the Convention in 2005 had made it clear that progress had been made in achieving gender equality and empowerment of women at the national level, in such areas as establishment of policies, strategies and plans of action, greater diversity and effectiveness of mechanisms to promote gender equality, increased participation of women in the economy, improved access to education for women and girls, greater attention to their participation in the public sector, increased attention to the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls, greater recognition of women's role in peace and security, more mechanisms to protect and promote women's rights and significant progress in accessions to the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

3. Despite those gains, women continued to encounter challenges in the economic, social and political spheres, including in employment. World leaders had expressed their commitment to gender equality at the 2005 World Summit by resolving to eliminate gender inequalities in primary and secondary education, to guarantee the right of women to own property and housing, and to ensure equal access to reproductive health care, to promote women's equal access to labour markets, employment and labour protection, as well as to productive assets and resources including land, credit and technology, to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and to increase women's representation in government decision-making bodies. They had also resolved to improve the effectiveness of the human rights treaty bodies, to integrate the promotion and protection of human rights into national policies and to pay special attention to the human rights of women and girls. The World Summit had also highlighted the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

4. Noting that the General Assembly had recently approved the Committee's request for additional meeting time, she said that the Assembly expected that

the Committee would now be able to eliminate the backlog of reports. She stood ready to assist the Committee in that task.

5. The Security Council had marked the fifth anniversary of the adoption of its landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security by an open debate. Women were no longer regarded solely as victims of war but were recognized as having an active role to play as peacemakers, peacebuilders and negotiators.

6. She had recently undertaken a mission to Sudan, where she had met with the Sudanese authorities and women in the South and in Darfur. The overall situation of Sudanese women continued to be dire and she had urged the Government to accede to the Convention. She had also recently attended a conference on migration and gender issues within the Millennium Development Goals, where many participants had urged that full attention should be paid to the issue from a gender perspective.

7. Finally, noting that the Committee had made important linkages between implementation of States' international legal obligations under the Convention and their follow-up to global policies such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration, she said that she hoped it would continue to call for a holistic approach to the realization of gender equality.

8. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that, since the previous session, three additional States — Burkina Faso, San Marino and South Africa — had become party to the Optional Protocol, Georgia and Liberia had accepted the amendment to article 20, and Kuwait had withdrawn its reservation to article 7 (a).

9. The decision by the General Assembly to grant the Committee additional meeting time would pose new challenges for both the Committee and the Secretariat. The Division for the Advancement of Women would do its utmost to provide the support necessary to enable the Committee to use the new opportunities created.

10. One of the technical cooperation activities undertaken by the Division to enhance the implementation of the Convention at the national level was its collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in a subregional

workshop on follow-up to concluding comments and observations of the Committee. Several members of the Committee had participated in the workshop, which had been held in Egypt. The Division continued to support national machineries for the advancement of women in Africa, in particular by facilitating the systematic and effective use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to enhance dissemination of national data on gender equality issues and improve networking at the subregional and regional levels.

11. The priority theme for the forthcoming fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women would be participation, more specifically the participation of women in development and in decision-making processes at all levels. The Committee had consistently endeavoured to ensure that the Convention was fully taken into account in the intergovernmental process so as to strengthen a holistic approach to the promotion of gender equality. The Chairperson regularly addressed the Commission, and the Committee had provided valuable input to its work.

12. During the thirty-fourth session, the Committee would consider the reports of eight States parties and would continue its work under the Optional Protocol. It would proceed with the drafting of a general recommendation on article 2 and would address the question of women migrant workers. It would also meet with the High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss reform proposals for the human rights treaty body system.

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/2006/I/1 and Corr.1)

13. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the provisional agenda and organization of work as contained in document CEDAW/C/2006/I/1 and Corr.1.

14. **Ms. Morvai** noting that, after she had expressed criticism — based on objective data — regarding the situation of women in the occupied territories, the Government of Israel had approached her own Government, said that members of the Committee should be protected from government interference in the discharge of their duties. She therefore requested that the issue be placed on the agenda for the session.

15. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** expressed her solidarity with that request.

16. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** proposed that the matter should be discussed in closed session.

17. *It was so decided.*

18. *The provisional agenda and organization of work were adopted.*

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the thirty-third and thirty-fourth sessions of the Committee

19. **The Chairperson** said that, in accordance with established practice, she had attended the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and had spoken before the Third Committee, where she had explained the rationale behind the Committee's decision to call for three annual sessions as a long-term solution, as well as the possibility of meeting in parallel working groups for parts of the 2006 and 2007 sessions. She had also briefed the Assembly about the Committee's work in 2005, had drawn attention to the Committee's statements regarding the 10-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the tsunami disaster and had stressed its continuing concern with the situation of women in Iraq. She had emphasized the Committee's continuing efforts to improve its working methods and its contribution to enhancing the working methods of all the human rights treaty bodies.

20. Since the last session, she had worked with experts on a future general recommendation on women migrant workers, a first draft of which was almost completed. In October, she had hosted a workshop in the Philippines attended by NGO representatives and experts on migration from all over the world.

21. During the current session, eight States would be presenting their reports and the Committee would meet with representatives of the United Nations system, as well as with non-governmental organizations, which would provide country-specific information. She expressed appreciation of the support given by International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific to national non-governmental organizations for the preparation of shadow reports. Additional demands would be placed on it and on national NGOs by the increase in the number of States considered annually. The Committee had always benefited greatly from the inputs of national NGOs and she hoped that the necessary support would be forthcoming so as to ensure the preparation of such

shadow reports in most if not all of the reporting States.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

22. **Ms. Popescu**, speaking as Chairperson of the pre-session working group, said that in drawing up the list of issues and questions for the eight States parties that would be presenting their reports at the current session, the group had adopted a new methodology, which consisted in focusing on priority areas rather than proceeding on an article-by-article basis. It had also given attention to States parties' follow-up to the Committee's concluding comments and other core documentation, with due regard for information received from United Nations agencies and NGOs. Dialogue with United Nations entities should be further developed both between and during sessions.

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention
(CEDAW/C/2006/3)

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2006/1/4)

23. **Ms. Brautigam** (Chief, Women's Rights Section, Division for the Advancement of Women) drew attention to the vote by the Secretariat contained in document CEDAW/C/2006/1/3, saying that three specialized agencies, namely the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), had submitted reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas within their purview. Their reports were contained in addenda 1, 3 and 4 respectively to document CEDAW/C/2006/1/3. Later that morning, the Committee would be meeting with representatives of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system wishing to present information on the States parties whose reports were to be considered at the current session or on what the agencies themselves had done to promote the provisions of the Convention nationally and regionally.

24. She introduced the note by the Secretariat on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, contained in document CEDAW/C/2006/1/4 which summarized recent developments in the human rights regime, including the human rights treaty bodies,

and action taken by intergovernmental bodies, as well as the Secretariat's activities in support of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. It also provided information on guidelines for interaction with national human rights institutions; interaction with United Nations entities; and availability and issuance of the Committee's summary records. Since the document had been finalized, Bolivia, Jordan and Mexico had submitted their reports, so that the total number of States whose reports were awaiting consideration stood at 60, not including the eight reports to be considered at the current session. Since the Committee's last session the backlog had thus increased by five States. In 2005, 30 States had submitted reports; there were 17 States whose reports were more than 10 years overdue. Finally, she drew attention to document CEDAW/C/2006/1/2 which showed the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.