



**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 719th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 3 February 2006, at 4 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Manalo

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06-23227 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.45 p.m.

Adoption of the report of the Committee on its thirty-fourth session (CEDAW/C/2006/1/L.1; CEDAW/C/TGO/CO/5/CRP.1; CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/3/CRP.2; CEDAW/C/THA/CO/5/CRP.3; CEDAW/C/ERI/CO/3/CRP.4; CEDAW/C/MKD/CO/3/CRP.5; CEDAW/C/VEN/CO/6/CRP.6; CEDAW/C/AUL/CO/5/CRP.7; CEDAW/C/MLI/CO/3/CRP.8; and CEDAW/C/CRP.1 and Add.1)

1. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Committee, contained in document CEDAW/C/2006/1/L.1, as well as its concluding comments on the eight States parties whose reports it had considered during the session, contained in documents CEDAW/C/TGO/CO/5/CRP.1, as amended; CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/3/CRP.2, as amended; CEDAW/C/THA/CO/5/CRP.3, as amended; CEDAW/C/ERI/CO/3/CRP.4, as amended; CEDAW/C/MKD/CO/3/CRP.5, as amended; CEDAW/C/VEN/CO/6/CRP.6, as amended; CEDAW/C/AUL/CO/5/CRP.7, as amended; and CEDAW/C/MLI/CO/3/CRP.8, as amended.

2. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the Committee's draft report, contained in document CEDAW/C/2006/1/L.1, as well as its concluding comments, as amended, on the eight States parties' reports.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Working Group of the Whole, contained in documents CEDAW/C/CRP.1 and Add.1. The report contained details of the activities and action taken by the Committee under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, action taken by the Committee in implementation of article 21 of the Convention, and action 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 documents CEDAW/C/CRP.1 and Add.1.

6. *It was so decided.*

Provisional agenda for the thirty-fifth session

7. **Ms. Šimonović**, Rapporteur, drew attention to the provisional agenda for the thirty-fifth session, which was also contained in document CEDAW/C/CRP.1.

8. *The provisional agenda for the thirty-fifth session was adopted.*

Statement by the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

9. **Ms. Mayanja** (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that, in considering reports by eight States parties, the Committee had probed carefully and conscientiously to obtain a very precise picture of the status of implementation of the Convention. Its many diverse and sometimes difficult questions had not only reflected its detailed knowledge but also provided a framework for better implementation of the Convention at the domestic level in the reporting States.

10. Although conditions in the States parties differed greatly, the Committee had identified a number of common concerns in many or all of them. Those concerns included the status of the Convention in the domestic legal system and its application and enforceability, the continuing prevalence of many forms and manifestations of violence against women, sexual exploitation, trafficking in women, low levels of participation in public life, lack of gender-disaggregated data, persistence of stereotypical attitudes, and women's disadvantages in the labour market and in education.

11. The Committee had also given careful attention to the situation of vulnerable groups of women, in particular rural women and women belonging to ethnic or other minorities. In each instance, the Committee had provided detailed guidance to States parties on measures to eliminate discrimination and accelerate realization of women's de facto equality, as required by the Convention.

12. The Committee had also discussed ways and means of improving its work, met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss proposals for reform of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, and discussed a draft

general recommendation on migrant women. It had also given preliminary consideration to the working methods of the parallel working groups to be established for consideration of periodic reports in August 2006 and during 2007. In that connection, she welcomed the invitation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the Committee to hold an informal meeting in Berlin in May 2006 to discuss those matters further and observe the Committee's twenty-fifth anniversary.

13. The consideration of reports submitted by States parties was complemented by the Committee's responsibilities under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and she congratulated the Committee on the work completed under the Optional Protocol at its thirty-fourth session. The new guidelines adopted on the contribution of United Nations entities to the implementation of the Convention were also a welcome development.

14. Turning to her own activities during the thirty-fourth session, she said that she had attended a meeting on gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals at the International Model United Nations Conference, held in The Hague, Netherlands, on 23 and 24 January 2006, at which she had stressed Goal 3 on gender equality and the empowerment of women and the importance of renewed commitments to reducing gender gaps. She had also co-chaired the Biennial Workshop of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Gender Equality, held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 30 and 31 January 2006. During the Workshop, she had noted in particular, that in most countries, women's progress continued to be held hostage by deep and systematic discrimination and social, political and economic exclusion, which were embedded in cultural norms and often enshrined in national laws.

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

15. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) recalled that pursuant to a decision of the General Assembly, the Committee would hold three sessions during 2006, with meetings of parallel working groups in August. The increased meeting time would enable the Committee to consider the reports of 31 States parties, instead of 16 as in previous years. Furthermore, two States parties, St. Kitts and Nevis and the United Republic of Tanzania, had acceded to the Optional Protocol since

the beginning of the year, and two States parties, Mexico and Honduras, had submitted reports under article 18 of the Convention. Those developments augured well for a busy year, which would once again require a significant focus on the promotion and protection of women's human rights.

16. She welcomed the opportunities that had arisen during the session for the Committee or individual experts to participate in various activities that had an impact on the implementation of the Convention. Several experts had taken an active interest in the negotiations on a comprehensive convention on persons with disabilities. There had also been significant interest in learning about the Committee's experience in furthering de facto equality between men and women, and the Committee had been briefed on two important new publications, "The World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics", published by the United Nations Statistics Division, and "WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women", published by the World Health Organization (WHO).

17. The Committee's preliminary discussion of a general recommendation on migrant women was a timely initiative, as the question of international migration was being addressed by her Division and the Commission on the Status of Women, and held a prominent place in debates within the United Nations system. The Committee would be able to make a unique contribution to the discussion from its perspective as a human rights treaty body.

18. At its upcoming fiftieth session, the Commission on the Status of Women would examine the question of women's participation, an issue the Committee had often raised during its consideration of States parties' reports. During past sessions, the Committee had consistently and systematically addressed the low participation of women in political and public life, the lack of women's representation and access to high-level positions in government and governmental bodies at all levels, the diplomatic service, the legislature and the judiciary. It had also voiced concern about the need to ensure women's participation in the leadership of the economy. At its fiftieth session, the Commission would also address the question of an enabling environment for increasing women's participation in development, especially in relation to health, education and work.

Statement by the Chairperson

19. **The Chairperson** said she hoped that the Committee's concluding comments would give the eight States parties whose reports it had examined renewed impetus to proceed more decisively towards the realization of de facto equality for women. She would strongly urge them to use the concluding comments as the basis for concrete and comprehensive follow-up, and would invite them to publicize the comments widely to the public at large and ensure that government officials, parliamentarians and other public officials were made well aware of them and were encouraged to take follow-up measures within their areas of responsibility.

20. Non-governmental organizations had once again made a significant contribution to the Committee's work, and she would encourage them to intensify their efforts on behalf of women in their countries. Moreover, United Nations entities could and should be playing an important role in supporting implementation of the Convention and realizing women's human rights, and she would encourage them to offer their support and assistance to the States parties concerned as they followed up on the Committee's concluding comments. In the spirit of a constructive dialogue aimed at enhancing implementation, the Committee always identified positive aspects, followed by principal areas of concern, accompanied by recommendations.

21. The Committee had once again found that certain groups of women encountered multiple forms of discrimination, placing a particular responsibility on governments to counteract and eradicate such patterns and violations of women's rights. Rural women and women belonging to ethnic or other minorities consistently had lower levels of education, employment, health and participation in decision-making than women in urban areas or women who belonged to predominant groups. The Committee was very concerned at that situation and wished to impress upon States parties the need for targeted action, as the Convention must be implemented for the benefit of all women.

22. The Convention remained insufficiently known to the legal profession in many countries. While acknowledging the different methods used to transform international human rights treaties into domestic legal systems, the Committee wished to emphasize that the definition of the Convention, contained in its article 1,

including a prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination, should be comprehensively reflected in the Constitution or other appropriate legislation. States that were parties to the Optional Protocol should make greater efforts to ensure that their populations were aware of the procedures available under it.

23. She wished to express the Committee's appreciation to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for its invitation to hold an informal meeting in Berlin in May 2006, which would allow the Committee to prepare the working methods for the parallel working groups, continue its discussion of its draft general recommendation on migrant women, and discuss the reform proposals of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pertaining to the human rights treaty bodies.

24. The Committee wished to thank the High Commissioner for the time she had spent with the Committee during the session, but also wished to emphasize that insufficient information was available to assess all the implications of her proposals, not only for the functioning of the treaty bodies, but in particular for the full and effective implementation of treaty obligations at the national level. The Committee therefore looked forward to receiving her concept paper, to which it would give careful consideration.

Closure of the session

25. **The Chairperson** declared the thirty-fourth session closed.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.