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Commission on the Status of Women

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**Results of the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The present note reflects the results, including decisions taken, of the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, held in Geneva from 6 to 24 July 2015 and from 26 October to 20 November 2015. Information on the sixtieth session, held in Geneva from 16 February to 6 March 2015, can be found in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly ([A/70/38](#), part III).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 47/94, the General Assembly recommended that the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be scheduled, whenever possible, to allow for the timely transmission of the results of those sessions for information to the Commission on the Status of Women.

2. The Committee held its sixty-first and sixty-second sessions from 6 to 24 July 2015 and from 26 October to 20 November 2015, respectively. At its sixty-first session, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice ([CEDAW/C/GC/33](#)). It also decided to mandate its Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) working group to explore possibilities for the Committee to engage in the follow-up and review of a proposed indicator for target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality, in cooperation with UN-Women and to rename the working group as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/UN-Women/Sustainable Development Goals working group. At its sixty-second session, its first ever four-week session, the Committee adopted a statement on the refugee crises and the protection of women and girls. The Committee also held a panel discussion on the topic "Connecting the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the women, peace and security agenda", organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Treaty Body Platform of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. The panel was composed of several high-level speakers. Some 29 States and different United Nations entities, specialized agencies, international and regional organizations attended the event.

3. The Committee continued to engage with partners. Directly following the sixtieth session, the new Chair of the Committee, Yoko Hayashi, delivered a statement to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-ninth session, in New York. Prior to the sixty-second session of the Committee, on 12 October 2015, the Chair presented the report of the Committee on its fifty-eighth, fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions ([A/70/38](#)) to the Third Committee of the General Assembly in New York.

4. At its sixty-first session, the Committee received a briefing from the Chief of the Research and Data Section of UN-Women, Shara Razavi, by videoconference, on a proposed indicator on non-discriminatory legislation for measuring progress towards Sustainable Development Goals target 5.1 on gender equality, and discussed the possibility for the Committee to engage in the follow-up and review of such an indicator. It also privately met with the Chair and gender focal point of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Megan Davis, who briefed the Committee on the rights of indigenous women.

5. At its sixty-second session, the Committee heard a briefing from the Director of the Global Indicators Group, Development Economics, of the World Bank, Augusto Lopez-Claros, on the Women, Business and the Law dataset of the World Bank and related global gender equality indicators. It also received a briefing from the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director, Intergovernmental

Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau of UN-Women, Lakshmi Puri, by videoconference, on the follow-up and review of target 5.1 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and continued discussions on the Committee's possible involvement in such follow-up and review. The Committee also privately met the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, to exchange information on each other's work in addressing violence against women and to discuss continuing cooperation.

6. The Committee continued to benefit from country-specific information received from United Nations entities and specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (NGOs coordinated by International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific).

7. As at 20 November 2015, the closing date of the sixty-second session of the Committee, there were 189 States parties to the Convention and 106 States parties to the Optional Protocol. A total of 70 States had accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee. To bring the amendment into force, two thirds of the States parties to the Convention (currently 126 States parties) must deposit their instruments of acceptance with the Secretary-General.

II. Results of the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the Committee

A. Reports considered by the Committee

8. At its sixty-first session, the Committee considered the reports of eight States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon: Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (CEDAW/C/BOL/5-6), Croatia (CEDAW/C/HRV/4-5), the Gambia (CEDAW/C/GMB/4-5), Namibia (CEDAW/C/NAM/4-5), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (CEDAW/C/VCT/4-8), Senegal (CEDAW/C/SEN/3-7), Spain (CEDAW/C/ESP/7-8) and Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8). The consideration of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the absence of a report had originally been scheduled for the fifty-sixth session, but Saint Vincent and the Grenadines submitted its combined fourth to eighth periodic reports on 5 August 2013, meaning that consideration was subsequently postponed to the sixty-first session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of an updated list of issues and questions at the meeting of the pre-sessional working group.

9. At its sixty-second session, the Committee considered the reports of 11 States parties and issued its concluding observations thereon: Lebanon (CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5), Liberia (CEDAW/C/LBR/7-8), Madagascar (CEDAW/C/MDG/6-7), Malawi (CEDAW/C/MWI/7), Portugal (CEDAW/C/PRT/8-9), Russian Federation (CEDAW/C/RUS/8), Slovakia (CEDAW/C/SVK/5-6), Slovenia (CEDAW/C/SVN/5-6), Timor-Leste (CEDAW/C/TLS/2-3), United Arab Emirates (CEDAW/C/ARE/2-3) and Uzbekistan (CEDAW/C/UZB/5).

10. Representatives of United Nations entities, specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and NGOs attended the sessions. The reports of the States parties, the Committee's lists of

issues and questions, the States parties' replies thereto and their introductory statements are posted on the website of the Committee under the relevant session, as are the concluding observations of the Committee.

B. Action taken in relation to the implementation of article 21 of the Convention

Task force on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

11. The task force met during the sixty-first session. During the sixty-second session, on 19 November 2015, the Committee convened a panel discussion on the topic "Connecting CEDAW and the women, peace and security agenda", organized by OHCHR, in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Treaty Body Platform of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and to underline the importance of the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, in that context. The panellists included a member of the Committee and of the High-level Advisory Group for the Global Study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Pramila Patten; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani; and a member of the Syrian Women League, Sarah Abu Assali. The Chair and the Vice-Director of the Directorate of International Law of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, made welcoming remarks. The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Flavia Pansieri, opened the discussion, and the Chief of the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section, OHCHR, Veronica Birga, moderated the panel. The Manager of Policy Studies of the Geneva Academy, Felix Kirchmeier, made concluding remarks. Twenty-eight States parties to the Convention (Algeria, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay) and one non-State party (Islamic Republic of Iran) attended the event. In addition, nine United Nations entities, specialized agencies, international and regional organizations (European Union, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Development Law Organization, International Organization for Migration, International Organization of Francophonie, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations Children's Fund) as well as NGOs attended the event.

General recommendation on access to justice

12. On 24 July 2015, the Committee adopted, by consensus, general recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice. In the general recommendation, the Committee identifies six interrelated components of justice systems that are essential to ensure women's access to justice, namely, the justiciability of their rights, availability, accessibility, good quality, provision of

remedies and accountability. It makes recommendations to States parties on how to ensure these components and eliminate discriminatory procedures, practices as well as stereotyping within justice systems. It states that stereotyping compromises the impartiality and integrity of justice systems in all areas of law and can lead to miscarriage of justice and re-victimization of women complainants. The Committee also makes recommendations on how to ensure women's access to justice in specific areas of law, such as constitutional, civil, family, criminal, administrative, social and labour law, and within specific mechanisms such as plural justice systems, specialized judicial and quasi-judicial systems, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, national human rights institutions and ombudsman offices. It observes that the presence of plural justice systems can itself limit women's access to justice by perpetuating and reinforcing discriminatory social norms and that practices embedded in plural justice systems should be harmonized with the Convention to minimize conflict of laws and ensure women's access to justice.

Working group on rural women

13. The working group met during the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions and further improved the draft general recommendation. During the sixty-first session, the Committee completed a first reading, and during the sixty-second session, it began adopting its draft general recommendation on rural women.

Working group on the right to education

14. The working group met during the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions.

Working group on climate change and natural disasters

15. The working group met during the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions. At the sixty-second session, the Committee endorsed, in principle, a concept note for a draft general recommendation and confirmed that a half day of general discussion on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change would be held on 29 February 2016 during the sixty-third session of the Committee.

Working group on working methods

16. The working group met during the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions. At the sixty-first session, it considered and submitted draft decisions to the Committee on guidelines on reprisals and on elements for the elaboration of and consultations on general recommendations, both of which were adopted by the Committee (see para. 21 below). At the sixty-second session, the working group considered and submitted to the Committee draft decisions on a new standard paragraph on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on the role of country rapporteurs, on membership of country task forces, as well as on the maximum length of concluding observations and of follow-up information from States parties, all of which were adopted by the Committee (see para. 22 below).

Working group in charge of updating general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women

17. The working group met during the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions to discuss a first draft general recommendation updating general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women. At the sixty-second session, the working

group decided to hold an expert meeting to be hosted by the London School of Economics, Centre for Women, Peace and Security, on 4 and 5 February 2016.

Joint working group of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Human Rights Committee

18. During the sixty-second session, on 29 October 2015, the Committee and the Human Rights Committee held a joint informal consultation, hosted by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, to continue the discussion on abortion that had been initiated at the previous joint meeting of both Committees on 16 July 2014.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/UN-Women/Sustainable Development Goals working group

19. The working group met during the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions. At the sixty-second session, it considered a proposal by UN-Women concerning the Committee's involvement in the follow-up and review of a proposed indicator for target 5.1 on gender equality of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The working group prepared the videoconferences held with UN-Women to discuss the proposal on 12 and 19 November.

Working group on the Inter-Parliamentary Union

20. The working group met during the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions.

C. Action taken in relation to ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

Enhancing the Committee's working methods under article 18 of the Convention

Working methods

21. At its sixty-first session, the Committee took note of the guidelines on reprisals endorsed by the twenty-seventh meeting of chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, held in San José, from 22 to 26 June 2015 ("San José guidelines"; [HRI/MC/2015/6](#)) and decided to consider them further with a view to adapting and developing them to best reflect the Committee's particular context, mandate and experience. In the meantime, the Committee decided that its Bureau would continue to act as focal point for intimidation or reprisals, including intersessionally. The Committee further took note of the elements for the elaboration of and consultations on general comments/general recommendations endorsed by the twenty-seventh meeting of chairs of the human rights treaty bodies (see [A/70/302](#), para. 91 (a) to (h)) and decided to adopt most of them, while noting that the process for consulting and incorporating comments from other mechanisms and stakeholders on draft general recommendations would require further consideration by the Committee.

22. At its sixty-second session, the Committee took decisions to introduce a new standard paragraph on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its concluding observations on State party reports, to further strengthen the role of country rapporteurs in the preparation and during dialogues with States parties, to reduce the minimum membership of country task forces from 10 to 9 experts (including the country rapporteur) and to introduce internal word limits for

concluding observations (6,000 words) as well as for information from States parties on follow-up to concluding observations (4,000 words).

Follow-up procedure

23. The Committee continued its work under the follow-up procedure at its sixty-first and sixty-second sessions, adopting the reports of the Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and considering the follow-up reports of Algeria, Angola, Austria, Chile, Cyprus, Hungary, Kuwait, Malta, Mexico, Nepal, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo and Turkmenistan. The reports are posted on the web page of the Committee.

Overdue reports

24. The Committee decided that the secretariat should systematically remind States parties whose reports were five years or more overdue to submit their reports as soon as possible. As at 20 November 2015, the closing date of the sixty-second session, there were 15 States parties whose reports are overdue by five years or more: Antigua and Barbuda, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominica, Ireland, Kiribati, Latvia, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Monaco, Mozambique, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe and Suriname. With regard to long overdue reports, the Committee decided that, as a last resort, and failing receipt of the long overdue reports by a specified date, it would proceed with the consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the State party in the absence of a report. In 2016 and 2017, the Committee is scheduled to review the following States parties in the absence of a report: Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis. States parties have been responsive to the reminders transmitted by the secretariat, as evidenced by the number of reports submitted and scheduled for consideration. The Committee currently has 44 reports scheduled for consideration between the sixty-third session (February/March 2016) and the sixty-seventh session (July 2017).

Dates of future sessions of the Committee

25. The Committee confirmed the tentative dates of its sixty-third, sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions as follows:

Sixty-third session

- (a) Thirty-fourth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 9 to 12 February 2016, Geneva;
- (b) Third session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 11 and 12 February 2016;
- (c) Plenary: 15 February to 4 March 2016, Geneva;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the sixty-fifth session: 7 to 11 March 2016, Geneva;

Sixty-fourth session

- (a) Thirty-fifth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 29 June to 1 July 2016, Geneva;
- (b) Fourth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 30 June and 1 July 2016, Geneva;
- (c) Plenary: 4 to 22 July 2016, Geneva;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the sixty-sixth session: 25 to 29 July 2016, Geneva;

Sixty-fifth session

- (a) Thirty-sixth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 19 to 21 October 2016, Geneva;
- (b) Fifth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 20 and 21 October 2016, Geneva;
- (c) Plenary: 24 October to 18 November 2016, Geneva;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the sixty-seventh session: 21 to 25 November 2016, Geneva.

Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

26. The Committee confirmed that it would consider the reports of the Czech Republic, Haiti, Iceland, Japan, Mongolia, Sweden, the United Republic of Tanzania and Vanuatu at its sixty-third session and the reports of Albania, France, Mali, Myanmar, the Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and Uruguay at its sixty-fourth session.

D. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising from article 2 and article 8 of the Optional Protocol

27. At its sixty-first session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its thirty-second session. The Committee adopted, by consensus, views finding violations with regard to communications No. 24/2009 concerning Georgia and No. 45/2012 concerning Kazakhstan. It also found, by consensus, that communications No. 50/2013 concerning Denmark and No. 52/2013 concerning the Netherlands were inadmissible.

28. Also during the sixty-first session, the Committee decided to put the follow-up dialogue to a close with regard to a communication concerning Turkey (No. 28/2010), having found a partially satisfactory resolution of the recommendations contained in its views.

29. With regard to inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee, among other things, endorsed the report of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol on its first session. In relation to inquiry 2010/1 concerning the Philippines, it adopted the recommendation of the Working Group to raise questions on the implementation of the recommendations made by

the Committee in its report of the inquiry in the list of issues and questions concerning the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the Philippines to be established by the pre-sessional working group for the sixty-fourth session of the Committee. In relation to inquiry 2011/1 concerning Canada, the Committee adopted the recommendation of the Working Group to start a follow-up process with regard to the recommendations made by the Committee in its report of the inquiry.

30. At its sixty-second session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its thirty-third session. The Committee, by consensus, adopted views finding violations with regard to communication No. 53/2013 concerning Denmark and declared communications No. 55/2013 concerning the United Kingdom and No. 56/2013 concerning Denmark inadmissible.

31. Also during its sixty-second session, the Committee decided to put the follow-up dialogue to a close with regard to a communication concerning Bulgaria (No. 32/2011), having found a satisfactory implementation of the recommendations contained in its views in the light of the compensation paid (7,000 BGN, equivalent to 3,500 euros).

32. With regard to inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol on its second session. In relation to inquiry 2011/1 concerning Canada, the Committee ratified the decision made by the Working Group to wait for the information from the State party on follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations due on 1 February 2016. The Committee decided to request the Division of Conference Management of the United Nations Office at Geneva to prepare summary records with restricted distribution for closed plenary meetings of the Committee where activities under article 8 of the Optional Protocol are being considered.
