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## Commission on the Status of Women

### Sixty-fourth session

9–20 March 2020

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters**

## **Results of the seventy-third and seventy-fourth 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 seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, held in Geneva from 1 to 19 July and from 21 October to 8 November 2019, respectively. Information on the seventy-second session, held in Geneva from 18 February to 8 March 2019, can be found in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly ([A/74/38](#), part three).

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\* E/CN.6/2020/1.



## 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 seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions from 1 to 19 July and from 21 October to 8 November 2019, respectively. At its seventy-third session, the Committee established a focal point on gender-based violence against women and decided to convert it into a working group once the working group on national human rights institutions was dissolved and a specific objective defined for a working group on gender-based violence. It adopted a joint statement with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, entitled “Human rights and climate change”. It also adopted a joint statement with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, entitled “Protecting and empowering girls and demanding equality”. The Committee also decided to prepare a contribution for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the 25-year review scheduled to be conducted during the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

3. At its seventy-fourth session, the Committee adopted a guidance note for States parties for the preparation of reports under article 18 of the Convention in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also adopted a paper on its cooperation with national human rights institutions, which takes into account procedures and practices developed by other human rights treaty bodies, and decided to dissolve the working group on national human rights institutions, in accordance with decision 72/12, as it had delivered its output. At the same time, the Committee decided to transform the focal point on gender-based violence against women into a working group. The Committee further decided to postpone the adoption of its contribution to the 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action until its seventy-fifth session, in February 2020.

4. At its seventy-third session, the Committee hosted a panel discussion entitled “The CEDAW Convention: 40 years of promoting and empowering women”, convened by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Convention. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, gave a briefing to the Committee on her thematic report to the Human Rights Council on the 25 years of her mandate. A representative of the Maternal and Perinatal Health and Preventing Unsafe Abortion Team, World Health Organization, gave a briefing to the Committee on the World Health Organization database and repository on abortion policies, intended to strengthen global efforts to eliminate unsafe abortion.

5. The Committee continued to engage with partners. Directly following the seventy-second session, the Chair delivered a statement to the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-third session, in New York. Before the seventy-fourth session of the Committee, the Chair presented the report of the Committee on its seventieth, seventy-first and seventy-second sessions ([A/74/38](#)) to the Third Committee of the General Assembly, in New York, on 4 October 2019.

6. At its seventy-fourth session, the Committee hosted a panel discussion entitled “Paving the way for adolescent girls’ rights: integrating an age and gender perspective

in policy and law”, convened by Plan International, OHCHR, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Child Rights Connect, Terre des Hommes International Federation and Defence for Children International, to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Convention and the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee met the Deputy Executive Director for Normative Support, United Nations System Coordination and Programme Results of UN-Women, who gave a briefing on the Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting held by the Economic Commission for Europe and on the Generation Equality Forums to be held in Mexico and France in 2020. The Committee also met the Ambassador of France and Secretary-General of the Generation Equality Forum, Delphine O, who reported on the 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A former Committee member, Ruth Kaddari, described her research on domestic violence and child custody issues, including the challenges posed by the use of the parental alienation concept in many jurisdictions. The Committee held an informal meeting with the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss the current pushback on women’s rights in the wake of the 25-year review, the 2020 review of the treaty body system and the liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations. It also held an informal discussion with the Human Rights Committee, hosted by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, to discuss issues of common concern.

7. The Committee continued to benefit from country-specific information received from United Nations country teams and entities, specialized agencies of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations.

8. As at 8 November 2019, the closing date of the seventy-fourth session of the Committee, there were 189 States parties to the Convention and 113 States parties to the Optional Protocol. A total of 80 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 seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions of the Committee**

### **A. Reports considered by the Committee**

9. At its seventy-third session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon: Austria ([CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/9](#) and [CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/9/Corr.1](#)), Cabo Verde ([CEDAW/C/CPV/CO/9](#)), Côte d’Ivoire ([CEDAW/C/CIV/CO/4](#)), Democratic Republic of the Congo ([CEDAW/C/COD/CO/8](#)), Guyana ([CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/9](#)), Mozambique ([CEDAW/C/MOZ/CO/3–5](#)) and Qatar ([CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/2](#)).

10. At its seventy-fourth session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties and issued its concluding observations thereon: Andorra ([CEDAW/C/AND/CO/4](#)), Bosnia and Herzegovina ([CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/6](#)), Cambodia ([CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/6](#)), Iraq ([CEDAW/C/IRQ/CO/7](#)), Kazakhstan ([CEDAW/C/KAZ/CO/5](#)), Lithuania ([CEDAW/C/LTU/CO/6](#)) and Seychelles ([CEDAW/C/SYC/CO/6](#)).

11. Representatives of United Nations country teams and entities, specialized agencies of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations attended the

sessions, whether in person or remotely via videoconference. 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**

### **Working group on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration**

12. The working group met during the seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions. At the seventy-third session, it considered the outcome of the expert group meetings on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, held in London on 29 May and in Athens on 13 June 2019. The Chair of the working group reported on an expert group meeting planned to be held in Helsinki in August 2019. At the seventy-fourth session, the Chair of the working group reported on the organization of a regional expert group meeting in Cairo on 24 and 25 November 2019. The working group discussed the timelines for the drafting of the general recommendation, in addition to the structure and content of the draft annotated outline prepared by a consultant. It also discussed the possibility of organizing additional regional expert group meetings.

### **Working group on working methods**

13. The working group met during both sessions. At the seventy-third session, it discussed and submitted two draft decisions to the Committee: one on the revision of criteria for States parties to avail themselves of the simplified reporting procedure, namely to lift the requirement to submit a common core document; and another on improving the accessibility of the work of the Committee for experts with disabilities. At the seventy-fourth session, it submitted to the Committee draft decisions to introduce a word limit for additional answers provided by States parties following the constructive dialogue and to reschedule the coordination meeting of country task forces.

### **Working group on cooperation with national human rights institutions**

14. The working group met during both sessions. It discussed and finalized a paper on cooperation between the Committee and national human rights institutions, in consultation with the National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section of OHCHR and the secretariat of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

### **Working group on the Convention, UN-Women and the Sustainable Development Goals**

15. The working group met during both sessions. It discussed a draft guidance note for States parties for the preparation of periodic reports under article 18 of the Convention in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to the preparation of a written contribution of the Committee to the 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

## 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

16. At its seventy-third session, the Committee decided to waive its requirement of the submission of a common core document for States parties wishing to avail themselves of the simplified reporting procedure for the submission of periodic reports, with a view to aligning its working methods with those of other treaty bodies. In line with paragraph 29 of General Assembly resolution [68/268](#) on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, and recognizing the importance of ensuring that its work was accessible to members with disabilities to ensure their full and effective participation, the Committee decided that all documents would be available in accessible formats (Word/accessible PDF), generally at least 24 hours in advance, and in urgent cases, at least 6 hours in advance, of their consideration by the Committee; that Braille copies would be made available when requested with sufficient notice; and that any paragraphs under discussion during the adoption of documents would be read out in full by the secretariat or by the member of the Committee in charge. It also decided to keep its practices under review to continuously improve the accessibility of its work for all stakeholders with disabilities and ensure their full and effective participation in the work of the Committee.

17. At its seventy-fourth session, the Committee decided that States parties must limit additional answers provided in writing within 48 hours following the constructive dialogue to a maximum of 1,500 words, with a view to ensuring that such answers were kept to a manageable volume. It also decided that States parties should be informed accordingly before the constructive dialogue. To operationalize the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies ([A/67/222](#), annex I), the Committee decided that the country rapporteur, members of the country task force and the Chair of the Committee should not participate in mock sessions or reporting workshops during the period between the adoption of the list of issues and questions or list of issues and questions prior to reporting, respectively, and the adoption of the concluding observations on the State party concerned. It also decided that members who participated in mock sessions during that period must not join the country task force at a later stage nor participate in the dialogue or in the preparation and adoption of the concluding observations on the State party concerned, nor accept any remuneration for their participation apart from a daily subsistence allowance and travel costs. It further decided to reschedule the coordination meeting of country task forces so that it would be held immediately after the private lunchtime briefing by non-governmental organizations on the day before the constructive dialogue with the State party concerned.

### Follow-up procedure

18. The Committee continued its work under the follow-up procedure at its seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions, adopting the reports of the Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and considering the follow-up reports of Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bhutan, Burundi, Canada, El Salvador, Germany, Honduras, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, the Philippines, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine. At its seventy-fourth session, the Committee adopted the assessment of the follow-up procedure and the updated methodology presented by the Rapporteur on follow-up, in accordance with the recommendation made in the previous assessment of the procedure adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session ([A/72/38](#), part two, chap. IV). The Rapporteur on follow-up recommended that the follow-up procedure be continued and that the next assessment be made at the eighty-third session, in October/November 2022.

### Overdue reports

19. 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 8 November 2019, the closing date of the seventy-fourth session, there were 13 States parties whose reports were overdue by five years or more: Belize, Dominica, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe and Uganda. With regard to long-overdue reports, the Committee decided that, as a last resort, and failing receipt of the those 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. 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 23 reports scheduled for consideration between the seventy-fifth session (February 2020) and the seventy-eighth session (February 2021).

### Dates of future sessions of the Committee

20. The Committee confirmed the tentative dates of its seventy-fifth, seventy-sixth and seventy-seventh sessions, as follows:

#### *Seventy-fifth session, Geneva*

- (a) Forty-sixth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 4 to 7 February 2020;
- (b) Fifteenth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 6 and 7 February 2020, Geneva;
- (c) Plenary: 10 to 28 February 2020;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the seventy-seventh session: 2 to 6 March 2020;

#### *Seventy-sixth session, Geneva*

- (a) Forty-seventh session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 17 to 19 June 2020;
- (b) Sixteenth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 18 and 19 June 2020;
- (c) Plenary: 22 June to 10 July 2020;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the seventy-eighth session: 13 to 17 July 2020;

#### *Seventy-seventh session, Geneva*

- (a) Forty-eighth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 14 to 16 October 2020;
- (b) Seventeenth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 15 and 16 October 2020;
- (c) Plenary: 19 October to 6 November 2020;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the seventy-ninth session: 9 to 13 November 2020.

### Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

21. The Committee confirmed that it would consider the reports of Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Eritrea, Kiribati, Latvia, Pakistan, the Republic of Moldova and Zimbabwe at its seventy-fifth session, the reports of Bahrain, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia and Panama at its seventy-sixth session and the reports of Azerbaijan, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Uruguay and Yemen at its seventy-seventh session.

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

22. At its seventy-third session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its forty-fourth session. The Committee adopted decisions of inadmissibility with regard to communications concerning Denmark (non-refoulement; [CEDAW/C/73/D/94/2015](#)), Czechia (non-exhaustion of domestic remedies; [CEDAW/C/73/D/102/2016](#)) and Poland (*actio popularis*; non-exhaustion of domestic remedies; [CEDAW/C/73/D/136/2018](#)). It also adopted views finding violations with regard to communications concerning Denmark (non-refoulement; [CEDAW/C/73/D/86/2015](#)), Ukraine (failure to provide effective consular protection; [CEDAW/C/73/D/87/2015](#)), Bulgaria (domestic violence; [CEDAW/C/73/D/99/2016](#)) and the Russian Federation (domestic violence; [CEDAW/C/73/D/100/2016](#)). It discontinued its consideration of two communications concerning Denmark (non-refoulement; [CEDAW/C/73/D/84/2015](#) and [CEDAW/C/73/D/109/2016](#)).

23. 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 thirteenth session. It also invited Canada to submit information on the measures taken in response to the recommendations of the Committee in its report concerning inquiry No. 2011/1.

24. At its seventy-fourth session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its forty-fifth session. The Committee adopted decisions of inadmissibility with regard to Denmark ([CEDAW/C/74/D/82/2014](#)) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ([CEDAW/C/74/D/106/2016](#) and [CEDAW/C/74/D/126/2016](#)). It also adopted views finding violations with regard to the Republic of Moldova ([CEDAW/C/74/D/104/2016](#)) and decided to refer one communication concerning that country back to the Working Group for further consideration.

25. 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 fourteenth session. It adopted its findings, comments and recommendations on inquiry No. 2011/4 and decided to transmit them to the State party concerned for observations within six months, following which the report of the inquiry will be made public.