



International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

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Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Thirty-third session

Summary record (partial)* of the 453rd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 27 September 2021, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Taghi-Zada (Vice-Chair)
later: Mr. Ünver

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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In the absence of Mr. Ünver, Mr. Azad Taghi-Zada, Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the thirty-third session of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Opening statement by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

2. **Mr. Salama** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), speaking via video link on behalf of the Secretary-General, said that he was pleased to welcome the Committee members to the Committee's first in-person session since the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and to congratulate the seven new members who had been elected or re-elected at the 10th meeting of States parties, in June 2021. He was also pleased to note that, as from 1 January 2022, the Committee's membership would include three women. He commended the Committee for developing and adopting general comment No. 5 (2021) on migrants' rights to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention and their connection with other human rights, whose public launch was keenly awaited, and expressed his appreciation for the contributions made to the general comment by a range of stakeholders.

3. According to the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the COVID-19 pandemic had drastically affected all forms of human mobility, including international migration. Hundreds of thousands of migrants had been left stranded by border closures, unable to return to their home countries. The right to freedom from collective expulsions, including at States' borders, was a specific right of migrant workers, irrespective of their migration status, that only the Convention explicitly protected. Moreover, migrant workers often faced overcrowding and a lack of access to basic services in immigration detention, putting them at high risk of infection with the virus. States parties must take all measures to prevent outbreaks of COVID-19 in such settings, including by considering alternatives to detention.

4. Against that backdrop, it was unfortunate that the Convention remained the least ratified of all the major human rights treaties, with only 56 States parties, which was an untenable situation given the importance and topicality of the issues it addressed. He therefore encouraged all States parties and stakeholders to work to increase ratifications.

5. The annual meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, held from 7 to 11 June 2021, had been an opportunity for the Chairs to translate their vision into concrete actions in the light of the report of the co-facilitators of the 2020 review of the treaty body system. The main issues discussed by the Chairs had been the development of a predictable State party review calendar, including the possibility of making every other review focused; the ongoing harmonization of working methods; and the digital transition. In follow-up to the meeting, the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had put forward comprehensive proposals to be considered by all the committees by the end of 2021. The Office would continue to support the treaty bodies in shaping the future of the system, including by facilitating another meeting of the Chairs, with a view to reaching consensus on the way forward on the main issues.

6. *Mr. Ünver took the Chair.*

Adoption of the agenda

7. *The agenda was adopted.*

8. **The Chair** said that, as no non-governmental organizations had answered the Committee's invitation to meet prior to the review of the periodic report submitted by the Government of Rwanda, the Committee would shift to a closed meeting.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.35 a.m.