



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Fifty-first session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 1399th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 25 May 2009, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chairperson: Ms. KANG (United Nations Deputy
High Commissioner for
Human Rights)

Chairperson: Ms. LEE

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

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Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON declared open the fifty-first session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Ms. KANG (United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that, since the Committee's previous session, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had held its first session in February 2009. Given that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities contained many references to children, future collaboration between the two committees would be extremely valuable.
3. The tenth session of the Human Rights Council had taken place in March 2009. In its resolution A/HRC/RES/7/29 on the Rights of the Child, adopted in March 2008, the Human Rights Council had decided to incorporate into its programme of work discussion of different themes on the rights of the child. They would include identifying challenges in the realization of the rights of the child, measures and best practices that States and other stakeholders could adopt, and assessing the effective integration of the rights of the child in the Council's work. In the context of the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the annual full-day meeting had taken place on 11 and 12 March, with Mr. Puras representing the Committee during the panel discussion. At its June session, the Human Rights Council would hold an annual full-day meeting on the human rights of women and a panel discussion on human rights and climate change.
4. The fifth session of the Universal Periodic Review had taken place in May 2009 and had considered 16 States, bringing the total number of countries reviewed to 80.
5. The Durban Review Conference had been held in April 2009 in Geneva. It was important to note that the final outcome document, which had been adopted by acclamation, contained carefully worded language and sent strong and appropriate signals that would help the international community's endeavour to fight racism and extremism in all its manifestations. It provided proper answers to the misinformation and misunderstandings that had clouded much of the preparatory process for the Conference and had prompted a number of countries to stay away from the Conference table. All treaty bodies should consider ways to ensure that follow-up to the Conference was taken into consideration in the course of their work.
6. On 20 November 2009, the international community would celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations General Assembly. To mark the anniversary, the Committee had initiated the organization of a two-day meeting, to be held in Geneva on 8 and 9 October 2009. Her Office would do its utmost

to support the event. The meeting would be in lieu of the Committee's usual day of general discussion, and would have as its theme "Dignity, Development and Dialogue". It would provide an important opportunity to bring together all entities interested in the Convention, including States parties, United Nations funds and programmes, national and international NGOs, academics and other relevant actors, including children.

7. On 1 May 2009, Ms. Santos Pais had been appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children. The appointment had been eagerly anticipated since the report of the Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children had been published in 2006. The Office was confident that the process initiated by the Study would be continued under the expert guidance of Ms. Santos Pais. The Committee would no doubt work in close cooperation with the new Special Representative, beginning with a meeting at the current session.

8. At its fifty-first session, in addition to considering six States parties' reports under the Convention and two under the Optional Protocols, the Committee would continue to discuss three general comments. At the current session, it would hopefully adopt the general comment on article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to be heard. It would also continue work on the general comments on article 3 on the best interests of the child, and on article 19 on violence against children. Other issues for consideration included the Committee's working methods, and overall harmonization of working methods of treaty bodies.

9. Mr. ZERMATTEN, in response to an invitation to put questions to the Deputy High Commissioner, said that, while the Secretariat provided excellent support for the Committee, the high level of staff movement was regrettable as it prevented Secretariat members from becoming Committee specialists. That would be of particular importance at the forthcoming session, as the Committee would be meeting in two chambers.

10. Ms. ORTIZ said that the translation of documents into Spanish was proving a problem, particularly given that the Committee was constantly updating the terminology it used, and translators were not always informed of the Committee's decisions. In particular, she asked the Deputy High Commissioner to ensure that the translations of the Committee's general comments were corrected, since those documents provided States parties and other readers with detailed information on the Committee's position on the provisions of the Convention.

11. Mr. KRAPPMANN said that the computer equipment available to Committee members during the sessions needed updating. There were also frequent problems with the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which made it difficult to access the documents necessary to prepare for Committee meetings.

12. Ms. AIDOO said that it would be useful if the Secretariat could provide the Committee with a comparative analysis of different treaty bodies' approaches to elections. Such information would be particularly helpful for new Committee members.

13. Ms. KANG (United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was committed to providing the

Committee with the resources it required, even though holding meetings in two chambers was a huge challenge for Committee members and the Secretariat. Recently there had been significant levels of movement within the organization, because personnel were being moved between the field and headquarters, and also to different branches, in the interest of staff development. Nevertheless, the treaty bodies evidently needed continuity, and OHCHR would try to guarantee the Committee the support to which it was accustomed.

14. As regards translations into Spanish, a person was being recruited specifically to deal with the issue during the two-chamber sessions.

15. On the question of computers and Internet access, the OHCHR database was being redesigned to make it more user-friendly; meanwhile, Committee members could have access to information through the OHCHR Extranet.

16. Each treaty body had its own method of electing its officers. The procedures tended to be fairly flexible, although they took into account a rotation between the different regional groups. The Secretariat could prepare a note on the different practices.

17. Ms. ORTIZ said that most documents on the OHCHR website were only in English, which presented difficulties for Spanish-speaking Committee members.

18. Ms. LEE said that, although there were many anniversaries within the United Nations system, a successful celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the signature of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which would take place in October, was important to the Committee and to OHCHR. The programme for the commemoration was currently being finalized.

19. Ms. KANG (United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that most of the issues raised by Committee members related to different types of resources. She also looked forward to the day when information would be available in the six languages. Furthermore, targeted funding might be required for the twentieth anniversary celebrations, since two of the largest contributors to OHCHR had recently cut their financial support substantially.

SOLEMN DECLARATION BY THE NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

20. The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON invited the newly elected members of the Committee to make the solemn declaration contained in rule 15 of the Committee's rules of procedure.

21. Ms. AL-ASMAR, Mr. GURÁN, Mr. KOOMPRAHANT, Ms. MAURÁS PÉREZ, Ms. VARMAH and Ms. VILLARÁN DE LA PUENTE solemnly declared that they would perform their duties and exercise their powers as members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child honourably, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

22. Ms. ORTIZ nominated Ms. Lee for the office of Chairperson.

23. Mr. KRAPPMANN supported the nomination.
24. Ms. Lee was elected Chairperson by acclamation.
25. Ms. Lee took the Chair.

The public part of the meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.00 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

26. The CHAIRPERSON drew the attention of Committee members to the annotations to the provisional agenda (CRC/C/51/1) and invited them to adopt it.
27. The agenda was adopted.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES

28. Ms. ANDRIJASEVIC-BOKO (Secretary of the Committee) said that, since its previous session, the Committee had received second periodic reports from Cuba and Cambodia, a third periodic report from Bahrain, and fourth periodic reports or a combined third and fourth periodic report from Costa Rica, Iceland, Italy, Madagascar, Panama and the Syrian Arab Republic. It had also received an initial report on the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and initial reports on the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography from Canada, Nepal, Sweden and Togo. However, initial reports from Afghanistan, Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tonga and Tuvalu were overdue.
29. Ms. ORTIZ asked what measures the Committee could take to encourage countries to submit their initial reports.
30. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Secretariat was constantly in touch with the Permanent Missions and she had visited the Pacific Islands in August 2008 to discuss the matter and had reminded them that UNICEF field offices could assist in the preparation of their reports. Discussions were also continuing with Afghanistan.
31. The second periodic reports of some countries were also long overdue, even though the Secretariat sent out letters before every session of the Committee reminding them of their reporting status.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER UNITED NATIONS BODIES, SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER COMPETENT BODIES

32. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee would continue its discussion on how cooperation with relevant bodies could be strengthened to enhance the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. It had engaged in systematic collaboration with UNICEF and, starting in 2008, an annual workshop was organized for members of the Committee and UNICEF

regional directors; the next would take place on 19 June 2009. In addition, the Committee was exploring avenues for cooperation with other United Nations agencies, and enjoyed a strong collaborative relationship with the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector in Geneva.

33. Ms. MAURÁS PÉREZ said it would be useful to know the agenda for the June workshop with UNICEF in order to prepare for the event appropriately.

34. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee would be discussing the agenda during the private part of the meeting.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 11.15 a.m.