



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child Fifty-second session

Summary record of the first part (public)* of the 1426th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 14 September 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Lee

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* No summary record was prepared for the second part (closed) of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the fifty-second session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Referring to the H1N1 influenza pandemic facing the world, she emphasized that many regions lacked anti-viral medicines and that, even more alarmingly, the virus was starting to develop resistance. The first vaccinations appeared to be giving encouraging results and it was to be hoped that children all over the world would be able to be vaccinated and treated effectively.
2. She noted with concern that the issue of Committee members' travel conditions had still not been resolved. Some members had been forced to accept very restrictive travel itineraries and timetables, which was unacceptable and detrimental to the Committee's work. She called on the Office of the High Commissioner to make every effort to find solutions to the problem.

Statement by the Representative of the Secretary-General

3. **Mr. Salama** (Chief, Human Rights Treaties Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the situation described by the Chairperson was indeed unacceptable. He pointed out that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was currently changing from one administrative system to another and that the rules on buying tickets electronically would be changed.
4. He recalled that, during its eleventh session in June 2009, the Human Rights Council had adopted two resolutions. The Council had noted that procedures allowing for individual communications had been established for other core international human rights treaties and had recalled the view of the Committee on the Rights of the Child that the development of a communications procedure for the Convention on the Rights of the Child would significantly contribute to the overall protection of children's rights. Resolution 11/1 provided for the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide a communications procedure. Such a mechanism would complement the reporting procedure provided for under the Convention. The Working Group would hold its first meeting in Geneva from 14 to 18 December and a Committee member would attend as an adviser. He explained that the Working Group would be assisted by a secretariat within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
5. The Human Rights Council had also adopted resolution 11/7 on the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, in which, in particular, it had decided to submit the Guidelines to the General Assembly for consideration, with a view to their adoption on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
6. The celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention would take place on 8 and 9 October 2009 in Geneva and had already attracted considerable interest among States parties and civil society organizations. The Committee had chosen Dignity, Development and Dialogue as the core themes of the event, as they were the three elements essential to implementing the Convention. Furthermore, the event would provide an opportunity to evaluate the progress achieved towards the realization of the rights of the child and assist in identifying future priorities.
7. The ninth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies had taken place in June 2009, enabling participants to discuss with representatives of States parties ways to enhance the treaty bodies' effectiveness, including through harmonization and simplification of their working methods, as well as the relationship of the treaty body system to the wide human rights machinery of the United Nations.

8. The tenth inter-committee meeting would take place in November 2009 and would be devoted to the follow-up to concluding observations and the views of treaty bodies in order in particular to identify best practices and consider possible areas of harmonization in that respect. The overall success of the human rights protection system, marked by the increase in the number of human rights instruments and corresponding monitoring bodies, as well as an increase in ratifications and reports, posed greater demands on the treaty bodies. He said that the High Commissioner for Human Rights encouraged Committee members, States parties to human rights treaties and other stakeholders to reflect on how to streamline and strengthen the treaty body system to achieve better coordination and effectiveness. The Office of the High Commissioner would contribute all of its expertise to that process of reflection.

9. With regard to cooperation with other human rights mechanisms, the Committee would have its first meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, which would be an opportunity to reflect on how the two mandates could complement and mutually reinforce each other, in particular in conjunction with State party reviews under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The Committee would also have the advantage of collaborating with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children, who would be taking up her duties shortly.

10. During the fifty-second session, the Committee would have to consider reports submitted by eight States parties: five reports on the implementation of the Convention, namely those from Bolivia, Mozambique, Pakistan, the Philippines and Qatar, two on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (Poland and Yemen) and two on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (Poland and Turkey). As usual, the Committee would have meetings with United Nations system entities as well as non-governmental organizations.

11. He said that the pre-sessional working group would be very busy as it would be convening in two separate working groups to prepare for the 2010 sessions, when the Committee would be meeting in two chambers, which would double their workload and that of the secretariat. With the sessions in double chambers being a temporary measure, he encouraged the Committee to reflect on possible future modalities for considering the high number of submitted reports, bearing in mind that it had three treaties to monitor.

Submission of reports by States parties

12. **Ms. Andrijasevic-Boko** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, since the last session, the Committee had received 17 reports, of which 13 covered the implementation of the Convention, 2 were on the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and 2 on the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In total, 68 reports had been received on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and 55 on the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. There were now 128 States parties to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been ratified by 132 States.

Organizational matters

13. **The Chairperson** emphasized that it was highly important that the Committee should receive unstinting support from the Secretariat when it was meeting in two chambers.

14. She recalled that the Committee would have nine reports of States parties to consider under item 4 of the provisional agenda, and, with regard to item 7, that the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention would be held on 8 and 9 October 2009, during the meeting of the pre-sessional working group.

15. Finally, she announced that the Committee would organize a meeting for an exchange of views with Mr. Salama.

16. **Ms. Khattab** said that the Committee, in its concluding observations made in 2001 following consideration of the second periodic report of Egypt (CRC/C/15/Add.145), had neglected to give a deadline for the submission of the next periodic report. She suggested that a date be decided on and the document amended accordingly.

17. **Ms. Maurás Pérez** emphasized that it was important that Committee members inform Mr. Salama of the practical problems they faced during sessions. She also raised the issue of the quality of the Spanish translation of documents.

Adoption of the agenda (CRC/C/52/1)

18. *The agenda was adopted.*

The first part (public) of the meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.