



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
3 October 2013

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Fifty-sixth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 1157th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 30 September 2013, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ameline

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

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

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the fifty-sixth session of the Committee.

Statement by the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

2. **Mr. Doren** (External Outreach Service), speaking on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that the newly created External Outreach Service was responsible for leading and coordinating the outreach efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). As a key part of the outreach efforts of the Service was to expand media coverage, a media officer had been appointed to work with Committee members and the secretariat, organize press conferences and inform the media about the role and activities of the treaty bodies. In view of the current funding gap, it was necessary to build more support and achieve greater sustainability for the efforts of OHCHR by strengthening existing partnerships, attracting new donors and developing private sector fundraising.

3. Turning to the treaty body strengthening process, he drew attention to a set of draft elements of the co-facilitators for a resolution (A/67/995, annex I) that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights considered to form a solid basis for achieving a comprehensive and sustainable outcome and to General Assembly resolution 66/295, which extended the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly until February 2014.

4. On 25 September, a special event had been held on the Millennium Development Goals. The High Commissioner had attended a round-table discussion on progress made in achieving those goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Regrettably, the Millennium Development Goals had overlooked the poorest and most marginalized persons, a disproportionate number of whom were women. The new development agenda needed to be based on respect for universal human rights, including women's rights, and tackle the root causes of poverty, exclusion and inequality.

5. UN-Women had called for a separate goal on gender equality, women's rights and empowerment in the post-2015 agenda, arguing that gender-based discrimination was the most pervasive form of discrimination in the world. The Office agreed that gender discrimination required special, cross-cutting measures, as well as institutional, social and cultural change. A joint statement on the post-2015 agenda adopted at the twenty-fifth annual meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies had also stressed the importance of linking development goals to States' treaty obligations, and making gender equality a global priority.

6. At the twenty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council in September, an annual discussion had been held on the theme of civil society's contribution to the integration of a gender perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. The Council had also adopted a resolution on early and forced marriages, and had asked the Office to prepare a study and organize a panel discussion on that topic in June 2014. In September, the High Commissioner had also attended a side event on women's empowerment and participation in public life, with a special focus on countries in political transition. The Security Council planned to hold an annual open debate on women, peace and security in October, and the United Kingdom was promoting the adoption of a declaration on sexual violence in conflict, leading to a non-binding international protocol on the investigation and documentation of such violence, to be presented before the Human Rights Council and General Assembly in 2014.

7. The Women's Rights and Gender Section was working together with the Regional Office for Central America in Panama to develop a model protocol to investigate femicide. A draft had been prepared by the Office, with input from judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and NGOs in the region, to be finalized by the end of the year. The Office was also actively engaged in the "Beyond 2014 Review" process of the International Conference on Population and Development, and had organized an international thematic conference on human rights in July 2013, focusing on action to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights, and combat discrimination. He noted that the Committee had played a vital part in informing participants of important human rights standards in that field.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/56/1)

8. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee

9. **The Chairperson** said that since the previous session there had been no change to the number of States parties to the Convention, the number that had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, or the number that had ratified the Optional Protocol. Namibia, Senegal, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Croatia and Timor-Leste had submitted their periodic reports.

10. Since the fifty-fifth session, she had attended a working lunch with the Secretary-General, hosted by the French National Assembly, and had promoted the Convention at an informal meeting of the Working Group on Human Rights of the Council of the European Union and a meeting of ambassadors in Paris. In September, she had briefed the French National Human Rights Commission on the Convention, and organized a meeting to discuss the introduction of an information-technology-based tool for implementing and raising awareness of the Convention, aimed at decision makers and civil servants. At all the meetings she had attended, she had worked to promote the Committee's request to the General Assembly for additional budgetary resources. She planned to present the Committee's annual report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly in October, to meet the new Executive Director of UN-Women, and to participate in a side event on women's participation in public life and decision-making.

11. **Ms. Haidar** said that she had very recently given a presentation on behalf of the Committee at a conference in Cairo on the role of NGOs in promoting women's participation in the democratic transition processes in Egypt. The conference had been attended by representatives of various NGOs, women's groups, the Government of Egypt, UN-Women and bilateral partners. She had focused on constitutional and electoral issues and her presence as a Committee member had been widely welcomed. She had been struck by the impressive analytical work that had been carried out, from the grass-roots to the highest decision-making levels, in all the provinces to overcome the setbacks of the previous period and outline a road map for a transition to democracy.

12. **Ms. Gabr**, pointing out that she had been a member of the steering committee of the Cairo conference but had been unable to attend, said that the conference had been organized by civil society, with the backing of the Government of Egypt and the financial support of foreign donors and the United Nations Development Programme. It had been a crucial opportunity to increase the Committee's credibility and visibility, especially as it had been under fire during the previous period.

13. She had travelled to Bahrain as part of awareness-raising activities in the lead-up to that country's presentation of its periodic report. While there, she had met with

parliamentarians, women's organizations and other relevant actors. She had also attended a meeting in South Africa on rural women's right to water at which she had been astonished and proud to see how many stakeholders from around the world had followed the Committee's general discussion on rural women.

14. **Ms. Nwankwo** said that she had trained Nigerian magistrates in equal treatment in courts and tribunals, including an entire module on gender equality and the Convention. She had also taken part in an expert meeting to draft a general comment on article 14 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, on health and reproductive rights. She had spent one month in South Sudan as a consultant on training law enforcement officers, corrections personnel and staff of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan in gender mainstreaming and gender analysis. The objective was for those themes to be taken into account in the codification of South Sudanese customary laws. Lastly, she had also attended a conference in South Africa on the right to water.

15. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that she had attended a conference on political participation where there had been a panel discussion on gender-disaggregated statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean. Extremely interesting work was being carried out on indicators and the reliability of data. People in the region had shown increasing interest in the topic and some improvement had been noted, but local data collection remained patchy. She had been invited to give a presentation on the Convention to the national human rights institution of Uruguay. Participants had been very eager to learn what part they could play in implementing the Convention and how they could cooperate with the Committee.

16. **Ms. Pimentel** said that she had participated in a meeting at the Supreme Court in Mexico City with members of the judiciary from around the country. The gender unit of the Supreme Court had developed guidelines aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes in the judicial system. She had also attended a meeting with academics and other actors involved in the campaign to prevent and punish sexual harassment in educational institutions and the workplace. Lastly, she had chaired a panel, co-sponsored by the Catholic University of São Paulo and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, during which she had stressed the need to include a gender perspective in public law.

17. **Ms. Neubauer**, presenting the report of the pre-session working group, said that questions had been prepared for the seven States parties under review and that, since the Committee had only recently received the combined fourth to eighth periodic reports of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the consideration had been postponed until a future session. When preparing the questions, the working group had paid particular attention to the States parties' follow-up to the relevant concluding comments of the Committee.

Follow-up to the consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

18. **Ms. Hayashi** (Alternate Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations), presenting the report of the Rapporteur on Follow-up, said that the Committee had invited representatives of Liberia for a meeting, but none were available during the current session. Letters outlining the results of follow-up report assessments had been sent at the end of the fifty-fifth session to Argentina, Australia, the Czech Republic, Guatemala and Japan. First reminders of overdue follow-up reports had been sent to Albania, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Malta, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Uganda, while second reminders had been sent to Libya and Papua New Guinea. The Committee had received follow-up reports from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Lesotho, Malawi, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan, either on time or with delays ranging from 3 to 19 months. She called for volunteers to assess the reports by Bhutan and Malawi, as the rapporteurs for those countries were no longer members of the Committee.

19. During the current session, first reminders to submit follow-up reports should be sent to Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Nepal, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Zambia, while reminders to submit additional information should be sent to Fiji, the Netherlands and Turkey. Furthermore, meetings should be scheduled with representatives of Haiti, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the United Arab Emirates. As decided at the fiftieth session, she and Ms. Bailey would be presenting an evaluation of the follow-up procedure. Finally, she recalled that the Committee would have to appoint a new rapporteur and alternate rapporteur.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 11.40 a.m.