



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Thirty-seventh session

Summary record of the 756th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 January 2007, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chairperson: Ms. Mayanja (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women)

Chairperson: Ms. Šimonović

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary Chairperson** declared open the thirty-seventh session of the Committee and welcomed the members of the Committee, particularly the 12 new and re-elected members.

Solemn declaration by the new and re-elected members of the Committee

2. *Ms. Ferdous Ara Begum, Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani, Ms. Chutikul, Ms. Coker-Appiah, Mr. Flinterman, Ms. Gabr, Ms. Halperin-Kaddari, Ms. Neubauer, Ms. Patten, Ms. Saiga, Ms. Gumede Shelton and Ms. Šimonović made the solemn declaration provided for in rule 15 of the Committee's rules of procedure.*

Election of officers

3. **The Temporary Chairperson** invited nominations for the office of Chairperson in accordance with article 19, paragraph 2, of the Convention and with rules 16 and 17 of the Committee's rules of procedure.

4. **Ms. Patten**, speaking on behalf of the African States, nominated Ms. Šimonović for the office of Chairperson, to serve for a term of two years, until 31 December 2008.

5. *Ms. Šimonović was elected Chairperson by acclamation.*

6. *Ms. Šimonović took the Chair.*

7. **The Chairperson** said that it was a particular honour to serve as Chairperson at a time when the Committee was commemorating 25 years of contributing to the protection of women's rights around the world. She invited the members to proceed with the election of three Vice-Chairpersons.

8. **Ms. Tavares da Silva**, speaking on behalf of the Western European and Other States, nominated Ms. Gaspard for the office of Vice-Chairperson.

9. **Ms. Arocha Dominguez**, speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States, nominated Ms. Simms for the office of Vice-Chairperson.

10. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani**, speaking on behalf of the African States, nominated Ms. Gabr for the office of Vice-Chairperson.

11. *Ms. Gaspard, Ms. Simms and Ms. Gabr were elected Vice-Chairpersons by acclamation.*

12. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to nominate candidates for the office of Rapporteur of the Committee.

13. **Ms. Simms** nominated Ms. Dairiam for the office of Rapporteur.

14. *Ms. Dairiam was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Statement by the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women

15. **Ms. Mayanja** (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women) said that the tenure of Mr. Ban Ki-moon as Secretary-General had started auspiciously for women. Of the five appointments that he had made to date, three, unprecedentedly, were women. They included the new Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Migiro, who was a former member of the Committee. From the very outset, the Secretary-General had thus signalled his commitment to gender equality as well as his readiness to place women in key high-level positions, as called for under articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

16. Ms. Coker-Appiah and Ms. Shin had served on the Advisory Committee for the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122 and Add.1), launched at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Since such violence continued unabated, she called upon the Committee to remain vigilant in ensuring that States parties protected women and girls from all its forms and manifestations. Of particular interest was the decision of the Secretary-General to transfer to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the responsibility of servicing the Committee. There would in fact be an opportunity to discuss the matter with the High Commissioner that afternoon.

17. In its report "Delivering as One" (A/61/583), the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment had reviewed the contribution of the United Nations to achieving gender

equality and had made recommendations on how gender equality perspectives might be better integrated into the Organization's work. It had also proposed the establishment of one dynamic entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, to be headed by an Executive Director with the rank of Under-Secretary-General. She hoped to discuss the proposal with members at the current session.

18. Universal ratification of the Convention by the year 2000, established in the Beijing Platform for Action, had yet to be achieved. However, further progress had been made in the ratification of both the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Since the previous session, the Cook Islands and Montenegro had ratified the Convention, bringing the total number of States parties to 185. She was also pleased to announce that four additional Member States — Armenia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and the Republic of Korea — had become party to the Optional Protocol, bringing the total number to 83. With the acceptance by Slovenia of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, on the Committee's meeting time, the total number of acceptances currently stood at 48.

Statement by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women

19. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that the Secretary-General's decision in 2006 to transfer the servicing of the Committee from the Division for the Advancement of Women to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights constituted a significant change in the institutional framework for the promotion of gender equality in the United Nations. The Division would, however, continue to support the Committee until the transfer of the servicing function was completed.

20. Since the General Assembly had biennialized its resolution on the Convention, no resolution on it had been adopted at the sixty-first session of the Assembly. However, the Committee's preliminary assessment of the work in parallel chambers and its anticipated need for extended meeting time in 2008 and beyond, as reflected in its decision 36/I, had been brought to the Assembly's attention by the Chairperson.

21. The question of violence against women, in particular the Secretary-General's in-depth study on the topic, had received the priority attention of the General Assembly during its sixty-first session. In its resolution

61/143, the Assembly had taken note with appreciation of the Committee's work and had presented recommendations for action by different stakeholders. As a result, the commitment of Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations system to effectively addressing violence against women had never been stronger. Follow-up activities were already under way, and she was confident that the Committee would continue to provide leadership in that regard.

22. Preparations for the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to be held from 26 February to 9 March, were well under way. The priority theme of the session would be the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. It was expected that the Commission would adopt a set of agreed conclusions in support of a focused approach to the particular needs of the girl child. In preparation for the session, the Division had held an expert meeting in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence.

23. The participants had made it clear that, despite the significant attention given to the needs of children, too little specific attention was devoted to addressing the particular forms of discrimination and violence suffered by girls in all parts of the world. They had also highlighted the importance of the international human rights framework, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

24. The Committee had suggested that it could contribute an analysis of its consideration of the theme concerned, drawing from its concluding comments. It had also suggested that its overall experiences and findings could be conveyed to the Commission and that experts could participate in any relevant panel discussion in order to highlight the views of the Committee. Those suggestions had been brought to the attention of the Bureau of the Commission.

25. The Commission would review implementation of its agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, which had been adopted at its forty-eighth session, and would also convene an expert panel on the theme "Elimination of all forms of violence against women: follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study at national and international levels". The Division would endeavour to

ensure that the Committee's work was taken into account in the discussions.

26. The Division had undertaken several technical assistance activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of Governments to implement the Convention, notably a high-level expert dialogue with the Government of Afghanistan; a subregional workshop on follow-up to the Committee's concluding comments for six countries in the Asia-Pacific region; a workshop in support of the efforts of the Government of Cambodia to follow up on the Committee's concluding comments; and a further workshop in Sierra Leone to finalize its report under article 18 of the Convention. As a result of the series of workshops held in Sierra Leone since September 2003, that country had submitted its combined initial, second, third, fourth and fifth periodic report in December 2006. As part of its capacity-building efforts, the Division had been able to support the participation, as observers, of two Government officials from Sierra Leone during the second week of the current session.

27. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee would consider the reports of 15 States parties and would continue its work under the Optional Protocol with regard to the petition and inquiry procedures. It would also continue its work on general recommendations on migrant women and on article 2 of the Convention. The Committee would meet with representatives of NGOs and of the United Nations system to hear information about the countries reporting at the current session. After the session, the pre-session working group would meet to prepare the lists of issues and questions for the 15 States parties due to present their reports at the thirty-ninth session. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol would meet from 5 to 7 February, and its members would be appointed during the current session. The Division pledged its full support to the Committee in carrying out its work.

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/2007/I/1 and Corr.1)

28. **The Chairperson** drew attention to document CEDAW/C/2007/I/1 and Corr.1 and said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposed provisional agenda and organization of work, subject to any necessary adjustments.

29. *It was so decided.*

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions of the Committee

30. **Ms. Dairiam** read out the report on behalf of Ms. Manalo, who was unable to attend the Committee's current session. Since the thirty-sixth session, the outgoing Chairperson had been required to participate in the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in her capacity as Chairperson of the Committee, in continuation of a long-standing tradition that had been confirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/230. However, circumstances beyond her control had prevented her from attending, and it had not been possible for any of the Vice-Chairpersons to replace her. Her statement had therefore been presented on her behalf by Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women.

31. The outgoing Chairperson wished to draw the attention of Committee members to the letter that she had received from the former Secretary-General on 11 October 2006, informing her of his decision to transfer responsibility for supporting the Committee to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and asking her to convey that decision to the Committee. She recalled that she had forwarded the letter to Committee members on 16 October. In her response of 30 October, she had pointed out that Committee members had provided extensive comments on the decision and had raised many questions and concerns. She had also indicated that, as the Committee had not been in session at the time, she had been unable to convey a Committee position on the matter. She had, however, noted that members had underlined their desire for an in-depth discussion of the decision and its implications at the thirty-seventh session.

32. As her membership on the Committee had ended on 31 December 2006, she would no longer be able to contribute to the Committee's discussions on the issue. However, she encouraged members to be guided in their deliberations by the Committee's paramount purpose, which was to enhance women's enjoyment of their human rights. Lastly, since the thirty-sixth session, she had also participated in a personal capacity in a number of activities relating to women's human rights and the implementation of the Convention.

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention
(CEDAW/C/2007/I/3 and Add.1 and 3)

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2007/I/2, CEDAW/C/2007/I/4 and Add.1)

33. **Ms. Brautigam** (Chief, Women's Rights Unit, Division for the Advancement of Women) drew attention to the Secretary-General's note contained in document CEDAW/C/2007/I/3. Two specialized agencies, namely the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), had submitted reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas within their purview. Those reports were contained in addenda 1 and 3 respectively to the document in question. The Committee would be receiving additional information from specialized agencies and other United Nations system entities in due course.

34. The note on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2007/I/4) summarized recent developments in the human rights regime, in particular the human rights treaty bodies, and referred to action taken by the General Assembly. It also drew experts' attention to several areas for consideration and possible action, including follow-up to the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and to the fifth inter-committee meeting. The note further recalled the Committee's incremental strategy to encourage States parties to fulfil their reporting obligations, noted those States parties that were more than 10 years overdue in submitting their initial reports under article 18 of the Convention and suggested steps that the Committee might wish to take in that regard. The note also contained a list of reports received from States parties but not yet considered by the Committee. Since the issuance of the document, Sierra Leone and Yemen had also submitted reports. In that connection, the Committee's attention was drawn to document CEDAW/C/2007/I/2 on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

35. Lastly, she drew the Committee's attention to document CEDAW/C/2007/I/4/Add.1, which contained an overview of the Committee's working methods. The Committee had previously included such an overview in its annual report for 2005. The current document

updated that overview to reflect in particular the Committee's work in parallel chambers.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
(CEDAW/PSWG/2007/I/CRP.1)

36. **Ms. Coker-Appiah**, speaking as co-Chairperson of the pre-session working group, drew attention to its report contained in document CEDAW/PSWG/2007/I/CRP.1 and said that the group had drawn up lists of issues and questions for 21 States parties, 15 of which would be reporting at the current session and six at the thirty-eighth session. The Committee had held a closed meeting with representatives from two NGOs, which had provided information on one State party. In preparing the lists of issues and questions for periodic reports, the group had paid particular attention to States parties' follow-up to previous concluding comments and had also taken into consideration their previous reports. In accordance with various Committee decisions, the lists of issues and questions focused on the main themes addressed by the Convention.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.