



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
**Seventy-second session**

**Summary record of the first part (public)\* of the 1659th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 18 February 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Leinarte

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\* The summary records of the second part (closed) and the third part (public) of the meeting appear as documents CEDAW/C/SR.1659/Add.1 and CEDAW/C/SR.1659/Add.2.

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

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chair** declared open the seventy-second session of the Committee.

### **Statement by the representative of the Secretary-General**

2. **Mr. Nowosad** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that the Convention, which was entering its fortieth anniversary year, had been a driving force for change in almost every society, shattering glass ceilings in the corporate world, extending suffrage to women, and challenging long-held, discriminatory gender stereotypes and social norms. Although it enjoyed almost universal ratification, the Convention had received a significant number of reservations and had withstood 40 years of fierce criticism from those who would stop at nothing to thwart the hopes of women and girls who wished only to be treated with respect and dignity as equal human beings. There was, therefore, still a long way to go to achieve the equal rights of men and women. In particular, women remained underrepresented in politics, sexual violence during conflicts was still rife and gender-based violence against women and girls was unabated.

3. He commended the Committee's determination to address the problems faced by women and girls around the world, including by reminding States parties of the commitments they had made to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and holding them to account if they failed to do so. It was therefore fitting that, at the forthcoming sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, due to be held in New York in March 2019, the Committee would be holding a side event on the links between the Convention and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. There had been a number of developments since the Committee's previous session. On 19 December 2018, the General Assembly had adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the first agreement of its kind to establish a common approach to international migration based on the values of shared responsibility, cooperation, non-discrimination and human rights. Objective No. 10 of the Global Compact concerned measures to prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration and was thus of particular relevance to the Committee as it sought to draft a new general recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. The General Assembly had also adopted a series of resolutions relating to women's rights, including resolution 73/146 on trafficking in women and girls, which, among other aspects, sought to encourage the responsible use of the media to eliminate the exploitation of women and children, resolution 73/148 on the intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, and resolution 73/46, on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which called for a better understanding of the impact of armed violence, in particular the impact of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, on women and girls. The latter resolution would be of special interest to the Committee following its adoption of general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and its upcoming panel discussion on the theme of strengthening synergies between the Convention and the women and peace and security agenda. Lastly, recalling that States Members of the United Nations would be meeting in April 2020 to discuss treaty body strengthening, he urged the Committee to review previous efforts made in that regard with a view to developing pragmatic recommendations on the effective protection of women's and girls' rights.

5. **Ms. Ameline** said that the fortieth anniversary of the Convention presented a timely reminder of the need to reinforce basic human rights principles and place women's rights at the heart of strategies addressing global challenges, such as the growing threat to the universality of rights, issues associated with large migration flows and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2020 review of the treaty body system was also an opportunity to focus on women's leadership and prevent any backsliding in progress already made.

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

6. *Ms. Acosta Vargas, Ms. Akizuki, Ms. Al-Rammah, Ms. Chalal, Ms. Gabr, Ms. Narain, Ms. Pelaez Narvaez, Ms. Reddock, Mr. Safarov, Ms. Tisheva and Ms. Toe Bouda made the solemn declaration provided for in rule 15 of the Committee's rules of procedure.*

### **Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

7. *The provisional agenda contained in document [CEDAW/C/72/I](#) was adopted.*

### **Report of the Chair on activities undertaken between the seventy-first and the seventy-second sessions of the Committee**

8. **The Chair**, welcoming the Committee's new and re-elected members, said that the number of States parties to the Convention and the Optional Protocol had remained unchanged, at 189 and 109 respectively. Three States parties – Samoa, Montenegro and Oman – had recently accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention, concerning the Committee's meeting time. The number of States parties that had accepted the amendment now stood at 77; in accordance with the Convention, 126 States parties were required in order to bring it into force. Periodic reports had been received from Afghanistan, Kiribati, Latvia, the Republic of Moldova and Zimbabwe; in addition, two States parties had expressed their desire to avail themselves of the simplified reporting procedure.

9. In the period since the Committee's previous session, she had attended a Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights workshop for treaty body members on the simplified reporting procedure. The workshop had enabled participants to share their experiences of using the procedure, identify good practices and discuss possibilities for a common approach, which would be explored further at the 2019 annual meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies. She had also participated in a workshop, organized by the International Service for Human Rights and OHCHR, aimed at increasing awareness of reprisals and intimidation and coordinating the efforts of the treaty bodies and the United Nations system in order to tackle the issue. Among other activities, she had briefed members of the Council of Europe on the Convention, participated in a global workshop in Bangkok on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, organized by International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific and attended a Coalition Against Trafficking in Women conference in Madrid that sought to place women at the centre of efforts to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

10. During her two-year term as Chair, the Committee had adopted three new general recommendations – on gender-based violence against women, on the right of girls and women to education and on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change – and had embarked on the process of drafting a fourth concerning trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. It had also integrated the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals into its reporting guidelines and broadened its cooperation with various United Nations entities, including the World Health Organization (WHO), special procedures mandate holders and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Committee members had played active roles as experts on women's rights and gender equality and had endorsed the Guidelines against Intimidation or Reprisals.

11. **Ms. Gabr** said that, in late 2018, she had attended the seventh ministerial conference on women and development of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in her capacity as an independent expert. The conference had provided an opportunity for OIC member States to cooperate on issues relating to women's rights. As part of her work in Cairo to combat trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, she had been involved in drafting a model employment contract for domestic workers aimed at defending their rights and protecting them against exploitation.

12. **Ms. Bethel** said that, in November 2018, she had given presentations on the Convention and on human rights in general at Florida International University in the United States and at a workshop for the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights in the Bahamas. In January 2019, she, the Chair and Ms. Song had attended an International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific workshop in Bangkok on trafficking of women

and girls in the context of global migration, which would prove useful as the Committee continued its work to draft a general recommendation on that issue.

13. **Ms. Haidar** said that, as part of the Committee's efforts to increase its cooperation with other United Nations organizations, including WHO, she and Ms. Chalal had participated in an expert meeting on health and human rights. In addition to attending the Geneva Academy workshop on the simplified reporting procedure, she had also been a panellist at two International Organization of la Francophonie events to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Current threats to the universality of rights were among the issues that had been discussed.

14. In view of the high number of reservations to the Convention, the majority of which concerned religious issues, she had taken part in a regional meeting in Tunisia on lifting religion-based reservations as a means of strengthening women's rights. Discussions had centred on the practical measures that could be taken by States parties to facilitate the withdrawal of such reservations. Lastly, in January 2019, she had participated in a meeting, organized by the Geneva Academy and attended by States Members of the United Nations, on the 2020 review of the treaty body system, a crucial issue that would be considered by the Committee during the current session.

15. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that, in November 2018, she and Ms. Bethel had represented the Committee at a training course on the Convention organized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's rights organizations in Lima. Also in November she had been invited by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the regional office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to a meeting to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She had made a presentation on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as it related to the rights of children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean. She had also been a member of a panel at that meeting, along with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children and a member of the Committee on Migrant Workers. In December 2018 she had given a paper at the annual event on gender and injustice organized by the Brazilian judicial training school in Rio de Janeiro.

16. **Ms. Ameline** said that she had attended two events with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. One, organized in January 2019 by the Human Rights Council, had addressed the links between the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights; the other, in December 2018, had been a workshop organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on women's political leadership. In addition, in Algeria, at the invitation of Ms. Chalal, she had met senior officials responsible for equality and given a talk on the Committee's reporting methodology.

17. **Ms. Song** said that, in January 2019, with Ms. Bethel and the Chair, she had attended a meeting organized in Bangkok by International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. In-depth discussions had been held and the recommendations made promised to be of great value in the Committee's deliberations on that subject.

18. **Ms. Verges** said that, in November 2018, she had taken part in an IPU workshop on capacity-building for members of the parliament of Djibouti, for which she had produced a paper on international instruments for the advancement of women's rights. She had highlighted the work of the Committee and the topics it addressed. In December 2018 she had attended a national workshop on the development of women's participation in her own country, Mauritania, since independence.

19. In January 2019, she had taken part in a British Broadcasting Corporation television broadcast on Arab women's political participation. She had highlighted the role played by the Committee in strengthening women's participation. She had also attended a meeting organized by a network of women journalists in Mauritania, at which she had given a paper on the migration of African women. She had taken the opportunity to highlight the Committee's work on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration.

20. **Ms. Rana** said that, in November 2018, she had attended the launch of the fourth National Action Plan of Switzerland for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. Entitled “Gender equality: an asset for peace and security”, the event had been hosted by the Swiss Government and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces. She had delivered the closing remarks, entitled “Peace, security and human rights: strengthening accountability by building synergies between CEDAW and Security Council resolution 1325”. The keynote speaker had been Claire Hutchinson, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security.

21. Also in November, in Nepal, she had moderated a meeting of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women with civil society. The Committee’s concluding observations on Nepal, whose report had been considered in October 2018, had been a recurrent topic. In January 2019 she had been closely involved in designing and leading workshops in three of the seven newly-restructured provinces of Nepal. The purpose of the workshops had been to help mainstream the Committee’s concluding observations in the provincial five-year plans.

22. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she had taken part in a workshop for High Court and Supreme Court judges on the use of the provisions of the Convention and the rulings of the Committee in respect of cases relating to women’s health. Examples of the Committee’s jurisprudence, articles of the Convention and best practices cited by the Committee had been presented. The judges had found it illuminating to know that they could address women’s health issues from a judicial perspective on the basis of the Convention.

23. She had also launched a series of training workshops for stakeholders and government officials in order to enhance reporting on implementation of the Convention. More than 250 participants had taken part to date and 100 had now signed up to a virtual network focusing on the Convention.

24. She said that she had joined a digital connectivity workshop organized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, as a virtual participant. She had made a presentation on various provisions of the Convention showing how the work of the Committee’s working group on the sustainable development goals intersected with the work of WTO and examining possibilities for collaboration.

25. She had attended a regional meeting organized by UN-Women at the Nigerian Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, exploring the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and comparing national action plans. She had made a presentation on how to incorporate the resolution into such plans and the reports of States parties on implementation of the Convention. She had also attended three workshops on women’s political participation in the run-up to the elections in Nigeria, working with the Independent National Electoral Commission and other stakeholders.

26. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, in November 2018, at the invitation of IPU and the Kenyan Parliament, she had taken part in a seminar on advancing gender equality in Kenya, at which she had made presentations on the Convention, the Optional Protocol, selected general recommendations and, in particular, the Committee’s concluding observations on Kenya. She had also made a presentation on Parliament’s role in implementing the Convention.

27. Also in November, at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, she had attended the thirteenth Implementation Meeting of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, at which she had drawn on her work with the Carter Center. She had moderated an event on guidelines on gender considerations in international election observation, a well-attended meeting with high-level participation including the former presidents of Botswana and Malta.

28. In December 2018 she had attended a meeting in Austria on the implementation of the joint commitment of States to effectively address and counter the world drug problem from a human rights perspective. She had made a presentation on the Committee’s jurisprudence on women and the drug problem. At the end of January 2019, she had attended consultations on the gender lens to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, under the auspices of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. It had been gratifying to find that many of the issues raised had been covered by the Committee in several of its general recommendations, notably Nos. 16, on

unpaid women workers in rural and urban family enterprises, 17, on measurement and quantification of the unremunerated domestic activities of women and their recognition in the GNP, and 33, on women's access to justice.

29. **Ms. Manalo** said that she had helped strengthen gender research at her university in the Philippines. She also believed she had convinced the Commissioner for Higher Education that the Convention should be made a mandatory component of all liberal arts courses in the Philippines.

*The first part (public) of the meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*