



**International covenant
on civil and
political rights**

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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Ninety-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2655th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Friday, 31 July 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. IWASAWA

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

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

Announcement of Bureau decisions

1. The CHAIRPERSON announced the status of the communications considered under the Optional Protocol as at the end of the current session. The Committee had declared two communications admissible and nine inadmissible; it had found violations of the Covenant in 12 cases, no violation in 2 cases, and had decided to discontinue consideration of nine communications.
2. At its ninetieth session, the Committee had adopted provisional concluding observations on the situation of civil and political rights in Grenada. It had finalized those concluding observations at the current session.
3. While many State party reports remained overdue, initial reports had been received from Kazakhstan and Ethiopia during the session. At the next session, the Committee intended to consider the reports of Croatia, Ecuador, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Switzerland. The lists of issues for Cameroon, Colombia, El Salvador, Estonia and Israel would also be finalized at that session.
4. Mr. AMOR drew attention to the problem of the late issuance of translations of Committee documents, which resulted in a violation of Committee members' status. While he had agreed to waive his right to use Arabic, his mother tongue, the situation concerning the lack of translations into the Committee's working languages was becoming untenable. It prevented some Committee members from performing their duties under the Covenant, which was tantamount to discrimination and called the legitimacy of the Committee's meetings into question. Nothing had changed following the forceful recommendations made by the Inter-Committee Meetings in that respect. The secretariat should not distribute State party reports that were not available in the Committee's working languages.
5. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee shared that concern; it was important for members to receive documents in all the Committee's working languages. Translation continued to be a problem throughout the United Nations system, as had been highlighted during the twenty-first Meeting of Chairpersons in June 2009. He had also emphasized the translation problem at the informal consultation the Committee had held with States parties on 23 July 2009. He would continue to raise the issue with the High Commissioner and to do his utmost to solve the problem in order to facilitate a good working environment for the Committee.
6. Ms. WEDGWOOD suggested the notion of earmarking funds for translation, particularly as so much of the funding for the work of the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) came from voluntary contributions.
7. Sir Nigel RODLEY noted that translation services were available 24 hours a day at United Nations Headquarters in New York, compared with 8 hours a day in Geneva. It might be necessary to examine how Geneva was resourced for translation services. While the problem

went far beyond the capacities of OHCHR to resolve, he endorsed colleagues' calls for OHCHR to do everything it could in order to convince the services responsible to find a solution to that serious problem.

8. Mr. AMOR said that, from a legal standpoint, it was inadmissible that the Committee should examine any issue that was not accessible to all members owing to the lack of translation. In future, he would not attend meetings at which the documents under consideration were not available in all the Committee's working languages.

9. Mr. RIVAS POSADA said the entire Committee agreed that the problem of translation should be given the highest priority.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

10. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRPERSON declared the ninety-sixth session of the Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.