



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Distr.: General
8 March 2021

Original: English

Human Rights Committee 131st session

Summary record (partial)* of the 3757th meeting

Held via videoconference on Monday, 1 March 2021, at 4 p.m. Central European Time

Temporary Chair: Mr. Walker (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Chair: Ms. Pazartzis

Contents

Opening of the session

Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee in accordance with article 38 of the Covenant

Election of the Chair and other officers of the Committee

Adoption of the agenda

Organizational and other matters, including the adoption of the report of the Working Group on Communications

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

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Opening of the session

Opening statement by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

1. **Mr. Cissé-Gouro** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that he was pleased to declare open the Committee's 131st session, which was being held online. He wished to warmly welcome the six new members of the Committee, who came with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

2. The Committee was meeting at a time of unique challenges for the human rights system. The ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic posed a threat to the rights of many people around the world. It was a time of disinformation, forced evictions, economic hardship and growing inequality. Protection had been much discussed but, in the context of human rights, inadequately ensured. However, the crisis was also an opportunity to build back better, focusing on the protection of human rights. The Committee had already begun that process and was leading the way in closing the human rights protection gap. Since the beginning of the pandemic, it had adopted a significant amount of jurisprudence, including Views on 153 individual communications and a groundbreaking general comment on the right of peaceful assembly.

3. He wished to commend the Committee on its decision to resume constructive dialogues with States parties remotely, on an exceptional basis, while it was unable to hold meetings in person owing to the pandemic. He was glad to see that the online review process included interaction with civil society and other stakeholders. He also welcomed the Committee's unwavering commitment to continuing its consideration of individual communications and was pleased to note that it planned to consider 28 draft communications and a draft report on follow-up to Views over the course of the session.

4. Regrettably, the General Assembly had not approved the request for additional staff to assist the treaty bodies with their increased workload. However, the Office continued to do its utmost to support the treaty bodies in their work and to look actively for solutions to the problems that they faced. The Secretary-General had reaffirmed that commitment in his opening statement to the Human Rights Council the previous week by appealing to all Member States to ensure that the treaty bodies had the necessary resources to carry out their mandates.

5. Lastly, he wished to express his appreciation for the work of the outgoing Bureau and to extend his best wishes to the Committee for a productive online session.

Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee in accordance with article 38 of the Covenant

6. *At the invitation of the Temporary Chair, the new members of the Committee – Ms. Bassim, Mr. El Haiba, Mr. Gómez Martínez, Mr. Soh, Ms. Kpatcha Tchamdja and Mr. Yigezu – solemnly undertook to discharge their duties as members of the Human Rights Committee independently, impartially and conscientiously.*

Election of the Chair and other officers of the Committee

7. **Mr. Santos Pais** nominated Ms. Pazartzis for the office of Chair, in view of her extensive experience as a member and former Vice-Chair of the Committee, her professional expertise and her sound judgment.

8. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** seconded the nomination, noting that Ms. Pazartzis had helped the Committee to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic and had demonstrated commitment to the principle of multilingualism. She pointed out that electing a woman to the position of Chair would send a strong message at a time when there had been considerable backsliding in some parts of the world with respect to the right of women to participate in political and public life.

9. **Mr. Furuya**, on behalf of the members from Asia-Pacific States, seconded the nomination.

10. **Mr. Zyberi**, on behalf of the members from Eastern European States, seconded the nomination.
11. **Ms. Bassim** and **Mr. El Haiba** seconded the nomination.
12. *Ms. Pazartzis was elected Chair by acclamation.*
13. *Ms. Pazartzis took the Chair.*
14. **Mr. Soh**, on behalf of the members from Asia-Pacific States, nominated Mr. Furuya to serve as Vice-Chair.
15. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl**, on behalf of the members from Latin American and Caribbean States, nominated Mr. Bulkan to serve as Vice-Chair.
16. **Mr. Zyberi**, on behalf of the members from Eastern European States, nominated Ms. Sancin to serve as Vice-Chair.
17. **Mr. Ben Achour**, on behalf of the members from African States, nominated Mr. Muhumuza to serve as Rapporteur of the Committee.
18. *Mr. Bulkan, Mr. Furuya and Ms. Sancin were elected Vice-Chairs by acclamation.*
19. *Mr. Muhumuza was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Adoption of the agenda (CCPR/C/131/1/Rev.1)

20. *The agenda and the programme of work were adopted.*

Organizational and other matters, including the adoption of the report of the Working Group on Communications

21. **Mr. Santos Pais** said that the Working Group on Communications had met via videoconference from 22 to 26 February 2021 and had considered 28 draft proposals in respect of communications involving 15 different countries. The Working Group, which consisted of nine members, had split into three subgroups, one for each of the Committee's working languages. It recommended finding a violation of the Covenant in 20 cases and finding that there had been no violation in 2 cases. One case allowed for two differing interpretations – violation or non-violation. In five cases, the Working Group recommended findings of inadmissibility. A further six cases that had already been discussed at the 130th session of the Committee would also be presented during the current session, bringing the total number of draft proposals to be considered by the plenary Committee to 34.

22. *The report of the Working Group on Communications was adopted.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 4.50 p.m.