



Convention on the
Rights of the Child

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Thirtieth session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 778th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 21 May 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. DOEK

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

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRPERSON declared open the thirtieth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 1 of the provisional agenda) (CRC/C/115)

2. The CHAIRPERSON proposed the inclusion, under item 1 of the provisional agenda, of an item 1 bis entitled "Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee".

3. It was so decided.

4. The agenda, as amended, was adopted.

SOLEMN DECLARATION BY THE NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE (agenda item 1 bis).

5. At the invitation of the CHAIRPERSON, Ms. KHATTAB, replacing Ms. El-Guindi, made the following declaration in accordance with rule 15 of the Committee's provisional rules of procedure: "I solemnly declare that I will perform my duties and exercise my powers as a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child honourably, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously."

6. The CHAIRPERSON announced that Ms. Chutikul had been elected Vice-Chairperson of the Committee in place of Ms. El-Guindi.

7. Ms. IZE CHARRIN (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) noted the size of the Committee's programme of work for its thirtieth session, involving consideration of 10 country reports, instead of the usual 9, and the preparation of 3 draft general comments on HIV/AIDS, young persons' health and national human rights institutions respectively. She noted with satisfaction the Committee's intention to submit its draft general comments for consideration by other treaty bodies and specialized agencies or bodies such as UNAIDS, UNICEF and WHO - a first in interagency collaboration - as well as to non-governmental organizations in the respective spheres. She also welcomed the preparations for the day of general discussion, in September 2002, on the role of the private sector as service provider in implementation of the rights of the child.

8. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Conference Services Division were concerned by the undue length of some State party reports, whose translation and reproduction gave rise to considerable budgetary problems.

9. The amendment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child increasing the number of Committee members to 18 would shortly enter into force, the Secretary-General having already received 119 of the 128 signatures required for that purpose.
10. Good progress had been made in ratification of the optional protocols, 30 States being parties to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, which had entered into force on 12 February 2002, and 29 States to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which had entered into force on 18 January 2002. Submission of the first initial reports by States parties under both protocols was expected by early 2004; the secretariat was considering measures to be taken for their consideration.
11. The General Assembly's special session on children, held in New York from 8 to 10 May 2002, had been a success in that, for the first time, children had been able to speak in the Security Council and the General Assembly; it was regrettable, however, that the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at its conclusion were not as binding as might have been hoped. Those texts would nevertheless be very useful to the Committee in pursuing its tasks.
12. The Committee could not fail to welcome the adoption by the Commission on Human Rights, at its fifty-eighth session, of resolution 2002/92, as a result of a recommendation made by the Committee after two days of general discussion, at its September 2000 and September 2001 sessions, on violence in the family and at school; the resolution proposed the appointment of an independent expert to undertake an in-depth study of violence against children.
13. The Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child would take part shortly in the fourteenth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, as well as the first inter-committee meeting, in June 2002, comprising three members of each committee, to discuss the revision of working methods with a view to greater efficiency.
14. Ms. SARDENBERG noted that a revision of the Committee's methods of work and a strengthening of its cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies had become necessary at the end of a decade of activity. Translation and publication of reports might be costly but it should not be overlooked that they constituted the basic documentation that enabled the Committee to appraise the situation of children's rights in the country concerned. In that regard, given the large number of ratifications of both optional protocols, the requisite financial and human resources would have to be found as soon as possible if the reports expected by January 2004 were to be considered.
15. Since the final texts of the special session on children were not binding enough on States, it would be as well to look at all the preparatory work that had gone into their adoption, since they complemented the Convention in many respects.

16. Lastly, she noted with satisfaction the forthcoming inter-committee meeting and the adoption by the Commission on Human Rights of the resolution on violence against children - the outcome of two days of general discussion the Committee had organized in September 2000 and 2001.

17. Ms. CHUTIKUL said it would be helpful if the independent expert responsible for carrying out an in-depth study on the question of violence against children made contact with the Committee immediately on being appointed.

18. Mr. CITARELLA said that although lengthy reports were often a source of useful information for the Committee they could sometimes be rambling and distract the Committee's attention with superfluous detail. Activities reported at any level to uphold children's rights should take the Committee's work into account.

19. Ms. KARP asked whether the Office of the High Commissioner envisaged providing, as soon as the amendment increasing the number of Committee members to 18 entered into force, the human and financial resources the Committee would need in order to work under the best conditions, and in particular to reduce the backlog of reports to be considered.

20. Ms. KHATTAB said that she too was disappointed in the final texts of the special session on children, which she had hoped would reflect a stronger consensus and deeper commitment by countries. The preparatory work for the session had shown, however, that the cause of children was far from being overlooked; States parties should be advised, moreover, to refer to the preparatory papers when drawing up their periodic reports.

21. To prevent reports submitted by States from being too long, perhaps a maximum number of pages should be stipulated for initial and periodic reports. In addition, States parties could attach a summary to their report so that experts could gain an overall idea of the report's contents and refer to the relevant paragraphs where necessary.

22. Lastly, she wondered in what way the Committee might provide technical assistance to countries to promote the Convention's implementation at the national level. Perhaps "Rights of the Child Convention Associations" could be established to monitor observance of the rights set forth in the Convention.

23. Ms. IZE CHARRIN reminded the Committee that it was for the Secretary-General to appoint the independent expert to carry out an in-depth study on the question of violence against children. It would indeed be highly desirable for the expert, once appointed, to work together with the Committee to establish a common approach in the task of upholding children's rights.

24. The Office of the High Commissioner would look closely into the matter of the funding required once the amendment increasing the number of Committee members to 18 entered into force, especially since the time would very shortly arrive.

25. Lastly, the establishment, at country level, of Convention associations was a good idea since they could monitor the actual implementation, in the field, of the Committee's concluding observations.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES (agenda item 3)

26. Mr. DAVID (Secretary of the Committee) said that the initial reports of San Marino and Singapore and the second periodic reports of Armenia, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Panama and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been received since the Committee's previous session, thus bringing to 227 the total number of reports received, 169 being initial reports and 58 periodic reports. Consideration of 172 reports had already begun; 22 initial and 119 periodic reports had not yet been submitted.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 11.05 a.m.