



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Fifty-seventh session

Summary record (partial)* of the 1185th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 10 February 2014, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Patten (Vice-Chairperson)

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

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In the absence of Ms. Ameline, Ms. Patten, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

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

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the fifty-seventh session of the Committee.

Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

2. **Ms. Pillay** (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the intergovernmental process on treaty body strengthening was in its final phase and was to be concluded by 15 February. Yet the treaty body system was facing the triple challenge of a significant backlog, chronic under-resourcing and insufficient compliance with reporting obligations, which could lead to its collapse unless prompt action were taken. Fortunately, a compromise resolution was being drafted by the Third Committee of the General Assembly that would provide for additional meeting time and resources for capacity-building.

3. The treaty bodies were making a constructive contribution to the strengthening process and should be encouraged to act as a single system, as their strength lay in their unity. A balance had to be struck between due respect for the views of all experts and the need for the system to speak with one voice, and that was why she truly valued the “Poznan formula”, which captured that balance. In line with that formula, committee chairpersons were mandated to take decisions in respect of working methods and procedures to be implemented by all treaty bodies unless a committee subsequently dissociated itself from the decision. The chairpersons were making a proactive effort to self-regulate the treaty bodies’ own standards of conduct so that there would be no need for the General Assembly to adopt a code of conduct for them. In May 2013, the chairpersons had proclaimed five principles to guide the treaty body strengthening process. Those principles focused on the accessibility and independence of the treaty bodies, on a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the challenges they faced, the reinforcement of human rights protection and the reinvestment of any cost-savings that were achieved.

4. The participation of Ms. Ameline, the Committee’s Chairperson, in the latest session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals had sent a very positive signal about the importance attached to human rights in the elaboration of goals for the post-2015 period. It was a crucial opportunity to put forward the position that women’s rights were central to sustainable development outcomes. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to advocate for the mainstreaming of gender equality across all the goals as well as for a stand-alone goal on equality and non-discrimination.

5. In October 2013, the Security Council had held an open debate on women, peace and security. At that debate, she had emphasized that efforts to ensure accountability for conflict-related violations of women’s rights must take into account the underlying structural factors of sex- and gender-based discrimination. She, along with the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women, had also welcomed the Committee’s adoption of its general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. On the same day that the debate had taken place, the Security Council had also launched a 15-year review of its resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and she encouraged the Committee to explore ways of contributing to that review.

6. The General Assembly had recently adopted several resolutions relevant to the Committee’s work, including resolutions on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control; the protection of human rights defenders; and the gender-related killing of women and girls. In the latter resolution, the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-

General to convene an open-ended intergovernmental expert group to discuss ways and means of more effectively combating gender-related killings of women and girls, and she was certain that the Committee would provide substantive input for that consultation.

7. In Human Rights Council resolution 24/23 on child, early and forced marriage, the Council had mandated her Office to prepare a report on the prevention and elimination of those forms of marriage. It would be important to obtain the Committee's input on the subject. The struggle to give effect to women's human rights had been a leitmotif of her entire professional career. She viewed the work of the Committee as a cause of great pride and firmly supported efforts to bring its impressive body of know-how and experience to bear in the implementation of women's rights.

8. **Ms. Hayashi** said that the innovation represented by the individual complaints procedure had been one of the greatest achievements of international human rights law. The Committee was proud of its pioneering work in that area but found it increasingly difficult to address all the individual communications it received and was in need of greater support from OHCHR. If support remained at the current level, the Committee would quickly accumulate a large backlog of communications to address. She would like to know what further steps OHCHR would take if the resolution currently being drafted by the Third Committee failed to fully respond to the Committee's needs.

9. **Ms. Pillay** (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that her Office was not able to provide more support because the Member States had not seen fit to allocate additional financial resources for the treaty bodies. It was possible that the draft resolution would not respond to all the Committee's needs, and there was very little that her Office could do about that. That being said, fundraising efforts by her Office were beginning to pay off. She would encourage the Committee members to explain to their Governments how the treaty bodies benefitted them.

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/57/1)

10. *The agenda was adopted.*

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

11. **The Chairperson** said that, as Ms. Ameline could not be present, she would read out the latter's statement on intersessional activities on her behalf. Since the previous session there had been no change in the number of States parties to the Convention, the number that had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, or the number that had ratified the Optional Protocol. Madagascar, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Portugal and Spain had submitted their periodic reports. Even though the Committee's request for additional resources had not found sufficient support in the General Assembly, Ms. Ameline was mobilizing support in New York and doing her utmost to ensure that the Committee would continue to be visible in New York and would have sufficient meeting time and capacity to perform all its mandated activities.

12. In October 2013 Ms. Ameline had presented the Committee's report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly and had emphasized the importance of including a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda, in addition to taking a cross-cutting approach based on non-discrimination. Ms. Ameline had attended multiple meetings related to the post-2015 development agenda, including a panel discussion on gender equality and women's empowerment which had been part of the programme of the latest session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee had been the only treaty body represented at that important meeting. Ms. Ameline had spoken at a number of events on topics such as gender in science and

society, the empowerment of women as a key tool for development, and challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. She had also promoted the Convention and the work of the Committee at meetings in Brussels, Paris and Angers, France. In addition, she had participated in an informal consultation with the chairpersons of the treaty bodies at which they had adopted a joint statement on treaty body strengthening. She would brief the Committee on the informal consultation and the treaty body strengthening process upon her return.

13. She (the Chairperson) said that, before she invited other members to brief the Committee on their intersessional work activities, she would like to inform the Committee that she had participated in a lunch, jointly sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), during which she had presented general recommendation No. 30 and underscored its key elements and its synergies with Security Council resolutions. She had also, along with Ms. Haidar, participated in a meeting with UN-Women and GNWP to brainstorm ways of implementing the general recommendation and to see how UN-Women could facilitate that process.

14. **Ms. Neubauer** said that she had attended a meeting of government representatives and NGOs in the Netherlands to discuss ways of ensuring high-quality periodic reporting and of increasing States parties' accountability for implementing the recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations. She had also attended a parallel session at the Conference on Eliminating Violence against Women in Europe, hosted jointly by the World Health Organization, the European Institute for Gender Equality and the City of Vienna, at which she had briefed the participants on the jurisprudence developed by the Committee through its individual communications procedure.

15. **Ms. Haidar** said that she had taken part in an expert group meeting in Lebanon on the identification of legislative gaps relating to the implementation of Security Council resolution No. 1325 on women, peace and security (S/RES/1325) in the Arab States Region. The meeting had also afforded an opportunity to present the Committee's general recommendation No. 30. A workshop in which emphasis had been placed on the importance of implementing the Committee's concluding observations had also been held for Lebanese judges and lawyers. She and Ms. Patten had attended a meeting in Amman at which they had briefed a delegation from Iraq on the treaty body system, in general, and the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in particular.

16. **Ms. Gabr** said that she had addressed the French parliament at a meeting commemorating that country's ratification of the Convention, during which she had informed parliamentarians about the Committee's endeavours to assist women in various regions. She had spoken about the implementation of Security Council resolution No. 1325 and had introduced general recommendation No. 30. She had participated in several consultations with Egyptian NGOs during the intersessional period to discuss the role of women's rights in the new Constitution, and she had held discussions with the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights.

17. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that she and Ms. Pimentel had visited Guatemala, where they had held meetings with indigenous leaders and female human rights defenders. In Guatemala, the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 was having a significant impact. She had also visited El Salvador and met with representatives of NGOs and government institutions. Although progress was being made, the situation in El Salvador remained complex; she had been particularly moved by a prison visit during which she had met a woman who was serving a 40-year prison sentence for having had an abortion. She had met with representatives of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government in Uruguay to discuss the low level of women's political participation.

18. **Ms. Pimentel** said that she welcomed cooperation between the Committee and human rights defenders at national level in Guatemala to promote implementation of the Convention. Since the Committee's last session, she had attended a public hearing in the Brazilian Senate on a proposal to include a provision on femicide in the Criminal Code. In view of the high levels of femicide in Latin America, she had also participated in a meeting organized by OHCHR to discuss the adoption of a Latin American and Caribbean regional protocol for investigating gender-related deaths. On International Human Rights Day, she, along with other treaty body members, had attended an event in Brazil to discuss the impact of the treaty bodies' work in Latin America. She had also recently been asked to contribute to a gender equality project at the faculty of law of the Catholic University of São Paulo.

19. **Ms. Jahan** said that she had participated in a high-level panel on women and the post-2015 development agenda that had been held in Brussels as part of the European Development Days project. During that event she had emphasized the importance not only of having a specific development goal related to women, but also of mainstreaming a gender perspective across the development agenda as a whole. The event had afforded an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the Convention and the work of the Committee. At national level, she had been working with the authorities in Bangladesh to encourage that State party to withdraw its reservations to the Convention.

20. **Ms. Schulz** said that, since the Committee's last session, she had given a presentation on the international legal framework for gender equality and for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women at a meeting for francophone members of the Human Rights Council. The meeting had proven to be a useful means of raising awareness of global and regional human rights instruments and had provided an opportunity for discussing potential links between the Human Rights Council and the treaty body system. She had also participated in a forum for judges and lawyers organized in Geneva by the International Commission of Jurists during which she had spoken about the Committee's role as a potential ally for judges, had informed them about the Committee's work and had explained how they could make use of the Committee's jurisprudence. Lastly, she had recently finished writing an article about the Convention for inclusion in a new human rights manual to be published, in French, by the University of Geneva.

21. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao said that she would like to outline some of her activities at national level in China. In the context of cooperation between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), she had been invited to give a presentation on the Convention and the work of the Committee during a meeting with women's representatives from Myanmar. She had also participated in a seminar for students and researchers during which she had provided information on the Convention and its Optional Protocol. In addition, she had attended a meeting with NGO representatives to discuss methods of preparing a shadow report and presenting it to the Committee.

22. **Ms. Bailey** said that she had participated in an initiative, spearheaded by the Caribbean Office of UN-Women, on gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. In that context, she had attended a training workshop in Guyana that had focused on promoting a more HIV-sensitive approach to Convention-related reporting, implementation and monitoring. Consideration had also been given to follow-up procedures with regard to the concluding observations concerning Guyana that the Committee had issued in 2012 (CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/7-8).

23. **Mr. Bruun** said that he had participated in a seminar held in Strasbourg to discuss a recent publication, *The European Convention on Human Rights and the Employment Relation*, to which he had contributed information on the Committee's jurisprudence.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

24. **The Chairperson**, speaking as the Chairperson of the pre-sessional working group for the fifty-seventh session, said that the group had met from 29 July to 2 August 2013 to prepare lists of issues and questions concerning the periodic reports of Bahrain, Cameroon, Finland, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Qatar and Sierra Leone. Particular attention had been paid to how those States parties had followed up on the Committee's previous concluding observations. Owing to the late submission of the periodic report of Sierra Leone, consideration of that State party's report had been postponed until a later session. Inputs had also been provided to the working group, in writing and in person, by representatives of United Nations entities and specialized agencies, as well as NGOs. The finalized lists of issues and questions had been transmitted to the relevant States parties.

Follow-up to the consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

25. **Ms. Bailey**, Rapporteur on follow-up, recalled that, during the Committee's fifty-sixth session, it had issued an invitation to representatives of Haiti, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Panama and the United Arab Emirates. Subsequently she had met with representatives of Panama. Haiti and the United Arab Emirates had requested written information on the follow-up procedure, and the Lao People's Republic had submitted its follow-up report during that session.

26. At the end of the session, follow-up letters had been sent to four States parties. First reminders on overdue follow-up reports had been sent to seven States parties, and reminders about overdue additional information had been sent to three. Follow-up reports had been received from 12 States parties, and 3 States parties had submitted additional information. During its current session, the Committee would send first reminders to Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Montenegro and Oman; second reminders would be sent to Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malta, South Africa and Uganda. A reminder regarding the submission of additional information would be sent to the United Republic of Tanzania, and meetings should be scheduled with representatives of Libya and Papua New Guinea.

The public part of the meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.