



Convention on the
Rights of the Child

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Thirty-first session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 805th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 16 September 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. DOEK

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRPERSON declared open the thirty-first session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
2. Ms. IZA-CHARRIN (Representative of the Secretary-General) drew attention to the appointment of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, from Brazil, as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for four years beginning on 12 September 2002. Mr. Vieira de Mello would open the Committee's general discussion day on "the private sector as service provider and its role in implementing child rights" on 20 September.
3. Three draft general comments would be discussed during the thirty-first session, concerning HIV/AIDS, adolescent health and national human rights institutions, respectively. A productive discussion had taken place a few days earlier during an expert consultation organized by the High Commissioner's Office on the draft general comment on HIV/AIDS. The Committee had also participated recently in the third meeting of the United Nations Coordination Panel on Technical Advice and Assistance on Juvenile Justice.
4. Only four more notifications of acceptance were required before the amendment increasing membership of the Committee to 18 came into force, which could mean 18 members being elected for the thirty-third session of the Committee in May 2003. A total of 39 States had ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and 38 had ratified the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
5. The first inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies had taken place in June 2002, with a view to enhancing cooperation between committees and improving methods of work. Other bodies were considering whether to follow the decision by the Committee on the Rights of the Child to limit the number of pages of periodic reports. A working group had been established to make preparations for a forthcoming study on the question of violence against children. A secretariat would be set up and an independent expert appointed to organize the study shortly. A Treaty Bodies Recommendations Unit had been established in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, designed to provide follow-up measures to assist States in implementing recommendations. While it was currently a small operation, owing to budgetary restrictions, it was intended to grow into a more significant body.
6. Ms. SARDENBERG said that, on a recent visit to Uruguay, she had been given a clear message from the national Government concerning the need for enhanced technical assistance on legislative reform. In particular, Uruguay required support for the development of a new Children's Code and the reform of juvenile justice. She welcomed the establishment of a Treaty Bodies Recommendations Unit, with responsibility for coordinating follow-up activities, but would like more precise details of its intended functions.

7. Ms. IZA-CHARRIN (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that the Unit would, on the one hand, assist treaty bodies in designing follow-up measures and, on the other, help States to implement concluding observations. It would assess the most difficult obstacles to implementation, and help to prepare technical assistance programmes accordingly. In future, it would be important to identify priorities on the basis of concluding observations and focus follow-up measures in that context. The Unit would also endeavour to disseminate information to colleagues from specialized agencies concerning the recommendations of treaty bodies.

8. Ms. KHATTAB suggested that time might be set aside during the coming session for a review of the provisions of the Convention, taking into account emerging trends such as cloning.

9. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee was required to keep abreast of developments that might have an impact on children's rights. However, the human rights implications of issues such as cloning were best brought to the attention of the Commission on Human Rights. A review of the provisions of the Convention would not be possible during the current session, in view of the full agenda already prepared.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 1 of the provisional agenda) (CRC/C/119)

10. The agenda was adopted.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES (agenda item 3)

11. Mr. DAVID (Secretary of the Committee) said that, since the previous session, the Committee had received one initial report, from Guyana. Guyana had been one of a group of six countries to which reminders had been sent regarding the fact that their initial reports had been overdue since 1992 or 1993. The Committee had also received five periodic reports, bringing the total amounts to 170 initial and 64 periodic reports. Of those, the Committee had considered 182. To date, 21 initial reports and 117 periodic reports were overdue.

METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (agenda item 7)

12. The CHAIRPERSON said that, during the course of the session, the Committee would discuss the revised set of guidelines on reporting, as well as proposals on how to prepare for the transition towards an increased membership.

GENERAL COMMENTS (agenda item 8)

13. The CHAIRPERSON said that preparatory work was almost complete on the revision of the General Comment on HIV/AIDS. A new draft general comment on adolescent health was being prepared, but budgetary constraints had delayed the activities of some experts in that regard.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.50 a.m.