



# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Ninetieth session

### Summary record of the 2118th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 3 February 2025, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Peláez Narváez

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chair** declared open the ninetieth session of the Committee.

### **Statement by the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

2. **Mr. Ori** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), welcoming the new and re-elected members of the Committee, said that the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which a vision had been laid out for safeguarding women's rights and achieving gender equality across the world, represented an opportunity for the Member States of the United Nations to renew their related commitments. Despite considerable progress since the adoption, however, achievement of the vision remained far off. For instance, approximately one in three women experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, during their lifetime; only 26 per cent of parliamentarians in the world were women; and women accounted for 30 per cent or less of all management posts and of jobs in high-tech industries. In addition, a backlash was taking place against gender equality and against women's rights, in particular their rights to sexual and reproductive health, with an increase in attacks against abortion providers.

3. The persistence of harmful gender stereotypes in societies across the globe continued to limit opportunities for women and girls and to be used to justify gender-based violence and discrimination. Accordingly, he welcomed the Committee's timely work on a new general recommendation on gender stereotyping, which would commence during the session.

4. The fifty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council, which would take place from 24 February to 4 April 2025, would include the annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming, convened under the theme "Thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" and organized by OHCHR and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), among other entities of the United Nations system. The Secretary-General, António Guterres, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, would open the panel, in which Ms. Haidar would be a panellist. In addition, OHCHR would organize an event on the margins of the fifty-eighth session of the Council, which would be focused on pushback against women's rights and gender equality in the context of humanitarian action. In a similar vein, OHCHR would be one of the sponsors of a side event at the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which would be on the subject of advancing intergenerational and intersectional feminist movements.

5. In autumn 2024, the Chairs of the treaty bodies had made it clear to the Member States that the liquidity crisis had hampered those bodies' work and was continuing to do so. OHCHR was doing everything it could to highlight the impact of resource limitations on human rights protection, but the crisis was unlikely to end in the foreseeable future. While the General Assembly had not endorsed all proposals made by the Chairs, its resolution 79/165, adopted in December 2024, referred to a clear and regularized cycle for scheduling the reporting by States parties, substantive coordination among the treaty bodies and the further use of digital technologies in their work.

6. OHCHR had been involved in organizing an informal meeting, held on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2024, between the Chairs and focal points on working methods of several treaty bodies, on the one hand, and representatives of States parties and other stakeholders, on the other. Participants had discussed, among other matters, possible ways of improving the harmonization of procedures between treaty bodies. OHCHR would continue working with the treaty bodies to strengthen the human rights system, including through help with coordination on working methods.

**Solemn declaration by the new members of the Committee**

7. *Ms. Al-Shukairi, Ms. Barriteau, Ms. Draz, Ms. Mu, Ms. Jarbussynova, Ms. Pia-Comella, Ms. Schläppi and Ms. Toledo Vásquez made the solemn declaration provided for in rule 15 of the Committee's rules of procedure.*

**Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/90/1)**

8. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Report of the Chair on activities undertaken between the eighty-ninth and ninetieth sessions of the Committee**

9. **The Chair**, welcoming the new and re-elected members of the Committee, said that there were 189 States parties to the Convention, and 81 had accepted the amendment to article 20 (1). The amendment would have to be accepted by 126 to enter into force. There were 115 States parties to the Optional Protocol. Since the beginning of the previous session, the Committee had received periodic reports from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Romania, Solomon Islands, Togo and Tuvalu. Since the Committee had decided to make the simplified reporting procedure the default procedure for the submission of State party reports, 13 States parties had indicated that they wished to maintain the traditional reporting procedure.

10. On 8 October, she had presented the Committee's annual report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly. She had also taken part in an interactive dialogue with the members of the Third Committee during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly. She had co-chaired remote meetings of the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on the Elimination of Discrimination and Violence against Women on 28 October and 22 January. She had also, on 4 November, presented the Committee's work to the Advisory Board on Gender Equality of the President of the Human Rights Council and discussed the Committee's priorities and the budgetary situation with the Director of the Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division of OHCHR, Mahamane Cissé-Gouro. In addition, she had chaired the November, December and January meetings of the steering committee to monitor preparations for the Pacific technical cooperation session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, scheduled for April 2025.

11. She had, on 6 November, been a panellist in an event, organized by the Center for Reproductive Rights, which had addressed challenges pertaining to women's rights and sexual and reproductive rights in Nicaragua. On 14 November, she had given a talk on women and girls with disabilities in educational settings, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 (2017). Participating remotely in a multilateral meeting held in Bangkok on 18 November and organized by Transforming Communities for Inclusion, she had spoken about the importance of intersectional approaches to ensuring the rights of women with disabilities and of advocating recognition of their capacity in legal and policy frameworks.

12. On 20 November, she had taken part in a round table on combating gender-based violence at an event in Spain to mark the twentieth anniversary of the country's Organic Act on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence. She had, on 21 November, given a keynote address at a training and awareness-raising event on sexist violence against women with disabilities, organized by a local authority in Spain. Soon thereafter, she had spoken at the seventh Social Forum for Women and Children with Disabilities, organized by the Foundation of the Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities.

13. She had, on 4 December, given a presentation on the situation of women with disabilities, at a public event held by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament. On 9 December, she had given an online presentation about the Convention and the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as part of an event organized by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, a non-governmental organization (NGO) led by Ms. Tisheva. On 11 December, she had spoken as part of an event held by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. On 16 December, she had moderated and coordinated an online conference on

progress and challenges in respect of the human rights of women and children with disabilities since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, convened by the Foundation of the Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities.

14. On 27 January, she had both inaugurated the induction programme for new members of the Committee and taken part in a dialogue with the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament. Her final intersessional activity had consisted in participation on 31 January in a round table on legal and ethical issues related to obstetric violence, organized by the Foundation of the Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities.

15. **Ms. Rana** said that, on 11 November, she had participated in the National Review of Nepal and the launch of the Civil Society Report on Beijing+30, hosted by UN-Women Nepal. From 19 to 21 November, she had attended the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review, held at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok. On 20 November, she had been the moderator for the third round table on Sustainable Strategies to Respond to and Prevent Violence against Women and Girls in an Era of Uncertainty. On the same day, she had also been a panellist at a side event organized by the United Nations Population Fund on harnessing science, technology, engineering and mathematics to promote access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to address gender equality.

16. From 2 to 5 December, she had attended the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) International Forum in Bangkok and had discussed the Convention's role as an accountability mechanism for promoting gender equality. On 15 and 16 December, she had been a guest of honour at the Second International Conference on Paid Period Leave, in Odisha, India. On 21 December, she had been invited to participate in a round-table discussion, hosted by the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Women in Nepal, on the regional action plan to end the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. She had also remotely attended the steering committee meeting that was preparing for the Committee's technical cooperation event, to be held in Fiji.

17. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she had engaged in awareness-raising activities related to the Committee's concluding observations issued following its constructive dialogue with Japan. On 22 November, she had spoken about the dialogue as part of a special lecture series organized by Josai International University; on 1 December, she had delivered a lecture on gender equality in Japan at a seminar organized by the Japan Accountability Caucus for the Beijing Conference; on 14 December, she had given a lecture about the current situation and challenges of gender equality, with a particular focus on the Committee's recommendations, as part of the International Cooperation Seminar organized by the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women; and on 25 January, she had delivered a lecture on the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights as part of the Mitaka City Human Rights Commemorative Lecture. She had also participated in several meetings to disseminate the Committee's concluding observations to Japanese audiences.

18. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she had been invited by the Oxford Internet Institute to conduct research into artificial intelligence-driven lethal autonomous weapons systems and their compliance with international law and international humanitarian law. Her research would lay the groundwork for a 2026 legally binding United Nations instrument to prohibit lethal autonomous weapons systems that functioned without human control or oversight. She had also been invited to serve as Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association and had been appointed to the Advisory Board on Gender Equality of the President of the General Assembly, at its seventy-ninth session.

19. Over the previous two years, she had collected over 500 examples in which the Convention had been invoked in national courts worldwide, with the aim of producing a case book on global gender justice. In addition, she had moderated a session on gender and climate as part of the twenty-ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; participated in a conversation about feminist diplomacy with the first female president of Sri Lanka, Chandrika Kumaratunga; taken part in a panel discussion on reparations and survivor-centric justice; contributed to a high-level group on

Afghanistan in Geneva; and served as a member of the Academic Advisory Group on Gender Policy, for the International Criminal Court.

20. **Mr. Safarov** said that he had participated in the twenty-ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as a speaker and moderator and in the signing by the Government of Azerbaijan of the Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action. He had also taken part in a panel discussion on gender-based violence and climate change during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign and had served as a speaker at the Global Multi-Stakeholder Summit on Advancing Gender Equality in Nationality Laws, which had been held in Geneva.

21. **Ms. Mikko** said that she had delivered a lecture in Estonia on the Convention and had discussed with senior civil servants ways of closing the gender pay gap. On 27 November, she had given a lecture about the Convention and general recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, at the Estonian Academy of Arts. On 10 December, she had participated in a seminar organized by the national human rights institution of Estonia on the Convention and had emphasized the importance of meeting with civil society prior to engagement with the Committee in a constructive dialogue.

22. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she had been involved in the preparation and implementation of the second session of the Women's Human Rights Training Institute, which had taken place from 8 to 15 December in Bulgaria. The session had been dedicated to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Young lawyers from 11 European countries had received training on the procedure for the submission of complaints under the communications procedure.

23. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she had been working to disseminate the concluding observations that the Committee had issued following its constructive dialogue with Cuba. Within the framework of the Cuban Government's action plan for the implementation of the concluding observations, she had participated in meetings with civil society organizations, the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers and legal institutions.

24. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she had served as a panel member at a high-level conference organized by the European Institute for Gender Equality. The Institute's director wished to forge stronger links with the Committee.

25. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she had engaged with several initiatives in relation to peace and security, including an initiative to establish a mechanism to implement the third national action plan of Nigeria on women and peace and security, and the organization of a retreat for State legislators and lawmakers on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. She had also participated in a public policy forum as a keynote speaker, discussing contextual strategies for women's leadership in peace and co-governance.

26. She had worked with the Nigerian Government, the African Development Bank and UN-Women to address the costs of gender-based violence and the use of gender-responsive budgeting. She had also worked with civil society organizations to improve their understanding of how they could use the Convention to hold governments and stakeholders accountable for their budgeting decisions.

27. Lastly, she had delivered a keynote address at a trade fair organized to promote women's economic resilience as a means of eliminating gender-based violence, and she had helped to build the capacity of a group of women to empower them to hold the private sector accountable for gender-responsive procurement.

#### **Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention**

28. **The Chair** said that a pre-sessional report would not be presented, as the pre-sessional working group for the current session, which had been scheduled for June 2024, had been cancelled owing to the ongoing liquidity crisis. The Committee had subsequently decided to consider the pending reports from Belize, Belarus, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Nepal and Sri Lanka at the current session.

**Follow-up to the consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention**

29. **Ms. Akia**, speaking in her capacity as Alternate Rapporteur for follow-up to concluding observations, said that, at the end of its eighty-ninth session, the Committee had sent letters outlining the assessment of follow-up reports to Azerbaijan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Morocco, South Africa and Türkiye. Reminder letters had been sent to Mongolia, Namibia, Portugal and the United Arab Emirates, as their follow-up reports had been scheduled for consideration at the eighty-ninth session but had not been received. The Committee had now received all four follow-up reports and the reports of Mongolia, Namibia and the United Arab Emirates would be considered by the Committee at its ninety-first session, in June 2025. For the current session, the Committee would consider follow-up reports from Belgium, the Gambia, Sweden and Switzerland, all of which had been received on time, and from Portugal, received more than five months late.

**Other matters**

30. **The Chair** said that immediately after the current meeting, the Committee's Working Group of the Whole would elect a new Chair and new officers.

*The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.*