



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**Seventy-sixth session
(29 June–9 July 2020)**

**Seventy-seventh session
(26 October–5 November 2020)**

**Seventy-eighth session
(15–25 February and 4 March 2021)**

**General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-sixth Session
Supplement No. 38**



Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**Seventy-sixth session
(29 June–9 July 2020)**

**Seventy-seventh session
(26 October–5 November 2020)**

**Seventy-eighth session
(15–25 February and 4 March 2021)**



United Nations • New York, 2021

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	6
Part One	
Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its seventy-sixth session	7
I. Decisions adopted by the Committee	8
II. Organizational and other matters	10
A. States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol	10
B. Opening of the session	10
C. Adoption of the agenda	10
D. Report of the pre-sessional working group	10
E. Organization of work	10
F. Membership of the Committee	11
III. Report of the Chair on intersessional activities	12
IV. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention	13
V. Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol	14
A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol	14
B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications	14
C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol	14
VI. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee	16
VII. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention	17
VIII. Provisional agenda for the seventy-seventh session	19
IX. Adoption of the report	20
Annex	
Documents before the Committee at its seventy-sixth session	21
Part Two	
Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its seventy-seventh session	22
I. Decisions adopted by the Committee	23
II. Organizational and other matters	24

A.	States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol	24
B.	Opening of the session	24
C.	Adoption of the agenda.	24
D.	Report of the pre-sessional working group	24
E.	Organization of work	24
F.	Membership of the Committee.	25
III.	Report of the Chair on intersessional activities	26
IV.	Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.	27
V.	Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol	28
A.	Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol	28
B.	Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications	28
C.	Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol	28
VI.	Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee	30
VII.	Implementation of article 21 of the Convention	31
VIII.	Provisional agenda for the seventy-eighth session	32
IX.	Adoption of the report.	33
Annex		
	Documents before the Committee at its seventy-seventh session	34
Part Three		
Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its seventy-eighth session		
		35
I.	Decisions adopted by the Committee.	36
II.	Organizational and other matters	38
A.	States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol	38
B.	Opening of the session	38
C.	Adoption of the agenda.	38
D.	Report of the pre-sessional working group	38
E.	Organization of work	38
F.	Membership of the Committee.	39
III.	Report of the Chair on intersessional activities	40
IV.	Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.	41
V.	Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol	43
A.	Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol	43
B.	Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications	43

C.	Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol	43
VI.	Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee	44
VII.	Implementation of article 21 of the Convention	45
VIII.	Provisional agenda for the seventy-ninth session	46
IX.	Adoption of the report	47
Annexes		
I.	Documents before the Committee at its seventy-eighth session	48
II.	Membership of the Committee as at 25 February 2021	49

Letter of transmittal

26 March 2021

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, is to, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly on its activities.

The Committee held its seventy-sixth session from 29 June to 9 July 2020, its seventy-seventh session from 26 October to 5 November 2020 and its seventy-eighth session from 15 to 25 February and on 4 March 2021, at the United Nations Office at Geneva. It adopted its reports on the sessions at its 1784th meeting, on 9 July 2020, its 1792nd meeting, on 5 November 2020, and its 1801st meeting, on 4 March 2021. The reports are herewith submitted for transmission to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

(Signed) Gladys **Acosta Vargas**
Chair

Part One

**Report of the Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women on its seventy-sixth session**

29 June–9 July 2020

Chapter I

Decisions adopted by the Committee

Decision 76/I

On 9 July 2020, the Committee adopted the text of a joint statement on ending sexual harassment against women and girls with disabilities initiated by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), for subsequent endorsement by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹

Decision 76/II

On 9 July 2020, the Committee adopted a statement entitled “Global anti-racism protests must herald a new era in human rights, social and gender justice”.²

Decision 76/III

The Committee reviewed the conditions under which its seventy-sixth session had been held remotely, including accessibility of the online platforms used, time to migrate from one platform to another, problems with simultaneous interpretation, and issues of Internet connectivity and sound quality regardless of location. It decided that, in view of the technical and other difficulties encountered, future remote sessions of the Committee should be limited to exceptional circumstances of a global dimension similar to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Decision 76/IV

In line with articles 2 and 5 (3) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, in particular with reference to its aim of promoting inclusiveness and the need for barriers to accessibility to be “properly identified, addressed and removed” and its affirmation that “persons with disabilities engaging with the United Nations in any capacity ... have the right to reasonable accommodation”, the Committee decided to request the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure the full accessibility of remote sessions or parts thereof for Committee members with disabilities who require personal assistance, including by guaranteeing the full accessibility of any online platform used to conduct the business of the Committee and by providing reasonable accommodation to members with disabilities, including financial compensation for their personal assistant, in order to enable them to participate fully in the work of the Committee.

Decision 76/V

The Committee decided to move towards a predictable review cycle in order to ensure regular and timely reporting by all States parties, subject to the capacity and adequate resourcing of the Committee and its secretariat.

Decision 76/VI

The Committee decided to include the following standard paragraph in its lists of issues and lists of issues prior to reporting in relation to reports of States parties:

Please indicate the measures implemented by the State party in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to redress long-standing

¹ Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Statements.aspx.

² Ibid.

inequalities between women and men by placing women at the centre of recovery as an economic diversification strategy; to meet the needs and uphold the rights of women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and women in conflict or other humanitarian situations; and to ensure that, in the context of lockdown measures, whether partial or total, and in post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotyped gender roles. Please indicate the measures in place to ensure that all COVID-19 crisis response and recovery efforts: effectively address and are aimed at preventing gender-based violence against women and girls; guarantee the equal participation of women and girls in political and public life, decision-making, economic empowerment and service delivery; and are designed so that women and girls benefit equally from economic stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care roles, that are aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Please explain how the State party is ensuring that measures taken to contain the pandemic, such as restrictions on freedom of movement or physical distancing, do not limit the access of women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, to justice, shelters, education, employment and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services.

Decision 76/VII

The Committee confirmed the members of the pre-sessional working group for the seventy-seventh session: Tamader Al-Rammah, Marion Bethel, Esther Eghobamien-Mshelia, Dalia Leinarte and Ana Peláez Narváez.

Chapter II

Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol

1. As at 9 July 2020, the closing date of the seventy-sixth session of the Committee, there were 189 States parties to the Convention. In addition, 80 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee. A total of 126 States parties to the Convention are currently required to accept the amendment in order to bring it into force.
2. As at the same date, there were 114 States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its seventy-sixth session remotely from 29 June to 9 July 2020 using online meeting platforms owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee held four plenary meetings and four meetings to discuss agenda items 5 to 8. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in the annex to part one of the present report.
4. At the 1777th meeting, on 29 June, the session was opened by the Chair.

C. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda ([CEDAW/C/76/1](#)) at its 1777th meeting, on 29 June.

D. Report of the pre-sessional working group

6. The report of the pre-sessional working group ([CEDAW/C/PSWG/76/1](#)), which had met from 11 to 15 November 2019, was introduced by Wenyan Song at the 1777th meeting, on 29 June.

E. Organization of work

7. On 29 June, International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific remotely delivered a joint statement on behalf of civil society organizations on the impact of COVID-19 on the situation of women and girls.
8. On 6 July, the Committee held an informal remote private meeting with representatives of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia of UN-Women, who provided a briefing to the Committee on the impact of COVID-19 on women's and girls' livelihoods across the Europe and Central Asia region.
9. On 7 July, the Committee held an informal remote public briefing for States parties on its draft general recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. The Chair, Hilary Gbedemah, opened the meeting. The Chief of the Groups in Focus Section of the Human Rights Treaties Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Orest Nowosad, delivered introductory remarks. The Chair of the Committee's working group on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, Dalia Leinarte, introduced the draft general recommendation. The following States parties

to the Convention made statements: Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Representatives of the following 12 States parties attended the briefing: Austria, Colombia, Greece, Guyana, Israel, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, State of Palestine, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

F. Membership of the Committee

Attendance at the seventy-sixth session

10. All members attended the seventy-sixth session remotely. A list of the members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is contained in annex II to part three of the present report.

Chapter III

Report of the Chair on intersessional activities

11. At the 1777th meeting, on 29 June 2020, the Chair presented a report on her activities since the seventy-fifth session.

Chapter IV

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

Postponement of consideration of reports in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic

12. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee did not consider the reports of the following States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention, which had initially been scheduled for consideration at the seventy-sixth session:

Bahrain	(CEDAW/C/BHR/4)
Denmark	(CEDAW/C/DNK/9)
Dominican Republic	(CEDAW/C/DOM/8)
Gabon	(CEDAW/C/GAB/7)
Kyrgyzstan	(CEDAW/C/KGZ/5)
Maldives	(CEDAW/C/MDV/6)
Mongolia	(CEDAW/C/MNG/10)
Panama	(CEDAW/C/PAN/8)

Follow-up procedures relating to concluding observations

13. The Committee considered the follow-up reports received from the following States parties:

Barbados	(CEDAW/C/BRB/FCO/5-8)
Chile	(CEDAW/C/CHL/FCO/7)
Guatemala	(CEDAW/C/GTM/FCO/8-9)
Montenegro	(CEDAW/C/MNE/FCO/2)
Oman	(CEDAW/C/OMN/FCO/2-3)
Paraguay	(CEDAW/C/PRY/FCO/7)
Republic of Korea	(CEDAW/C/ROK/FCO/7-9)
Rwanda	(CEDAW/C/RWA/FCO/7-9)

14. The Committee sent first reminders to Fiji, Luxembourg, the Marshall Islands and Suriname, the follow-up reports of which were overdue.

15. The Rapporteur on follow-up met a representative of Nauru remotely, given that its follow-up report was overdue.

Chapter V

Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol

16. Article 12 of the Optional Protocol provides that the Committee is to include in its annual report a summary of its activities under the Optional Protocol.

A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol

17. The Committee discussed activities under article 2 of the Optional Protocol on 6 and 9 July 2020.

18. The Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its forty-seventh session (<https://bit.ly/3dBG0EK>).

19. The Committee adopted final decisions with regard to eight individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol. It adopted decisions of inadmissibility in *G.H. v. Hungary* (CEDAW/C/76/D/117/2017), *L.O. et al. v. Switzerland* (CEDAW/C/76/D/124/2018), *D.B. v. Slovakia* (CEDAW/C/76/D/135/2018) and *M.A.M.N. v. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* (CEDAW/C/76/D/141/2019). The Committee adopted views finding violations in *Promo-LEX v. Republic of Moldova* (CEDAW/C/76/D/105/2016) and *S.H. v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* (CEDAW/C/76/D/116/2017). It discontinued its consideration of *X. v. Czechia* (CEDAW/C/76/D/121/2017). Seven members of the Committee appended dissenting opinions to the views on *Promo-LEX v. Republic of Moldova* (CEDAW/C/76/D/105/2016). All other decisions were adopted by consensus.

B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications

20. Of the 13 cases currently under follow-up examination, 4 relate to the Russian Federation and 1 relates to each of Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Timor-Leste, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania.

C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol

21. The Committee discussed its activities under article 8 of the Optional Protocol on 2 and 8 July. It endorsed the report of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol on its sixteenth session (<https://bit.ly/2PvJrA1>).

22. The Committee approved the following recommendations made by the Working Group:

(a) In relation to inquiry No. 2019/1, that any additional information to be submitted by the sources of information be assessed during the seventeenth session of the Working Group;

(b) In relation to inquiry No. 2016/1, that a note verbale be sent to the Permanent Mission of the State party concerned proposing 22 November to 4 December 2020 as dates for a visit by the designated members to its territory;

(c) In relation to inquiry No. 2014/3, that a reminder be sent to the Permanent Mission of the State party concerned requesting it to propose dates for a visit by the

designated members to its territory during the period from December 2020 to January 2021;

(d) In relation to inquiry No. 2014/1, concerning Kyrgyzstan, that the assessment of the follow-up information adopted by the Committee be sent to the State party;

(e) In relation to inquiry No. 2011/2, concerning the United Kingdom, to request the State party to submit within six months a comprehensive follow-up report under article 9, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol;

(f) In relation to submission No. 2020/1, to request additional information from the sources of information.

23. On 8 July 2020, the Committee undertook a first reading of its draft report regarding inquiry No. 2013/1.

24. The Committee took note of the publication, on 24 June 2020, of its report regarding inquiry No. 2011/4, concerning Mali ([CEDAW/C/IR/MLI/1](#)), following the lapse of the six-month period under article 8, paragraph 4, of the Optional Protocol for the State party to submit its observations to the Committee.

Chapter VI

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

25. The secretariat informed the Committee about the status of submission of overdue reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 7

Dates of future sessions

26. In accordance with the calendar of conferences, the following dates were confirmed for the Committee's seventy-seventh and seventy-eighth sessions and related meetings, subject to restrictions on travel and in-person meetings that may be required owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic:

Seventy-seventh session (Geneva)

- (a) Forty-eighth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 14–16 October 2020;
- (b) Seventeenth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 15 and 16 October 2020;
- (c) Seventy-seventh session: 19 October–6 November 2020;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the seventy-ninth session: 9–13 November 2020;

Seventy-eighth session (Geneva)

- (e) Forty-ninth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 2–5 February 2021;
- (f) Eighteenth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 4 and 5 February 2021;
- (g) Seventy-eighth session: 8–26 February 2021;
- (h) Pre-sessional working group for the eightieth session: 1–5 March 2021.

Reports to be considered at future sessions

27. In the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and possible future disruptions to the holding of in-person sessions, the Committee decided to confirm the reports of States parties to be considered at its seventy-seventh and seventy-eighth sessions at a later stage.

Chapter VII

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

Working group on working methods

28. The working group met twice during the session. It discussed and submitted four draft decisions to the Committee, concerning exceptional remote sessions (see decision 76/III); reasonable accommodation of experts with disabilities during remote sessions (see decision 76/IV); a predictable cycle for the review of State party reports (see decision 76/V); and the inclusion in its lists of issues and questions and lists of issues prior to reporting of a new standard paragraph on the impact of COVID-19 on women's rights and gender equality (see decision 76/VI).

Working group on gender-based violence against women

29. The working group met once during the session. The Chair of the working group, Genoveva Tisheva, updated the members on initiatives taken intersessionally to reach out to potential partners and to identify funding support for the preparation of comprehensive guidance for States parties, including a checklist for the submission to the Committee of periodic reports on the implementation of their obligations and their accountability as set out in general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19. Members agreed to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, in preparing such guidance. The working group considered convening webinars to proceed with its work intersessionally.

30. The working group discussed a proposal by Nahla Haidar to embark as a matter of priority on the formulation of a practitioner's guide for States parties and other stakeholders on gender-based violence against women and girls during pandemics such as COVID-19.

31. It was reported that the Chair of the working group and Aruna Devi Narain had represented the working group at an informal remote meeting with a professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, Christine Chinkin, to discuss possible areas of collaboration, including the organization of workshops and seminars, as well as research support for the working group.

Working group on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration

32. The working group did not meet during the session. The Chair and several members of the working group had participated intersessionally in regional expert meetings for the Middle East and Northern Africa, organized by UN-Women, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration in Cairo on 24 and 25 November 2019; for Europe and Central Asia, organized by OHCHR, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Vienna on 30 January 2020; for the Americas, held remotely owing to the COVID-19 pandemic by the OHCHR Regional Office in Panama City from 6 to 15 May 2020, in cooperation with the United Nations country team in Panama; and for sub-Saharan Africa, held remotely by UN-Women and the OHCHR Regional Office in Addis Ababa on 26 May 2020. Participants in the expert meetings included representatives of regional and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academics and human rights experts. In the consultations, good practices and challenges in those regions, as well as issues to be addressed in the general recommendation, had been identified. The Government of Switzerland had supported the regional expert

meetings financially. The Government of Japan had supported the participation of working group members in the regional expert meeting in Cairo financially.

Chapter VIII**Provisional agenda for the seventy-seventh session**

33. At its 1784th meeting, on 9 July 2020, the Committee considered and approved the draft provisional agenda for its seventy-seventh session.

Chapter IX

Adoption of the report

34. At its 1784th meeting, on 9 July 2020, the Committee considered and adopted, as orally amended, the draft report on its seventy-sixth session.

Annex**Documents before the Committee at its seventy-sixth session**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
CEDAW/C/76/1	Annotated provisional agenda

Part Two

**Report of the Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women on its seventy-seventh session**

26 October–5 November 2020

Chapter I

Decisions adopted by the Committee

Decision 77/I

On 5 November 2020, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration (CEDAW/C/GC/38), by consensus.

Decision 77/II

On 5 November 2020, the Committee adopted a statement entitled “Call by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to release all detained women human rights defenders, including Saudi women’s rights activist Loujain Al-Hathloul, in the wake of International Women Human Rights Defenders Day on 29 November 2020” (<https://bit.ly/36q8N6N>).

Decision 77/III

Recalling rule 15 of its rules of procedure, the Committee decided that, in exceptional circumstances such as the current pandemic and in the event that its seventy-eighth session is held remotely, the newly elected members of the Committee shall read out the solemn declaration at the opening meeting of the session, which is public and webcast. They shall deposit their signed solemn declarations with the secretariat for publication on the website of the Committee.

Decision 77/IV

The Committee confirmed the members of the pre-sessional working group for the seventy-ninth session: Gladys Acosta Vargas, Naéla Mohamed Gabr, Lia Nadaraia and Bandana Rana.

Chapter II

Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol

1. As at 5 November 2020, the closing date of the seventy-seventh session of the Committee, the ratification status of the Convention (189 States parties) and the number of States parties having accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee (80) were as they had been on 9 July, the closing date of the seventy-sixth session.

2. The ratification status of the Optional Protocol to the Convention (114 States parties) was as it had been on 9 July, the closing date of the seventy-sixth session.

B. Opening of the session

3. The seventy-seventh session of the Committee was held remotely from 26 October to 5 November 2020 through online platforms owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee held two plenary meetings and six meetings to discuss agenda items 5 to 8. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in the annex to part two of the present report.

4. At the 1785th meeting, on 26 October, the session was opened by the Chair.

C. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda ([CEDAW/C/77/1](#)) at its 1785th meeting, on 26 October.

D. Report of the pre-sessional working group

6. The report of the pre-sessional working group ([CEDAW/C/PSWG/77/1](#)), which had met from 2 to 6 March, was introduced by Rhoda Reddock at the 1785th meeting, on 26 October.

E. Organization of work

7. On 26 October, in a public online meeting, Lia Burbano, Executive Director of the Mujer y Mujer Foundation; Deirdre Palacios, President of the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights; and Virginia Gómez de la Torre, of the National Coalition of Women of Ecuador, delivered a joint statement on behalf of non-governmental organizations, the preparation of which had been coordinated by International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific.

8. On 5 November, in a closed online meeting, the Committee met informally with the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nada al-Nashif, to discuss the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the financial crisis facing the United Nations on the Committee's work.

F. Membership of the Committee

Attendance at the seventy-seventh session

9. All members attended the seventy-seventh session remotely. A list of the members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is contained in annex II to part three of the present report.

Chapter III

Report of the Chair on intersessional activities

10. At the 1785th meeting, on 26 October 2020, the Chair presented a report on her activities since the seventy-sixth session.

Chapter IV

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

Postponement of consideration of reports in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic

11. Owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee did not consider the reports of the following States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention, which had initially been scheduled for consideration at the seventy-seventh session:

Azerbaijan	(CEDAW/C/AZE/6)
Ecuador	(CEDAW/C/ECU/10)
Nicaragua	(CEDAW/C/NIC/7-10)
Senegal	(CEDAW/C/SEN/8)
South Africa	(CEDAW/C/ZAF/5)
Sweden	(CEDAW/C/SWE/10)
Uruguay	(CEDAW/C/URY/10)
Yemen	(CEDAW/C/YEM/7-8)

Follow-up procedures relating to concluding observations

12. The Committee had received follow-up reports from the following States parties: Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ireland, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine and Thailand. However, owing to the prevailing circumstances, it decided to postpone the consideration of those reports to its seventy-eighth session. To avoid further backlog, the Committee decided to consider 12 follow-up reports at the seventy-eighth session.

Chapter V

Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol

13. Article 12 of the Optional Protocol provides that the Committee is to include in its annual report a summary of its activities under the Optional Protocol.

A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol

14. The Committee discussed activities under article 2 of the Optional Protocol on 2 and 3 November 2020.

15. The Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its forty-eighth session (<https://bit.ly/3urYLMQ>).

16. The Committee adopted final decisions with regard to two individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol. It adopted views finding violations in *R.G. v. Kyrgyzstan* (CEDAW/C/77/D/133/2018), by consensus, and in *S.B. and M.B. v. North Macedonia* (CEDAW/C/77/D/143/2019), with one member appending a dissenting opinion. The Committee noted that the Working Group on Communications had discussed issues related to requests for interim measures of protection and had updated the paper on working methods, available on the Committee's website.

B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications

17. The Committee was informed that the Working Group, at its forty-eighth session, had requested the secretariat to arrange for online meetings with representatives of the Permanent Missions of Mexico, Slovakia and the United Republic of Tanzania to discuss follow-up to views on individual communications.

C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol

18. The Committee discussed its activities under article 8 of the Optional Protocol on 28 and 29 October. It endorsed the report of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol on its seventeenth session (<https://bit.ly/3mITwLP>).

19. On 28 October, the Committee adopted its findings, comments and recommendations on inquiry No. 2013/1. It decided to transmit them to the State party concerned for observations within six months and to publish the report regarding the inquiry after the aforementioned period.

20. On 29 October, the Committee, in accordance with rules 31 (2), 32 and 34 of its rules of procedure, voted by roll call on the following proposed decision concerning submission No. 2020/1, as no consensus could be reached: "That having conducted a preliminary assessment of all information received, the Committee shall invite the State party to submit its observations on the information received". Of the members present and voting, 12³ voted in favour and 7⁴ voted against.

³ Gladys Acosta Vargas, Hiroko Akizuki, Marion Bethel, Hilary Gbedemah, Dalia Leinarte, Lia Nadaraia, Aruna Devi Narain, Ana Peláez Narváez, Bandana Rana, Rhoda Reddock, Wenyan Song and Genoveva Tisheva.

⁴ Nicole Ameline, Gunnar Bergby, Louiza Chalal, Naéla Mohamed Gabr, Rosario G. Manalo, Franceline Toé-Bouda and Aicha Vall Verges.

21. The Committee approved the following recommendation made by the Working Group: “In relation to inquiries Nos. 2016/1, 2014/3 and 2014/2, that notes verbales be sent to the Permanent Missions of the States parties concerned to explore whether there are other possible ways, apart from a country visit, to undertake the respective inquiries in the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic”.

Chapter VI

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

22. The secretariat informed the Committee about the status of submission of overdue reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 7

Dates of future sessions

23. In accordance with the calendar of conferences, the following dates were tentatively confirmed for the Committee's seventy-eighth and seventy-ninth sessions and related meetings, subject to possible restrictions on travel and in-person meetings that may be required owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic:

Seventy-eighth session (Geneva)

- (a) As indicated in paragraph 28 of part one of the present report;

Seventy-ninth session (Geneva)

- (b) Fiftieth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 17 and 18 June 2021;
- (c) Nineteenth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 17 and 18 June 2021;
- (d) Seventy-ninth session: 21 June–9 July 2021;
- (e) Pre-sessional working group for the eighty-first session: 12–16 July 2021.

Reports to be considered at future sessions

24. Subject to possible future disruptions to the holding of in-person sessions owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee confirmed that, at its seventy-eighth session, it would consider the reports of Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, South Sudan, Spain (under the simplified reporting procedure) and Yemen and that, at its seventy-ninth session, it would consider those of Azerbaijan, Denmark, Ecuador (under the simplified reporting procedure), Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Peru and South Africa.

Chapter VII

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

Working group on working methods

25. The working group met during the session. It discussed the possibility of newly elected members making their solemn declaration remotely at the public opening meeting of the seventy-eighth session in case the meeting were held online (see decision 77/III) and submitted a draft decision on the matter to the Committee.

Working group on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration

26. The working group met during the session to discuss and incorporate comments made during the first reading of the draft general recommendation, on 27 October and 3 and 4 November.

27. On 5 November 2020, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 38 (CEDAW/C/GC/38) by consensus,⁵ in accordance with rule 31 of the Committee's rules of procedure.

Working group on gender-based violence against women

28. The working group met during the session. The Chair of the group presented the draft introduction to the guidance note for States parties on the implementation of their obligations and their accountability as set out in general recommendation No. 35, updating general recommendation No. 19, as well as the draft practitioner's guide for States parties and other stakeholders on gender-based violence against women and girls during pandemics such as COVID-19.

29. The working group agreed that the guidance note should take the form of a checklist for States parties for the submission of periodic reports to the Committee. It also agreed to issue the practitioner's guide as part of the note.

30. The working group requested the secretariat to convene an online meeting of the working group with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences to discuss the draft guidance note.

31. Ana Peláez Narváez informed the working group about a request from the Government of Bulgaria for advice from the group on a national project aimed at addressing violence against women, regarding, in particular, improving the administrative and police response to victims of gender-based violence. The working group entrusted her and Elgun Safarov with the task of drafting a response to the Government of Bulgaria.

⁵ The following members were present during the adoption: Gladys Acosta Vargas, Hiroko Akizuki, Tamader Al-Rammah, Nicole Ameline, Gunnar Bergby, Marion Bethel, Louiza Chalal, Esther Eghobamien-Mshelia, Náela Mohamed Gabr, Hilary Gbedemah, Nahla Haidar, Dalia Leinarte, Rosario G. Manalo, Lia Nadaraia, Aruna Devi Narain, Ana Peláez Narváez, Bandana Rana, Rhoda Reddock, Elgun Safarov, Wenyan Song, Genoveva Tisheva, Franceline Toé-Bouda and Aicha Vall Verges.

Chapter VIII

Provisional agenda for the seventy-eighth session

32. At its 1792nd meeting, on 5 November 2020, the Committee considered and approved the draft provisional agenda for its seventy-eighth session.

Chapter IX

Adoption of the report

33. At its 1792nd meeting, on 5 November 2020, the Committee considered and adopted, as orally amended, the draft report on its seventy-seventh session.

Annex

Documents before the Committee at its seventy-seventh session

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
CEDAW/C/77/1	Annotated provisional agenda

Part Three

**Report of the Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women on its seventy-eighth session**

15–25 February and 4 March 2021

Chapter I

Decisions adopted by the Committee

Decision 78/I

On 15 February 2021, the Committee adopted a call for national action plans to achieve gender parity by 2030, to be issued jointly with the Inter-Parliamentary Union on International Women's Day on 8 March 2021 (<https://bit.ly/3tx3Piy>).

Decision 78/II

On 15 February 2021, the Committee endorsed a joint statement on corruption and human rights, to be issued jointly with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Human Rights Committee.

Decision 78/III

On 15 February 2021, the Committee elected Gladys Acosta Vargas as Chair of the Committee.

Decision 78/IV

On 15 February 2021, the Committee elected the following members as officers of the Committee: Nahla Haidar, Vice-Chair; Ana Peláez Narváez, Vice-Chair; Elgun Safarov, Vice-Chair; and Aruna Devi Narain, Rapporteur.

Decision 78/V

The Committee elected the following members as members of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: Hiroko Akizuki, Marion Bethel, Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen, Hilary Gbedemah and Genoveva Tisheva.

Decision 78/VI

The Committee elected the following members as members of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: Louiza Chalal, Bandana Rana, Rhoda Reddock, Elgun Safarov and Natasha Stott Despoja.

Decision 78/VII

The Committee decided to appoint Louiza Chalal as Rapporteur on follow-up, and Natasha Stott Despoja as alternate Rapporteur on follow-up, both for a period of two years from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022.

Decision 78/VIII

The Committee decided to appoint Dalia Leinarte as Rapporteur on reprisals and Leticia Bonifaz Alfonzo as alternate Rapporteur on reprisals, both for a period of two years from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022.

Decision 78/IX

Recalling its decision 73/III, by which it removed the requirement of the submission of a common core document for States parties wishing to avail themselves of the simplified reporting procedure for the submission of their periodic reports, the Committee decided to rescind its decision 70/VI limiting the number of States parties for which lists of issues prior to reporting could be prepared at any session of the pre-sessional working group to a maximum of three. In this context, the Committee

decided that the number of States parties for which lists of issues prior to reporting could be prepared at any session of the pre-sessional working group would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Decision 78/X

The Committee decided to hold a half-day general discussion on the rights of indigenous women and girls during its seventy-ninth session.

Decision 78/XI

The Committee confirmed the members of the pre-sessional working group for the eightieth session: Nicole Ameline, Louiza Chalal, Rosario G. Manalo, Rhoda Reddock and Genoveva Tisheva.

Chapter II

Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol

1. As at 4 March 2021, the closing date of the seventy-eighth session of the Committee, the ratification status of the Convention (189 States parties) and the number of States parties having accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee (80) were as they had been on 5 November 2020, the closing date of the seventy-seventh session.

2. The ratification status of the Optional Protocol to the Convention (114 States parties) was as it had been on 5 November, the closing date of the seventy-seventh session.

B. Opening of the session

3. The seventy-eighth session of the Committee was held remotely from 15 to 25 February and on 4 March 2021 through online platforms owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee held five plenary meetings and four meetings to discuss agenda items 5 to 8. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in annex I to part three of the present report.

4. At the 1793rd meeting, on 15 February, the session was opened by the outgoing Chair, Hilary Gbedemah.

C. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda ([CEDAW/C/78/1](#)) at its 1793rd meeting, on 15 February.

D. Report of the pre-sessional working group

6. The report of the pre-sessional working group ([CEDAW/C/PSWG/78/1](#)), which had met from 13 to 17 July 2020, was introduced by Marion Bethel at the 1793rd meeting, on 15 February.

E. Organization of work

7. On 15 February 2021, the Committee elected Gladys Acosta Vargas as Chair of the Committee for a term of two years, pursuant to the rules of procedure. It also elected the following members as officers of the Committee for a term of two years: Nahla Haidar, Vice-Chair; Aruna Devi Narain, Rapporteur; Ana Peláez Narváez, Vice-Chair; and Elgun Safarov, Vice-Chair.

8. On 15 February, the following newly elected members of the Committee assumed their duties and made the solemn declaration, as provided for in rule 15 of the rules of procedure: Leticia Bonifaz Alfonzo, Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen, Natasha Stott Despoja and Jie Xia.

9. On 15 February, the Committee, in an online closed meeting, met informally with Martin Chungong, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and Zeina Hilal, of the Gender Partnership Programme of the Union, who gave a briefing

on the full participation of women in decision-making in political and public life, including in the context of post-COVID-19 recovery strategies.

10. On 18 February, the Committee held a closed online meeting with a representative of an intergovernmental organization, who provided country-specific information and information on the efforts of the organization in support of the implementation of the Convention.

11. On 18 February, the Committee held an informal public online meeting with representatives of non-governmental organizations and the national human rights institution of Denmark, who provided information on the implementation of the Convention in that country.

F. Membership of the Committee

Attendance at the seventy-eighth session

12. All members attended the seventy-eighth session remotely. A list of the members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is contained in annex II to part three of the present report.

Chapter III

Report of the Chair on intersessional activities

13. At the 1793rd meeting, on 15 February 2021, the outgoing Chair presented a report on her activities since the seventy-seventh session.

Chapter IV

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

Exceptional online consideration of the ninth periodic report of Denmark

14. The Committee considered the ninth periodic report of Denmark, submitted under article 18 of the Convention, using an online platform for the dialogue with the State party, on an exceptional pilot basis, given that no in-person meetings could be held owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. On 4 March 2021, at its 1801st meeting, it adopted its concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/DNK/CO/9](#)).

Postponement of consideration of reports in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic

15. Owing to the pandemic, the Committee did not consider the reports of the following States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention, which had initially been scheduled for consideration at the seventy-eighth session:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	(CEDAW/C/BOL/7)
Indonesia	(CEDAW/C/IDN/8)
Peru	(CEDAW/C/PER/9)
Russian Federation	(CEDAW/C/RUS/9)
South Sudan	(CEDAW/C/SSD/1)
Spain	(CEDAW/C/ESP/9)
Tunisia	(CEDAW/C/TUN/7)
Uzbekistan	(CEDAW/C/UZB/6)

Follow-up procedures relating to concluding observations

16. The Committee considered the follow-up reports received from the following States parties:

Burkina Faso	(CEDAW/C/BFA/FCO/7)
Costa Rica	(CEDAW/C/CRI/FCO/7)
Cyprus	(CEDAW/C/CYP/FCO/8)
Ireland	(CEDAW/C/IRL/FCO/6-7)
Lao People's Democratic Republic	(CEDAW/C/LAO/FCO/8-9)
Luxembourg	(CEDAW/C/LUX/FCO/6-7)
Mexico	(CEDAW/C/MEX/FCO/9)
New Zealand	(CEDAW/C/NZL/FCO/8)
North Macedonia	(CEDAW/C/MKD/FCO/6)
Saudi Arabia	(CEDAW/C/SAU/FCO/3-4)
State of Palestine	(CEDAW/C/PSE/FCO/1)
Thailand	(CEDAW/C/THA/FCO/6-7)

17. The Committee sent first reminders to Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, the Congo, the Cook Islands, Ethiopia, Liechtenstein, Myanmar, Samoa, Serbia and the United Kingdom, the follow-up reports of which were overdue.

Chapter V

Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol

18. Article 12 of the Optional Protocol provides that the Committee is to include in its annual report a summary of its activities under the Optional Protocol.

A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol

19. The Committee discussed activities under article 2 of the Optional Protocol on 18 February 2021.

20. The Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its forty-ninth session (<https://bit.ly/3cTxNYh>).

21. The Committee adopted final decisions with regard to two individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol. It adopted views finding no violation in *A.B.M. v. Spain* (CEDAW/C/78/D/120/2017) and views finding a violation in *Magdulein Abaida v. Libya* (CEDAW/C/78/D/130/2018). Both decisions were adopted by consensus.

B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications

22. The Committee was informed that the Working Group, at its forty-ninth session, had renewed its request to the secretariat to arrange for online meetings with representatives of the Permanent Missions of Mexico, Slovakia and the United Republic of Tanzania to discuss follow-up to views on individual communications.

C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol

23. The Committee discussed its activities under article 8 of the Optional Protocol on 16 February 2021. It endorsed the report of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol on its eighteenth session (<https://bit.ly/3urT69i>).

24. The Committee adopted the following decisions:

(a) In relation to inquiries Nos. 2016/1, 2014/3 and 2014/2, to send a note verbale to the Permanent Missions of the States parties concerned to explore the possibility, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, of undertaking the respective inquiries in a hybrid format combining desk research and a country visit at a later stage;

(b) In relation to submission No. 2019/1, to designate Lia Nadaraia and Genoveva Tisheva to conduct an inquiry and to seek the consent of the State party concerned to a visit to its territory.

Chapter VI

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

25. The secretariat informed the Committee about the status of submission of overdue reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 7

Dates of future sessions

26. In accordance with the calendar of conferences, the following dates were confirmed for the Committee's seventy-ninth and eightieth sessions and related meetings, subject to possible restrictions on travel and in-person meetings that may be required owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic:

Seventy-ninth session (Geneva)

- (a) As indicated in paragraph 23 of part two of the present report;

Eightieth session (Geneva)

(b) Fifty-first session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 13–15 October 2021;

(c) Twentieth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 14 and 15 October 2021;

(d) Eightieth session: 18 October–5 November 2021;

(e) Pre-sessional working group for the eighty-second session: 8–12 November 2021.

Reports to be considered at future sessions

27. Subject to possible future disruptions to the holding of in-person sessions owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee confirmed that, at its seventy-ninth session, it would consider the reports of the States parties listed in paragraph 24 of part two of the present report and that, at its eightieth session, it would consider those of Azerbaijan, Ecuador (under the simplified reporting procedure), Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Peru, South Africa and Sweden (under the simplified reporting procedure).

Chapter VII

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

Working group on working methods

28. The working group met during the session. It discussed the removal of the strict limitation on the number of States parties for which lists of issues prior to reporting could be prepared at any pre-sessional working group session (see decision 78/IX), and submitted a draft decision on the matter to the Committee.

Working group on gender-based violence against women

29. The working group met during the session. The Chair of the group presented the first section of the draft guidance note for States parties on the implementation of their obligations and their accountability as set out in general recommendation No. 35, updating general recommendation No. 19, focusing on domestic violence. In the first section of the note, domestic violence is introduced as conceptualized through the practice of the Committee, as well as in international and regional definitions. Other sections of the note are under development by members of the group. The group discussed and adopted a programme of work for the completion of the note.

Working group on the rights of indigenous women and girls

30. The newly constituted working group met during the session. Comprising Gladys Acosta Vargas, Marion Bethel, Leticia Bonifaz Alfonzo, Louiza Chalal, Naéla Mohamed Gabr, Hilary Gbedemah, Nahla Haidar, Rosario G. Manalo, Aruna Devi Narain, Ana Peláez Narváez, Bandana Rana, Rhoda Reddock, Elgun Safarov, Natasha Stott Despoja, Genoveva Tisheva and Franceline Toé-Bouda, it elected Gladys Acosta Vargas as its Chair. The Chair of the group and the secretariat informed the members that a consultant was currently under recruitment to support the Committee in the preparation of the draft general recommendation on the rights of indigenous women and girls. The working group updated the internal workplan and tentative timeline for drafting and adopting the general recommendation. The group recommended that the Committee hold a half-day general discussion on the rights of indigenous women and girls during its seventy-ninth session (see decision 78/X).

Chapter VIII

Provisional agenda for the seventy-ninth session

31. At its 1800th meeting, on 25 February 2021, the Committee considered and approved the draft provisional agenda for its seventy-ninth session.

Chapter IX

Adoption of the report

32. At its 1800th meeting, on 25 February 2021, the Committee considered and adopted, as orally amended, the draft report on its seventy-eighth session.

Annex I**Documents before the Committee at its seventy-eighth session**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
CEDAW/C/78/1	Annotated provisional agenda
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/DNK/9	Ninth periodic report of Denmark

Annex II

Membership of the Committee as at 25 February 2021

<i>Name of member</i>	<i>Country of nationality</i>	<i>Term of office expires on 31 December</i>
Gladys Acosta Vargas (Chair)	Peru	2022
Hiroko Akizuki	Japan	2022
Tamader Al-Rammah	Saudi Arabia	2022
Nicole Ameline	France	2024
Marion Bethel	Bahamas	2024
Leticia Bonifaz Alfonso	Mexico	2024
Louiza Chalal	Algeria	2022
Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen	Netherlands	2024
Naéla Mohamed Gabr	Egypt	2022
Hilary Gbedemah	Ghana	2024
Nahla Haidar (Vice-Chair)	Lebanon	2024
Dalia Leinarte	Lithuania	2024
Rosario G. Manalo	Philippines	2024
Lia Nadaraia	Georgia	2022
Aruna Devi Narain (Rapporteur)	Mauritius	2022
Ana Peláez Narváez (Vice-Chair)	Spain	2022
Bandana Rana	Nepal	2024
Rhoda Reddock	Trinidad and Tobago	2022
Elgun Safarov (Vice-Chair)	Azerbaijan	2022
Natasha Stott Despoja	Australia	2024
Genoveva Tisheva	Bulgaria	2022
Franceline Toé-Bouda	Burkina Faso	2022
Jie Xia	China	2024

21-04069 (E) 260421

