



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-fourth session

### Summary record of the first part (public)\* of the 1939th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 6 February 2023, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Peláez Narváez

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\* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document [CEDAW/C/SR.1939/Add.1](#).

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

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as interim Chair of the Committee, declared open the eighty-fourth 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)) said that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had revealed serious gaps in care and support systems. Women and girls had taken on most of the increase in unpaid care work during the pandemic, sacrificing their well-being and their employment prospects, livelihoods and education. Women also undertook the majority of underpaid care work. The deficiencies in care and support systems during the pandemic had threatened women's and girls' rights to life, health, education and work and had exposed them to a higher risk of gender-based violence. In the efforts to build back better from the pandemic, the transformation of care had been identified as a key factor for gender-responsive recovery and sustainable development.

3. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality (UN-Women) was leading a United Nations system-wide discussion on the transformation of care that focused on the economic empowerment of women undertaking unpaid or underpaid care work. As groups associated with that work were often care receivers as well as caregivers and their rights were interrelated, it was crucial for both care receivers and caregivers to participate in the discussion. It was necessary to reshape attitudes to care in order to bring about a shift towards rights-based support and care systems. Existing care models that relied on women's free or cheap labour were no longer sustainable. Women's rights in support and care systems must be explicitly referenced in any post-2030 sustainable development framework and in key documents feeding into that framework, such as the political declaration to be adopted at the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in September 2023 and the Summit of the Future to be held in 2024.

4. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had selected "human rights in support and care systems" as the monthly theme for February of the campaign to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Furthermore, UN-Women had called for the development of a United Nations system-wide policy brief on care. The aim of both initiatives was to encourage Member States to include an agenda for transforming care in the next generation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee and other treaty bodies could influence the post-2030 development agenda by creating a human rights framework for support and care systems that would uphold the rights of all women and girls.

5. OHCHR continued to support the strengthening of the treaty bodies and was finalizing a plan for implementing the conclusions contained in the report of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies on their thirty-fourth annual meeting ([A/77/228](#)). A predictable schedule of reviews could be implemented only if modern, state-of-the art digital tools were made available to streamline the work of the treaty bodies. It was essential that such tools should be accessible to persons with disabilities. The work of OHCHR and the work of the treaty bodies reinforced each other. The Committee's concluding observations, general recommendations and jurisprudence constituted essential guidance for the work of OHCHR in the area of women's rights and gender equality.

6. The treaty body system was chronically underfunded, giving rise to significant backlogs in the consideration of State party reports, individual communications and confidential inquiries. While funding decisions remained in the hands of Member States, the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk, had expressed his commitment to doing his utmost to support greater funding for the treaty body system during his tenure.

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

7. *Ms. Akia, Ms. de Silva de Alwis, Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia, Ms. Hacker, Ms. Mikko and Ms. Morsy 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/84/1](#))**

8. *The agenda was adopted.*

### **Report of the Chair on activities undertaken between the eighty-third and eighty-fourth sessions of the Committee**

9. **The Chair** said that the number of States parties to the Convention and the Optional Protocol had remained unchanged, at 189 and 115, respectively. The number of States parties that had accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention, concerning the Committee's meeting time, had remained at 80. A total of 126 States parties were required to accept the amendment in order to bring it into force. Since the start of the previous session, periodic reports had been received from Cuba, the Niger and Tajikistan.

10. At the Committee's previous session, it had decided to make the simplified reporting procedure the default procedure for the submission of State party reports to the Committee. All 189 States parties had been informed of that decision and of the deadline for opting out of the simplified procedure. In response, 13 States parties had indicated that they wished to maintain the traditional reporting procedure.

11. Since the Committee's previous session, she had given a training session on the Committee and its relevance to women and girls with disabilities at a training course for new members of the Women's Committee of the European Disability Forum. On 14 November 2022, she had participated in a webinar entitled "Women with Disabilities in Europe: What Progress Needed?", hosted by University Women of Europe and Femmes pour le Dire – Femmes pour Agir.

12. On 21 November 2022, she had represented the Committee at a working breakfast with women ambassadors to Spain hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. On 5 December 2022, she had represented the Committee at a meeting between the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies and the International Labour Organization's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. On 6 December 2022, she had participated in a panel discussion on women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health and rights, organized by the ad hoc Group on Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law of the European Economic and Social Committee.

13. On 15 December 2022, she had appeared before the Portuguese parliament in Lisbon to give a presentation on the concluding observations issued by the Committee to Portugal. On 20 January 2023, she had given a talk on the Committee's work at the Congreso Emakumeak, a women's conference organized by the Provincial Council of Biskaia in Bilbao, Spain. On 25 and 26 January 2022, she had held informal discussions with the Committee's seven new members at an online induction programme for newly elected members organized by the secretariat. Lastly, on 31 January 2022, she had spoken at a discussion on the impact of the pandemic on fundamental rights, organized by the European Parliament's Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic.

14. **Ms. Rana** said that, on 5 November 2022 and 20 January 2023, she had led training sessions on the impact of gender stereotypes on women's access to justice at a workshop for lawyers organized by the Nepal Bar Association and the International Court of Justice. In November 2022, in Zanzibar, she had spoken at a meeting on the follow-up given to the twenty-five year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. On 28 November 2022, she had given an online presentation on gender-based violence as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign. On 12 December 2022, she had made the closing remarks during an online panel discussion on sexual and reproductive health. In December

2022, she had made a presentation and conducted a training session on the freedom of religion and belief from a gender perspective at the sixth annual meeting of the South Asia Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief in Bangkok. On 23 December 2022, she had chaired a panel discussion at an event held in Nepal to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Committee's establishment.

15. **Ms. Akizuki** said that, on 12 November 2022, she had given a lecture on the current situation regarding gender equality and the role of the Committee at a seminar organized by the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women and, on 29 November, she had delivered a report to the House of Councillors of Japan to encourage Japanese politicians to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention. On 3 December, she had moderated a session on the protection of women's dignity and pride at the World Assembly for Women, and she had spoken about communication No. 149/2019, *N.A.E. v. Spain*, which concerned obstetric violence, at a meeting organized by the Japanese Association of International Women's Rights on 26 December.

16. **Ms. Reddock** said that, on 4 December 2022, during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, she had delivered the keynote presentation at an event celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Committee's establishment and had been part of the panel for a dialogue on various matters related to the Convention to mark Human Rights Day on 10 December.

17. **Ms. Bethel** said that, on 30 November 2022, she had taken part in an online discussion on violence against women and girls with disabilities, sponsored by OHCHR in collaboration with Sightsavers, Ohana Indonesia and Women's Fund Asia. The topics had included gender-based violence in public and private institutions; situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies; violence prevention strategies; good practices in ensuring access to justice; and gender-responsive and disability-inclusive protection and support services. She had participated alongside Ms. Narain and Ms. Gbedemah in a series of online public discussions to raise awareness of the Convention and to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the ratification of the Convention by the Bahamas.

18. **Ms. Ameline** said that, in late November 2022, she had taken part in a meeting on the consolidation of the treaty body reform process and, in mid-December, she had been involved in a training programme for law enforcement officials and lawyers in Mauritania. In January 2023, she had travelled to New York to build partnerships to prepare for a future general recommendation No. 40 and for a side event during the upcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2023. Lastly, on 30 and 31 January 2023, she had participated in a meeting on economic empowerment organized by the Swedish presidency of the European Union.

19. **Mr. Safarov** said that, on 3 November 2022, he had been the coordinator of a working group on the situation in Ukraine with the Ukrainian Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy and the Minister of Social Policy. On 6 November, he had discussed the issue of women victims of violence in the context of the war in Ukraine and the procedure for follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations on the country's periodic report with Denise Brown, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ukraine. Subsequently, he had given a presentation on the Committee's work on the prevention of gender-based violence at an online conference organized by Istanbul University. He had participated in a conference for the creation of a gender equality portal and had helped organize a hackathon to encourage children between 12 and 17 years of age to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. He had spoken about the Committee's work on the prevention of domestic violence at a conference on sustainable development and human rights on 16 December 2022 and had given a presentation on international standards for women's rights at a training event organized by OHCHR and the European Union.

20. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she had written a policy brief on gender-related persecution under Taliban rule, which examined how the laws introduced by the Taliban since August 2021 had violated the fundamental premises of the Convention and other international treaties. She had given classes on women and peace and security during the autumn semester at Harvard University and she continued to teach international women's rights, with a specific focus on the Convention, at Princeton University.

21. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that in November 2022, she had given a training course on the role of the Committee in the defence of women's rights to members of the judiciary in the State of Tabasco, Mexico, and had participated in a round-table discussion on democracy from a gender perspective at the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary. In December 2022, she had attended a meeting at the Prosecutor General's Office as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence to discuss various types of violence against women, and had participated in a discussion about general recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls with members of the Spanish judiciary. Lastly, at the Public Administration Institute of the State of Chiapas, Mexico, she had spoken on the defence of women's rights and the international and regional bodies involved.

22. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she had presented the Committee's perspectives on women in the drug trade during a national dialogue on the implementation of the international guidelines on human rights and drug policy in Ghana, which had been held in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on 12 and 13 December 2022. She had engaged in discussions with a group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ghana on the process of constructive dialogues with States parties and had completed work on a chapter of an international law commentary regarding the Convention.

23. **Ms. Haidar** said that, on 17–18 November, she and Ms. Manalo had participated in the Judicial Dialogue on Access to Justice for Women to provide training to judges of the Supreme Court of the Philippines in Manila. The dialogue had focused on practical application of the Committee's jurisprudence, including general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, and a workshop had been held on the same topic with judges from the Court of Appeal. In early January 2023, she had been a panellist at the Global Climate Summit organized by the University of Colorado in cooperation with OHCHR, where she had spoken about the impact of climate change on women girls, with particular reference to general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change and general recommendation No. 39 (2022).

24. **Ms. Manalo** said that the Philippines was organizing an event celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, noting that the Philippine diplomat Carlos P. Romulo had played an instrumental role in the drafting of the Declaration alongside Eleanor Roosevelt.

25. **Ms. Xia** said that she had been involved in the drafting of an amendment to the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women and had taken part in a campaign to raise awareness of the Convention among Chinese university students.

26. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she had been involved in the launch of a handbook on feminist governance, which provided a comprehensive overview of feminist organizational principles and practice, including feminist foreign policy.

27. **Ms. Akia** said that she was a senior legal adviser for the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers and worked on issues related to access to justice, women's empowerment, women and peace and security, and climate justice for women and girls, who suffered most from the effects of climate change. In a similar vein, she played an active part in the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative.

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

28. **Ms. Reddock**, speaking on behalf of the Chair of the pre-sessional working group for the eighty-fourth session, said that the pre-sessional working group had met in Geneva on 4 to 8 July 2022. It had prepared lists of issues and questions with regard to the reports of the Central African Republic, Iceland, Montenegro, the Philippines, Rwanda and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and lists of issues prior to reporting for Monaco and New Zealand. To prepare the lists of issues and questions, the working group had been able to draw on the common core documents forming part of the reports of States parties and on their periodic reports, with the exception of Monaco and New Zealand, which would submit their periodic reports in response to the lists of issues prior to reporting. The working group had also drawn

on the Committee's general recommendations, draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the secretariat, the concluding observations of the Committee and other treaty bodies, and, in particular, information provided by States parties' in follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations. In addition, the working group had received information from entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, NGOs, national human rights institutions and other national bodies with a mandate to work on women's rights and gender equality. The lists of issues and questions, which focused on themes covered by the Convention, had been transmitted to the States parties concerned.

29. **The Chair** said that, owing to the backlog of State party reports pending consideration that had accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee had decided to postpone the consideration of the reports of the aforementioned States parties. It had decided to consider, at its eighty-fourth session, the reports of Bahrain, Costa Rica, Slovenia, Hungary, Georgia, Mauritania, Norway and Tunisia.

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

30. **Ms. Stott Despoja**, speaking on behalf of the Rapporteur on follow-up, said that at its eighty-third session the Committee had decided to postpone to the eighty-fourth session its assessment of the follow-up procedure. Since no assessments of follow-up reports had been scheduled for consideration at the eighty-third session, no follow-up letters had been sent at the end of that session. The Committee had received one follow-up report, from the Government of Zimbabwe, and volunteers were sought to assist in its assessment.

31. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she wished to volunteer to assist in the assessment of the follow-up report from the Government of Zimbabwe.

*The public part of the meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.*