



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
**Thirty-eighth session**

**Summary record of the 774th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 May 2007, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Šimonović

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the thirty-eighth session of the Committee.

2. **Ms. Mayanja** (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that, at its fifty-first session, the Commission on the Status of Women had discussed the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child as its priority theme. The Chairperson of the Committee had been one of three keynote speakers to launch the general debate on that theme. The Commission had also been addressed by the President of the Human Rights Council and had held an exchange of views with him.

3. The Commission had adopted agreed conclusions on its priority theme, in which it called on Governments to consider ratifying the Convention and its Optional Protocol, to limit the extent of their reservations to the Convention and to ensure that no reservation was incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. The Commission had encouraged the Committee and the other human rights treaty bodies to ensure that their reports explicitly addressed the situation of the girl child. The Commission had also adopted four resolutions, including, for the first time, a resolution on ending female genital mutilation and on forced marriage of the girl child.

4. The theme of the elimination of all forms of violence against women and follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study at national and international levels had been chosen by the Commission as an emerging issue. The panel discussion had provided the Commission with an opportunity to highlight emerging trends that the international community faced in addressing violence against women and to identify new approaches for addressing such challenges.

5. The theme of ending impunity for violence against women and girls had been selected by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality for the commemoration of International Women's Day on 8 March 2007. The Day had been a successful high-level event focusing on effective partnerships with men's anti-violence organizations and had underscored

the obligations of States to protect women and girls from violence, to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide justice and remedies to victims.

6. The critical importance of the issues of elimination of discrimination against women, full implementation of the Convention and the work of the Committee had been emphasized by Member States during the informal thematic debate of the General Assembly on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The debate had provided an opportunity to share views on action, best practice and lessons learned in the promotion of gender equality, to discuss how to bridge the gap between policy and practice and to renew political commitment to the full implementation of existing agreements.

7. Turning to her own activities as Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, she said that she had participated in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) strategy workshop with women's constituencies from troop- and police-contributing countries, held in Pretoria in February 2007. The Workshop had been hosted by the Government of South Africa and had been jointly organized by DPKO, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), with the support of the United Kingdom Government, as a follow-up to the DPKO policy dialogue with troop- and police-contributing countries held in March 2006. It had concluded that there was a need for a strengthened global mandate for gender-responsive peacekeeping, that the preparation of national action plans for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) should be a priority and that national dialogue on gender and peacekeeping should be initiated under the guidance of each country's national machinery for women. Specific steps needed to be taken to increase the recruitment and deployment of women to peacekeeping operations, to enhance pre-deployment preparation and training for all peacekeepers and to improve the working environment for women in peacekeeping operations.

8. Also in February 2007, she had chaired the sixth session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, which had brought together senior gender focal points from all United Nations entities. The Network had discussed the implementation of the system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming, which had been endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for

Coordination in December 2006, and had embarked on the development of an action plan to implement the policy and strategy. The Network had also discussed how to accelerate the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), especially at the country level, in view of the Security Council open debate that had taken place in October 2006. The Network had noted that special measures, such as those mandated in November 2006, were fully consistent with the human rights framework and article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, and should therefore be supported. The Network had also discussed more robust systems for tracking progress towards gender equality.

9. She had also recently attended a seminar hosted by the Government of Croatia on men's active participation in preventing domestic violence, one of a series of regional seminars organized within the framework of the Council of Europe's Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence. The event had provided an opportunity for a useful exchange of experience and good practice. A partnership had subsequently been launched between the Council of Europe and the United Nations in the campaign to combat violence against women.

10. In April 2007, the Secretary-General had presented to the General Assembly his report containing comments on the recommendations put forward by the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment (A/61/836). The Secretary-General had expressed agreement with the Panel's proposal to consolidate several current women's units into one dynamic entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, which should mobilize change at the global level and inspire enhanced results at the country level. However, he had also stressed that gender equality would remain the responsibility of all United Nations entities.

11. The Secretary-General was awaiting the outcome of the substantive discussions and consultations by Member States on the new gender architecture. The Deputy Secretary-General would oversee the system-wide coherence agenda and represent the United Nations in intergovernmental consultations on the Panel's recommendations.

12. She welcomed four colleagues from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) who were attending the session as part of the ongoing preparations for the transfer to OHCHR of the responsibility for the servicing of the Committee. She assured Committee members that she and the High Commissioner were fully committed to ensuring a smooth transition.

13. The paramount guiding principle in the Committee's forthcoming discussions must be improving the situation of women in their daily lives, families, workplaces and communities and in public life. She pledged the full support of her Office and the Division for the Advancement of Women in facilitating the Committee's task.

#### **Adoption of the agenda and organization of work** (CEDAW/C/2007/II/1 and Corr.1)

14. **The Chairperson** drew attention to document CEDAW/C/2007/II/1 and Corr.1 and said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposed provisional agenda and organization of work, subject to any necessary adjustments.

15. *It was so decided.*

#### **Tribute to the memory of Angela King, former Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women**

16. **Ms. Mayanja** (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) and **the Chairperson** paid a tribute to the memory of Angela King.

17. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

#### **Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions of the Committee**

18. **The Chairperson** said that, in her keynote address delivered at the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, she had emphasized States parties' general obligation to eliminate discrimination against all women without delay and by all appropriate means, and had highlighted the way in which the Committee monitored the implementation of the Convention as it pertained to

the girl child. She had also emphasized the Committee's attention to the issues of trafficking and violence against girls, the impact of measures taken and the need for adequate data to track progress over time.

19. Ms. Dairiam had participated in a panel discussion on capacity-building on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes for the elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Many speakers in the general debate had referred to the Convention and actions taken by States to eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child.

20. She had also made a statement on the main outcomes of recent sessions of the Committee, including its working methods, in particular its meetings in parallel chambers, its efforts to enhance reporting by States parties and its work under the Optional Protocol. She had participated in a panel discussion co-hosted by the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNICEF, on violence against women and children, in which she had focused on the work of the Committee in that regard. Several speakers had called for the preparation of a joint general recommendation on the girl child by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a possibility which the Committee should consider. Lastly, in a panel discussion on trafficking, co-sponsored by the Council of Europe, she had reflected on the work of the Committee under article 6 of the Convention.

21. In her capacity as a Committee expert and member of the working group on a general recommendation on article 2 of the Convention, she had attended an expert group meeting on article 2 organized by International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific in collaboration with the University of New South Wales. The meeting had explored the possible form and content of the general recommendation and had suggested a number of issues for the working group to address. Mr. Flinterman, the Chairperson of the working group, and Ms. Dairiam had also participated in the meeting.

22. As Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe's Task Force to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence, she had attended the seminar in

Croatia previously mentioned by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. In addition to the welcome presence of the Special Adviser, Ms. Brautigam, Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, had made a presentation on the Secretary-General's study on violence against women and relevant follow-up action.

23. Lastly, Ms. Schöpp-Schilling had recently attended a meeting in Geneva on the working methods of the human rights treaty bodies.

24. **Ms. Simms** asked whether a report from the seminar in Croatia was available. It would be interesting to know what strategies were being adopted by different regions to involve men in efforts to stop domestic violence.

25. **The Chairperson** said that the proceedings of that seminar and the others in the series would be posted on the Council of Europe website.

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

(CEDAW/PSWG/2007/I/CRP.1 and CEDAW/PSWG/2007/II/CRP.1)

26. **Ms. Tavares da Silva**, speaking as Chairperson of the pre-session working group, said that, in accordance with the list of States parties selected by the Committee to present reports at the thirty-eighth session, the working group had prepared lists of issues and questions with respect to the reports of Mauritania, Mozambique, the Niger, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Vanuatu at its meeting from 31 July to 4 August 2006, and with respect to the reports of Serbia and Sierra Leone at its meeting from 5 to 9 February 2007.

27. In preparing the lists of issues and questions, the group had drawn on information contained in the reports submitted by the States parties concerned, the core documents, where available, the guidelines for the preparation of reports by States parties (CEDAW/C/7/Rev.3), the Committee's general recommendations, the draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the Secretariat, and other relevant material, including information submitted by non-governmental organizations. In accordance with various Committee decisions, the lists of issues and questions focused on themes addressed by the Convention rather than on specific articles.

**Implementation of article 21 of the Convention**  
(CEDAW/C/2007/II/3 and Add.1, 3 and 4)

**Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee** (CEDAW/C/2007/II/4)

28. **Ms. Brautigam** (Chief, Women's Rights Unit, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that, since the previous session, the number of States parties to the Convention had remained at 185. Botswana and Argentina had ratified the Optional Protocol, bringing the total number of States parties to 86. With the acceptance by Bangladesh of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Committee's meeting time, the total number of acceptances stood at 49.

29. She drew attention to the Secretary-General's note contained in document CEDAW/C/2007/II/3. Three specialized agencies, namely the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), had submitted reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas within their purview. Those reports were contained in addenda 1, 3 and 4 respectively to the document in question. The Committee would be receiving additional information from specialized agencies and other United Nations system entities in due course.

30. The note on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2007/II/4) reviewed recent developments in the field of human rights and drew experts' attention to several areas for consideration and possible action, including further follow-up to the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies and the transfer of the servicing of the Committee to OHCHR. The note also contained a list of reports received from States parties but not yet considered by the Committee. Since the issuance of the document, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Mongolia and the United Kingdom had also submitted reports. In 2006, 21 States parties had submitted reports, and so far in 2007 10 States parties had submitted reports. The total number of reports awaiting consideration, not counting those which the Committee would be taking up at the current session, but including those to be considered at the thirty-ninth session, stood at 45, submitted by 42 States parties. The total number of outstanding reports as at 12 May 2007 was 228, of which 29 were initial reports and 199

were periodic reports. A total of 122 States had outstanding reports, the lateness of which ranged from a few days to almost 25 years.

*The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.*