



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Twentieth session

Summary record of the 405th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 19 January 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Gonzalez

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/1999/I/3 and

Add.1, Add.2, Add.3 and Add.4;

CEDAW/C/1999/I/WG.II/WP.2 and

CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.2)

1. **Ms. Timothy** (Deputy Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that, under article 21 of the Convention, the Committee could make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from States parties, and such suggestions and general recommendations would be included in the Committee's report together with comments, if any, from States parties.

2. At its tenth session, the Committee had decided to allow representatives of the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies to present information relating to specific articles of the Convention or issues being considered for general recommendations and suggestions. The Committee had also decided to select and review specific articles and other issues for consideration at subsequent sessions, without prejudice to any changes that might be necessitated by new developments arising from the review of States parties' reports. At its seventeenth session, the Committee had decided to prepare a general recommendation on article 12 of the Convention. It had also agreed on a three-stage method of work with regard to the formulation of general recommendations. The first stage would consist of a general discussion and exchange of views with representatives of specialized agencies, other United Nations bodies and interested non-governmental organizations. The second stage would involve the preparation of an initial draft of the general recommendation by a member of the Committee; the draft would be discussed by Working Group II, which could invite resource persons and non-governmental organizations to participate as appropriate. The third stage would entail the adoption of a revised draft of the general recommendation at the following session of the Committee.

3. At its nineteenth session, the Committee had discussed and revised a draft recommendation on article 12 (CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.2), which had been submitted to members for comments. At its

current session, the Committee had before it a text (CEDAW/C/1999/I/WG.II/WP.2) that incorporated revisions by two of its members and comments from other members. Comments submitted after the revised text had been submitted for translation would be made available to Working Group II.

4. As part of its consideration of article 21 of the Convention, the Committee would also take up article 22, which stipulated that the specialized agencies were entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention that fell within the scope of their activities, and that the Committee could invite the specialized agencies to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in those areas. The Committee had before it a note by the Secretary-General on reports submitted by specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1999/I/3) and reports by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Labour Organization (CEDAW/C/1999/I/3/Add.1, Add.2, Add.3 and Add.4). In accordance with the Committee's decision at its eighteenth session, representatives of specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies had been invited to attend the pre-session working group in order to provide information on implementation of the Convention in States parties whose periodic reports were before the Committee at its current session. Representatives of specialized agencies had also been invited to address the Committee regarding States parties whose initial reports would be considered at the Committee's current session.

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1999/I/4, CEDAW/C/1999/I/5; CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1)

5. **Ms. Connors** (Chief, Women's Rights Unit, Division for the Advancement of Women) drew attention to a report on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1999/I/4). The report addressed the working methods of the pre-session working group; the Human Rights Committee's guidelines for the exercise of functions by Committee members; issues relating to the receipt of reports by experts; and relations with specialized agencies and other United Nations entities. The report also raised

relevant issues discussed at the tenth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, including strategies to ensure universal ratification of all United Nations human rights treaties. It also addressed relevant action by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, particularly with respect to reservations to treaties. The report noted that 1999 was the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and suggested that the Committee might wish to make proposals in that regard.

6. Annex I to the report provided a list of States parties whose reports were more than five years overdue; annex II drew attention to reports submitted by States parties but not yet considered by the Committee; and annex III contained the procedures and format for the elaboration of concluding comments.

7. In addition to the ways and means report, Working Group I also had before it a report on progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action based on the Committee's review of States parties' reports (CEDAW/C/1999/I/5). At its forty-second session, the Commission on the Status of Women had requested the Committee to compile a report on the implementation of the Platform for Action to assist it in its preparation for the special session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000. The Committee should finalize that report at its current session.

8. The Committee had before it a working paper containing the draft rules of procedure (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1). At its fifteenth session, the Committee had decided to continue at its sixteenth session its review of the rules of procedure and had requested one of its members to prepare new draft rules of procedure on the basis of comments by Committee members. At its sixteenth session, the Committee had decided to postpone finalization of the draft rules, which it had discussed at its seventeenth session and might wish to take up again at its current session.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.