



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

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
Fourteenth session
16 January-3 February 1995

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS FOURTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Hanna Beate SCHÖPP-SCHILLING

Addendum

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON ON THE ACTIVITIES
UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN THE THIRTEENTH AND
FOURTEENTH SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. At the 261st meeting, the Chairperson of the Committee, in her introductory statement, said that the Committee had proven itself to be an important human rights body, and she summarized the numerous activities she had undertaken since the thirteenth session. She pointed out that in 1994 the attitude of various United Nations bodies towards the Committee had been very positive. She outlined the decisions of the fifth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, which took place at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 19 to 23 September 1994. The meeting touched on women's human rights generally and the Committee in particular. She noted that for the first time, the report of the chairpersons contained a section relating specifically to the Committee which criticized the resource constraints experienced by it. It also recommended that the Committee, during its current session, take a decision on whether it should be based, like all other human rights treaty bodies, at the Centre for Human Rights at Geneva.

2. The Chairperson informed the Committee that information exchange took place on a regular basis between the Centre for Human Rights at Geneva and, through her and some of the designated experts, the Committee. She noted the appointment of the "focal point" for women's human rights in the Centre. She also informed the Committee that the Special Rapporteur on Violence against

Women was in attendance at this session and that she would address the Committee.

3. The Chairperson described efforts which she had made to establish closer cooperation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) hosted a meeting attended by five members of the Committee that resulted in a "manifesto" relating to gender-inclusive culture through education, to be approved by the Committee and to be discussed in a joint UNESCO/CEDAW workshop at the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held at Beijing. Initial contacts have been made with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund. Concrete steps to foster collaboration with other specialized agencies, as well as the International Labour Organization have not yet been taken.

4. The Chairperson stressed the role of non-governmental organizations in publicizing the Convention and the work of the Committee and noted particularly the contribution of International Women's Rights Action Watch, with its regular "IWRAP to CEDAW report", and the International Human Rights Law Group, which had co-hosted an expert meeting sponsored by a Government, to develop a proposal for an optional complaints protocol for the Convention.

5. The Chairperson outlined the tasks before the Committee during this session. They would include consideration of the proposed optional protocol to introduce a right of petition under the Convention, any contribution that the Committee might like to make to the World Summit for Social Development, the Committee's role in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, its role in the Decade for Human Rights Education and the contribution of the Committee to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

6. In response to concerns expressed by members of the Committee regarding the lack of resources available to the Chairperson to undertake her inter-sessional activities, the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women indicated that general resources for the Committee were appropriated by the General Assembly based on the provisions of the Convention and subsequent decisions of the Assembly. Some travel expenses of the Chairperson had been financed from savings of these resources during 1994, and, on several occasions, the Division had undertaken to assist the Chairperson in communicating with members of the Committee.

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE SPECIAL RAPPOORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

7. The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women of the Commission on Human Rights explained that Commission resolution 1994/45 of 4 March 1994 had mandated her to recommend means of eliminating violence against women, to work together with other special rapporteurs and mechanisms in the human rights area and to consult with the Committee. She had contacted Governments to request information on violence in the family, in the community and violence by the State. She had requested information on national administrative and juridical practice and on programmes related to violence against women, including

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shelters. Thus far, 29 States, a number of United Nations agencies and a large number of non-governmental organizations had responded. She had prepared a preliminary report, to be considered by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session, in February, and indicated that subsequent reports would contain detailed recommendations on the elimination of specific forms of violence against women. She stressed that States should reject violence against women and, in accordance with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, should not seek to cite tradition or custom as a means of evading their responsibilities in this regard.

8. The Special Rapporteur outlined measures that she proposed to strengthen cooperation between herself and the Committee, including its secretariat. She hoped those parts of country reports which dealt with violence against women would be brought to her attention and that she would be given advance notice of country reports to be submitted so that she could encourage those countries to report on violence against women or pass on to the Committee information that had come to her attention.

9. In their comments on the presentation, members of the Committee noted the prevalence of violence against women in war and drew the attention of the Special Rapporteur to United Nations instruments concerning the special needs of women and children in this context. Others reflected on the interdependence of discrimination against women in general and violence against women in particular, as well as on the secret and taboo nature of violence against women in the family. Questions were raised as to the resource constraints on the work of the Special Rapporteur, who responded that some budgetary allocations had been made to her from the Economic and Social Council. Members underlined the need for strong cooperation between the Special Rapporteur and the Committee.
