



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: Limited
7 June 2002

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Twenty-seventh session

3-21 June 2002

Draft report

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II. Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. As at 21 June 2002, the closing date of the twenty-seventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were ____ States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979, and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex II. A list of States parties that have accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention is contained in annex III. A list of States parties that have signed, ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention is contained in annex IV.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its twenty-seventh session at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 21 June 2002. The Committee held ____ plenary meetings (550th to ____) and held ____ meetings to discuss agenda items 5 and 6. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in section A of annex ____ to the report.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Charlotte Abaka (Ghana), who had been elected at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee, in January 2001.

5. In addressing the twenty-seventh session of the Committee, the representative of the Secretary-General, Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, welcomed all members of the Committee to United Nations Headquarters. She noted the seminar held from 22 to 24 April at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Lund, Sweden, which had been attended by most members, to consider the working methods of the Committee. A number of decisions adopted at the seminar were contained in the report of the Secretariat on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2002/II/4).

6. Ms. Hannan reported on several events that had taken place since the twenty-sixth session of the Committee and on activities carried out by the Division and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. The forty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women had been held from 4 to 15 March and on 25 March 2002. The Commission had adopted agreed conclusions on two thematic issues and five resolutions, including on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan in which, inter alia, it urged the Afghan Interim Authority and the future Afghan Transnational Authority to give priority to the issue of ratification of the Convention and to consider signing and ratifying its Optional Protocol. Four decisions were adopted, including two relating to the communication procedure of the Commission.

7. Turning to the Commission on Human Rights, the representative of the Secretary-General informed the Committee that several resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission made specific reference to the work of the Committee and the work of all the human rights treaty bodies. She drew attention to resolution 2002/30 on human rights and extreme poverty, in which the Commission called upon the Committee to take into account extreme poverty and human rights when considering the reports of the States parties; resolution 2002/49 on women's equal ownership, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing, in which the Commission encouraged the Committee to integrate the content of this resolution into its work; resolution 2002/51 on traffic in women and girls, in which the Commission invited treaty bodies to continue to address this issue within their mandates and to share their knowledge and best practices in this area as widely as possible; and resolution 2002/52 on the elimination of violence against women, in which the Commission reminded Governments that their obligation under the Convention must be implemented fully with regard to violence against women, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation 19. She also highlighted resolution 2002/31 on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, in which the Commission established a special rapporteur on the right to health and called upon him or her to take account of the Committee's general recommendation 24 on article 12; and resolution 2002/50 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, in which the Commission welcomed the proposal in the joint work plan of the Office of Special Adviser on Gender Issues/Division for Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to create a multimedia training package on international human rights instruments, starting with the Convention and its Optional Protocol. The resolution also encouraged all entities of the United Nations system to pay systematic, increased and sustained attention to the recommendations of the Committee in order to ensure that its concluding comments and general

recommendations are better utilized in their respective work, and urged States parties to the Convention to implement fully, including through national legislation, policies and practices, the recommendations of the Committee in this regard. The representative of the Secretary-General also stated that during the recent session of the Commission on Human Rights she had had the opportunity to participate, along with the Committee's Chairperson, in a panel discussion organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women on combating racism and promoting women's rights.

8. Ms. Hannan indicated that the World Assembly on Ageing had taken place in Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002, and had been attended on behalf of the Committee by Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling, who presented the contribution of the Committee in her address to the Main Committee of the Assembly. The outcome documents adopted by the Assembly drew attention to particular needs of older women, which result, inter alia, from the fact that their life patterns are different from those of men.

9. The special session of the General Assembly on Children took place from 8 to 10 May 2002, and Regina Tavares da Silva participated in the special session on the Committee's behalf, presenting its contribution to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. Ms. Tavares da Silva participated in a panel discussion entitled "Women and children: from international law to national realities", organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

10. Ms. Hannan indicated that the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued to take every opportunity to encourage ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol, as well as acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, on the Committee's meeting time. Both offices also seek to encourage regular reporting and implementation of the substantive article of the Convention in States parties. She indicated that she had participated with the Committee's Chairperson and the Chief of the Women's Rights Section, Jane Connors, in a seminar held in the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm on follow-up of the Committee's concluding comments on the report of Sweden. The Chief of the Women's Rights Section had participated in a training seminar on the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's work for desk officers of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees based in the Americas in May 2002, and had also provided training to Government officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Convention. One staff member from the Women's Rights Unit had participated in a meeting organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kuala Lumpur on the formulation of the next phase of the UNDP programme on promoting gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region. Sjiamsiah Achmad, a member of the Committee, had also participated in the meeting.

C. Attendance

11. Twenty-three members of the Committee attended the twenty-seventh session. Emna Aouij attended from ___ to ___, Naela Gabr from ___ to ___ and Savitri Goonesekere from ___ to ___. Yolanda Ferrer Gomez attended from ___ to ___ because of the late issuance of her entry visa. A list of the members of the Committee indicating their terms of office is contained in annex ___.

D. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

12. The Committee considered the provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/2002/II/1) at its 550th meeting. The agenda, as adopted, was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of the reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
7. Provisional agenda for the exceptional session and for the twenty-eighth session.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-seventh session.

E. Report of the pre-session working group

13. A pre-session working group was convened from 4 to 8 February 2002 to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to the periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at its twenty-seventh session.

14. The pre-session working group met together with the pre-session working group for the exceptional session, authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/229 of 24 December 2001. The following 10 members of the Committee participated: Charlotte Abaka (Africa), Ivanka Corti (Europe), Yolanda Ferrer Gomez (Latin America and the Caribbean), Rosalyn Hazelle (Latin America and the Caribbean), Rosario Manalo (Asia), Göran Melander (Europe), Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini (Africa), Frances Livingstone Raday (Europe), Zelmira Regazzoli (Latin America and the Caribbean) and Heisoo Shin (Asia).

15. The working group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the reports of five States parties, namely, Belgium, Denmark, Tunisia, Ukraine and Zambia.

16. At its 550th meeting, on 3 June, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group, Mr. Melander, introduced the report of the group.

F. Report of the Chairperson between the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions of the Committee

17. Ms. Abaka, the Chairperson of the Committee, reported on her attendance at the forty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where she made a statement and participated in panel discussions. She also participated in a meeting organized by the Organization of African Unity with representatives of States parties

from Africa, during which she discussed the Convention, its Optional Protocol and the reporting obligations of States parties. She also drew attention to the availability of technical assistance from the Division for the Advancement of Women at the request of States parties. The Chairperson also participated in the International Women's Day celebration on 8 March, which was dedicated to Afghan women, during which the Committee's message of solidarity with the women of Afghanistan was read.

18. Ms. Abaka participated in the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights, as well as several of the side events. She informed the Committee that efforts should be made to make the work of the Committee better known among the Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and non-governmental organizations, through, inter alia, Internet technology.

19. In conclusion, Ms. Abaka briefed the Committee on her activities in Stockholm, during which follow-up of the concluding comments on that State party had been discussed.