



**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**

Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*

14 May-1 June 2007

**Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee  
on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

Note by the Secretariat

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\* CEDAW/C/2007/II/1.



## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report contains information that is relevant to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Section II provides information on developments in the United Nations human rights regime, including information concerning the following: the work of the General Assembly; the Commission on the Status of Women; the Human Rights Council; follow-up to the fifth inter-committee meeting and the eighteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies; and the transfer of the servicing of the Committee to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Section III presents information on the reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions. Section IV summarizes the activities of the Secretariat in support of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. Other issues are covered in section V.

## **II. Developments in the human rights regime**

### **A. General Assembly**

2. At its sixty-first session, the General Assembly adopted several resolutions of relevance to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Information on resolutions 61/144 on trafficking in women and girls and 61/180 on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons was provided to the Committee at its thirty-seventh session (see CEDAW/C/2007/I/4, paras. 21-22).

3. In its resolution 61/143 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, the Assembly took note with appreciation of the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The resolution urged Member States to take action at many levels to address and eliminate all forms of violence against women and called upon the United Nations system to support national efforts in those respects. It urged entities of the United Nations system to enhance coordination and intensify their efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in a more systematic, comprehensive and sustained way. It invited the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and other relevant United Nations bodies, to discuss, by 2008, the question of violence against women in all its forms and manifestations, and to set priorities for addressing this issue in their future efforts and work programmes. It also requested the Statistical Commission, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, to develop and propose a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women.

4. By its resolution 61/106, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (annex I) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention (annex II), which opened for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York as of 30 March 2007. The Assembly also adopted and opened for

signature, ratification and accession the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (resolution 61/177, annex).

## **B. Commission on the Status of Women**

5. The fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women was held from 26 February to 9 March 2007. At that session, the Commission considered as its priority theme the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. A number of events were held in connection with the theme, including a high-level round table on lessons learned and good practices and an expert panel discussion on key policy initiatives. The Chairperson of the Committee was one of the three keynote speakers that launched the general debate on the priority theme on the first day of the session. She also made a statement on the work of the Committee on the occasion of the introduction of reports before the Commission. The Chairperson also participated in a panel discussion on violence against girls, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

6. Two treaty body experts, Shanthi Dairiam of the Committee and Moushira Khattab of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, served as panellists on the theme of capacity-building on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

7. The Commission selected "the elimination of all forms of violence against women: follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study at national and international levels" as the emerging issue for the session. During an interactive discussion with a panel of experts on that theme, including the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, participants exchanged experiences and examples of initiatives that had been developed to address violence against women. The Commission was also addressed by the President of the Human Rights Council, and held an exchange of views with him.

8. The Commission adopted four resolutions. It adopted, for the first time, a resolution on ending female genital mutilation, where it reaffirmed that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, together with their Optional Protocols, constituted an important contribution to the legal framework for the protection and promotion of the human rights of girls. It recalled the Committee's general recommendation 14 and relevant paragraphs of its general recommendations 19 and 24, and called upon States parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Also for the first time, in its resolution on forced marriage of the girl child, the Commission reaffirmed the obligations of all States to promote and protect the human rights of women, including girls, and recalled relevant human rights instruments in this regard, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

9. The Commission adopted agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, in which it reiterated that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol and other treaties provided a legal framework and a

comprehensive set of measures for the promotion and protection of the human rights of the girl child, including for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against girls. The Commission called on Governments to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and their respective optional protocols; to limit the extent of any reservations that they lodge and review regularly such reservations with a view to withdrawing them so as to ensure that no reservation is incompatible with the object and purpose of the relevant treaty; and to implement the conventions and their respective optional protocols fully. The Commission encouraged the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the other human rights treaty bodies to invite States parties to ensure that their reports explicitly addressed the situation of the girl child.

### **C. Human Rights Council**

10. The resumed second session of the Human Rights Council was held from 27 to 29 November 2006. The Council adopted a resolution on the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Review of Mandates (resolution 2/1), in which it requested the Working Group to review the revised draft manual of the United Nations human rights special procedures of June 2006 and to make recommendations on possible additions or amendments thereto. It also requested the Working Group to draft a code of conduct regulating the work of the special procedures, and invited the Working Group to report to the Council at its fourth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution. In its resolution 2/5 on the effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, the Council took note with appreciation of the continuing efforts of Member States, the human rights treaty bodies, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General to improve the effectiveness of the treaty body system, and encouraged further such efforts. It encouraged the High Commissioner to undertake a study on various options for reforming the treaty body system, and to seek the views of States and other stakeholders in this regard and to report thereon to the Human Rights Council.

11. At its third session, held from 29 November to 8 December 2006, the Council adopted resolution 3/4 on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 60/251: agenda, annual programme of work, methods of work and rules of procedure of the Human Rights Council, in which it decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental, intersessional working group to formulate concrete recommendations on the Council's agenda, its annual programme of work, its methods of work and its rules of procedure. It requested the working group to report to the Council at its fourth session on progress made thereon. The fourth session of the Human Rights Council is scheduled to take place from 12 to 30 March 2007.

### **D. Follow-up to the fifth inter-committee meeting and eighteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies**

12. The fifth inter-committee meeting and the eighteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies recommended that the treaty bodies begin to apply the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties,

including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (see HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1). The guidelines were prepared by the inter-committee technical working group, which was chaired by Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling. Following its discussion at its thirty-sixth session in July 2006, the Committee resumed discussion at its thirty-seventh session and confirmed the need for a review and possible revision of its own reporting guidelines, taking into account the harmonized reporting guidelines. The Committee invited its task force, consisting of Ms. Schöpp-Schilling, Naela Gabr and Shanthi Dairiam, to complete a proposal for consideration by the Committee at its thirty-eighth session, with the assistance of the secretariat. The Committee will be briefed by the task force on the results of their intersessional preparations.

13. The Committee designated Mr. Flinterman to represent the Committee in the meeting that will be held in Geneva from 15 to 16 May 2007 between the International Law Commission and representatives of the human rights treaty bodies.

14. The working group on harmonization of the working methods of the human rights treaty bodies is expected to meet on 17 and 18 April 2007, to finalize its report before the next inter-committee and Chairpersons' meetings. Ms. Schöpp-Schilling will represent the Committee in the meeting of the working group and will brief the Committee on the results.

#### **E. Transfer of servicing of the Committee to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

15. During the thirty-seventh session in January 2007, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights met with the Committee in order to discuss the Secretary-General's decision to transfer the servicing of the Committee from the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Following that meeting and exchange of views, on 2 February 2007, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, wrote to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations High Commissioner. Among other issues raised, the Committee recommended that the proposed change in servicing arrangements be implemented in 2008, after the Committee's thirty-ninth session. In the letter to the United Nations High Commissioner, the Committee requested that it be provided at its thirty-eighth session with possible options for the dates and locations of its three proposed annual sessions of 2008 and 2009, of which at least one would be convened in parallel chambers.

16. The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights wrote to the Chairperson on 9 February 2007 in response to her letter of 2 February 2007. The letter of the Deputy High Commissioner was circulated to experts of the Committee by e-mail on 12 February 2007. With respect to the Committee's meeting time, the Deputy High Commissioner indicated that the Office's submission for the 2008-2009 biennial budget included three annual sessions of the Committee and also envisaged that one session of the Committee would be convened in New York in 2008 and 2009. She also indicated that discussions were taking place with the Conference Services Division on possible dates for the 2008 and 2009 sessions and that such information should be available to the Committee at its thirty-eighth session.

17. During the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Deputy High Commissioner met with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women to discuss issues pertaining to the transfer.

### **III. Reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions**

18. All States parties selected by the Committee for presentation of reports at the thirty-eighth session, to be held from 14 May to 1 June 2007, will be able to do so. The Committee will consider only initial reports at that session and all meetings will take place in plenary.

19. The Committee invited the following 15 States parties to present their reports at its thirty-ninth session, to be held from 23 July to 10 August 2007: Belize (CEDAW/C/BLZ/3-4), Brazil (CEDAW/C/BRA/6), Cook Islands (CEDAW/C/COK/1), Estonia (CEDAW/C/EST/4), Guinea (CEDAW/C/GIN/4-6), Honduras (CEDAW/C/HON/6), Hungary (CEDAW/C/HUN/6), Indonesia (CEDAW/C/IDN/4-5), Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/3-4), Kenya (CEDAW/C/KEN/6), Liechtenstein (CEDAW/C/LIE/2 and CEDAW/C/LIE/3), New Zealand (CEDAW/C/NZL/6), Republic of Korea (CEDAW/C/KOR/5 and CEDAW/C/KOR/6) and Singapore (CEDAW/C/SGP/3). In addition, Norway (CEDAW/C/NOR/7) was invited to present its report, as Bolivia indicated its preference to be considered at the fortieth session in January 2008.

20. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee identified States parties for presentation of their reports at the fortieth (January 2008) and forty-first sessions (May 2008). The Committee may wish to review and complete the list of States parties for presentation of reports at those sessions, in the light of confirmations received. The pre-session working group, scheduled to meet from 16 July to 20 July 2007, will prepare the lists of issues and questions for those States.

21. The Committee's attention is drawn to annex II of the present report, which provides an overview of available reports and dates of previous consideration, as applicable.

### **IV. Secretariat activities in support of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

22. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women continued their efforts to encourage universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, acceptance of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention. Those aspects are regularly addressed by the Special Adviser, the Director and the staff of the Division in meetings with and briefings for representatives of Member States, entities of the United Nations system and civil society organizations in training workshops and other outreach activities.

23. The Division continued its activities to help countries emerging from conflict to implement the Convention. Following a high-level consultation mission in Liberia in June 2006, a workshop on implementation and reporting under the Convention for staff of the national machinery for the advancement of women has been scheduled to take place from 19 to 21 March 2007. The workshop will be followed by meetings with the United Nations country team and Government officials from key line ministries to put in place a strategy and mechanisms for the preparation of the report under article 18 of the Convention. The Committee invited Liberia to submit all its outstanding reports by March 2008, for consideration by the Committee in early 2009.

24. Following an invitation from the Minister for Women's Affairs and Women's Rights, the Division will conduct a high-level consultation mission to Haiti from 16 to 19 April 2007. A team of internationally recognized experts on the Convention, including members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, will hold consultations with high-level Government officials, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations country team and other stakeholders on the implementation of the Convention, including a strategy for preparation of the report. The Committee invited Haiti to submit all its outstanding reports by March 2008, for consideration by the Committee in early 2009.

## **V. Other issues**

### **E-mail list**

25. The secretariat has been informed that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has restarted the distribution of information on the work of human rights treaty bodies, including concluding comments and observations, through the e-mail list administered by the Treaty Body and Council Branch. Subscribers to the list should begin to receive such information.

## **Annex I**

### **States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention**

#### **Africa**

Somalia

Sudan

#### **Asia and the Pacific**

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Nauru

Palau

Qatar

Tonga

#### **Western Europe and other**

Holy See

United States of America

## Annex II

### States parties whose reports have been submitted but not yet considered by the Committee as of 19 March 2007\*

#### A. Initial reports

<i>State party (report)</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Date received</i>
Cook Islands (1) <sup>a, b</sup>	10 September 2007	23 August 2006
Saudi Arabia (1-2)	7 October 2001	12 September 2006

#### B. Periodic reports

<i>State party (report)</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Date received</i>	<i>Previously considered</i>	<i>Previous report(s)</i>
Belize (3-4) <sup>a, b</sup>	15 June 1999	5 August 2005	1999, 21st session	1-2
Bolivia (2-4) <sup>b</sup>	8 July 1995	16 December 2005	1995, 14th session	Initial
Brazil (6) <sup>a, b</sup>	2 March 2005	18 August 2005	2003, 29th session	1-5
Burundi (2-4)	7 February 1997	29 September 2006	2001, 24th session	Initial
Ecuador (6-7)	9 December 2002	23 February 2007	2003, 29th session	4-5
El Salvador (7)	18 September 2006	15 March 2007	2003, 28th session	3-4, 5, 6
Estonia (4) <sup>a, b</sup>	20 November 2004	5 October 2005	2002, 26th session	1-3
Finland (5) <sup>b</sup>	4 October 2003	23 February 2004	2001, 24th session	3, 4
France (6) <sup>b</sup>	13 January 2005	17 March 2006	2003, 29th session	5
Guinea (4-6) <sup>a, b</sup>	8 September 1995	26 July 2005	2001, 25th session	1-3
Honduras (4-6) <sup>a, b</sup>	2 April 1996	31 January 2006	1992, 11th session	1-3
Hungary (6) <sup>a, b</sup>	3 September 2002	24 May 2006	2002, Exceptional session	4-5
Iceland (5) <sup>b</sup>	18 July 2002	14 November 2003	2002, 26th session	3-4
Indonesia (4-5) <sup>a, b</sup>	13 October 1997	20 June 2005	1998, 18th session	2-3
Israel (4) <sup>b</sup>	2 November 2004	1 June 2005	2005, 33rd session	3
Jordan (3-4) <sup>a, b</sup>	31 July 2001	12 December 2005	2000, 22nd session	1-2
Kenya (5-6) <sup>a, b</sup>	8 April 2001	14 March 2006	2003, 28th session	3-4

\* The list does not include the States parties whose reports the Committee will consider at its thirty-eighth session.

<i>State party (report)</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Date received</i>	<i>Previously considered</i>	<i>Previous report(s)</i>
Kyrgyzstan (3)	12 March 2006	27 February 2007	2004, 30th session	2
Lebanon (3) <sup>b</sup>	16 May 2006	6 July 2006	2005, 33rd session	1-2
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (2) <sup>b</sup>	15 June 1994	14 December 1998	1994, 13th session	Initial and Add.1
Liechtenstein (2) <sup>a, b</sup>	21 January 2001	6 February 2001	1999, 20th session	Initial
Liechtenstein (3) <sup>a, b</sup>	21 January 2005	13 July 2006	1999, 20th session	Initial
Lithuania (3) <sup>b</sup>	17 February 2003	16 May 2005	2000, 23rd session	Initial, 2
Luxembourg (5) <sup>b</sup>	4 March 2006	23 February 2006	2003, 28th session	4
Morocco (3-4) <sup>b</sup>	21 July 2002	18 August 2006	2003, 29th session	2
New Zealand (6) <sup>a, b</sup>	9 February 2006	20 April 2006	2003, 29th session	5
Nigeria (6)	13 July 2006	4 October 2006	2004, 30th session	4-5
Norway (7) <sup>a</sup>	20 September 2006	3 October 2006	2003, 28th session	5 and 6
Portugal (6) <sup>b</sup>	3 September 2002	15 May 2006	2002, 26th session	5
Republic of Korea (5) <sup>a, b</sup>	26 January 2002	23 July 2003	1998, 19th session	3, 4
Republic of Korea (6) <sup>a, b</sup>	26 January 2006	27 July 2006	1998, 19th session	3, 4
Singapore (3) <sup>a, b</sup>	4 November 2004	1 November 2004	2001, 25th session	Initial, 2
Slovakia (2-4)	27 June 1998	27 February 2007	1998, 19th session	Initial
Slovenia (4)	5 August 2005	10 August 2006	2003, 29th session	2 and 3
Sweden (6-7)	3 September 2002	5 December 2006	2001, 25th session	5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (5 and Add.1 and Add.2) <sup>b</sup>	7 May 2003	7 August 2003	1999, 21st session	3 and Add.1 and 2; 4 and Add.1-4
United Republic of Tanzania (4-5)	19 September 1998	8 February 2007	1999, 20th session	2-3
Yemen (6)	29 June 2005	5 December 2006	2002, Exceptional session	4, 5

<sup>a</sup> Report selected to be considered by the Committee at its thirty-ninth session, to be held from 23 July to 10 August 2007.

<sup>b</sup> Report has been translated, reproduced and made available in all official languages.