



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
15 December 2008

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Forty-third session

19 January to 6 February 2009

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

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

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Note by the Secretariat

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* CEDAW/C/2009/I/1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report contains information relevant to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Section II contains information on developments in the human rights regime, including the eighth inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies. Section III provides information on reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions and on reports that have been received but have not been scheduled for consideration. Section IV contains information on the approaches of human rights treaty bodies to comments submitted by States parties on concluding observations. A list of States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention is contained in annex I to the present report. Annex II contains a list of States parties whose reports have been submitted but not yet considered or scheduled for consideration by the Committee, as at 10 December 2008.

II. Developments in the human rights regime

A. Human rights treaty bodies

2. On 31 October and 3 November 2008, the first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was convened. As at 10 December 2008, 42 States were party to the Convention, of which 25 were party to the Optional Protocol. The Conference of States Parties elected the first 12 members to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Members are elected for a term of four years and are eligible for re-election once. The Convention mandates the Committee to consider the reports of States parties that are to be submitted within two years of the entry into force of the Convention for the State party concerned, and every four years thereafter and further whenever the Committee requests. The Optional Protocol provides the Committee with competence to consider communications from or on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals who claim to be victims of a violation by a State party to the Convention and the Protocol of the provisions of the Convention, in cases where such communications meet the admissibility criteria set out in the Protocol. The Optional Protocol also provides for an inquiry procedure, which States parties to the Protocol may opt out of at the time of signature, ratification or accession. Among the principles set out in article 3 of the Convention are non-discrimination and equality between men and women, while article 6 specifically concerns women and disabilities.

3. The human rights treaty bodies have continued to harmonize and simplify their working methods. At its ninety-fourth session, held from 13 to 31 October 2008, the Human Rights Committee discussed its follow-up procedure and decided that the follow-up progress report prepared by the relevant rapporteur at each session, as well as non-governmental organization submissions on follow-up, should be published on the Human Rights Committee web page, together with States parties replies on follow-up. It also agreed that the rapporteur for follow-up should suggest a system for qualitative assessment of States parties replies at the Committee's ninety-fifth session. The Committee should meet regularly with non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on follow-up, while non-compliance with the follow-up

procedure should be referred to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and generate a follow-up mission by the Committee. The Committee adopted a general comment on States obligations under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and decided to revise its general comment on article 19 (freedom of expression). The Committee adopted a media strategy and discussed a preliminary report prepared by two of its members on the Committee's relationship with the Human Rights Council.

4. During its forty-first session in November 2008, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted its treaty-specific reporting guidelines, which take into account the guidelines for the common core document, and the Committee's evolving practice. At the same session, the Committee convened a half-day general discussion on article 2, paragraph 2, of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with representatives of United Nations entities and civil society. Two members of the Committee against Torture are preparing draft treaty-specific guidelines to be used in conjunction with the guidelines for the common core document. The Committee is also reviewing its rules of procedure, while two of its members are preparing a working paper on methods to follow up individual communications.

B. Eighth inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies

5. The eighth inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies was held from 1 to 3 December 2008. It was the first time the inter-committee meeting had convened twice in one year, with the meeting dedicated exclusively to the improvement and harmonization of working methods of the human rights treaty bodies. The eighth inter-committee meeting focused on the revised treaty-specific guidelines; follow-up to concluding observations; consideration of a State party in the absence of a report; and the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council. It also discussed the role of the inter-committee meeting and whether it should be given an enhanced decision-making role with regard to harmonization of working methods. A number of recommendations emerged from the meeting, and it was decided that the agenda items for the ninth inter-committee meeting would include the identity and role of the country rapporteur and country task force; cross-referencing the work of other treaty bodies; standardization of terminology; participation of States parties, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations; and the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council. The Committee may wish to discuss the agenda items prior to the ninth inter-committee meeting, which will be held from 29 June to 1 July 2009, followed by the twenty-first meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, on 2 and 3 July 2009.

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

6. During the forty-third session, to be held from 19 January to 6 February 2009, the Committee will consider the reports of the following States parties: Armenia, Cameroon, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Rwanda. Implementation of the Convention in a State party with a long overdue initial report (Dominica) will also be considered by the Committee, in the absence of a report, at

that session. Information on the practices of other human rights treaty bodies in relation to consideration of the implementation of human rights treaties in the absence of a report was provided to the Committee at its forty-second session (CEDAW/C/2008/III/4, paras. 13-23).

7. The Committee has invited the following States parties to submit their reports at its forty-fourth session, to be held from 20 July to 7 August 2009: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Denmark, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Spain, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu. States parties invited to submit their reports at the forty-fifth session in January/February 2010 are Botswana, Egypt, Malawi, the Netherlands, Panama, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. In drawing up the list of States parties to be considered at future sessions, the Committee is invited to consider annex II to the present report, which contains a list of States parties whose reports have been submitted but not yet scheduled for consideration. The Committee may also wish to recall that it decided to consider implementation of the Convention in the Bahamas, the Central African Republic, Grenada and Seychelles in early 2010, and Chad, Comoros, Lesotho and Papua New Guinea in the second part of 2010, if necessary, in the absence of a report. At its forty-first session, in June 2008, the Committee invited Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Zimbabwe to submit all their overdue reports in a combined report within two years, failing which, it would proceed with the consideration of the implementation of the Convention in those States parties in the absence of a report. A similar invitation was issued by the Committee at its forty-second session, in October/November 2008, in respect of Iraq, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

IV. Approaches of human rights treaty bodies to comments submitted by States parties on concluding observations

8. As in the case of other human rights treaty bodies, States parties are increasingly submitting comments on concluding observations. At its twenty-first session, the Committee adopted decision 21/II, in which it stated that observations by States parties on concluding observations would be circulated to members of the Committee and their receipt acknowledged in an annex to the Committee's next annual report to the General Assembly. It also stated that it might decide to make available such observations independently of its annual report.

9. In the context of treaty body efforts to harmonize working methods, the Committee may wish to consider adopting the practice of the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee against Torture, in which such comments are referred to in the Committee's annual report and issued as official documents and made available on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In line with rule 71 (3) of its rules of procedure, the Committee on the Rights of the Child includes any comments of States parties on concluding observations in its reports to the General Assembly if specifically requested to do so by the State party concerned. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination sometimes includes such comments in its annual report, but has also posted them on the website.

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 or scheduled for consideration by the Committee as of 10 December 2008

Periodic reports

<i>State party (report)</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Date received</i>	<i>Previously considered (session)</i>	<i>Previous report(s)</i>
Albania	10 June 2003	22 October 2008	2003 (28)	1-2
Turkey	19 January 2007	24 October 2008	2005 (32)	4-5
Turkey	—	—	1997 (16)	2-3
Turkey	—	—	1990 (9)	1