



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
23 October 2009
English
Original: French

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

First session

Summary record of the 10th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 27 February 2009, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Al-Tarawneh

Contents

Future meetings

Closure of the session

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Editing Unit, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Future meetings (item 7 of the agenda)

1. **The Chairperson** summarized the decisions taken by the Committee at its first session, recalling that three open-ended working groups had been established to deal with, respectively, the draft rules of procedure, the draft reporting guidelines and proposals on working methods, under the coordination of Mr. McCallum, Ms. Peláez Narváez and Ms. Cisternas Reyes.
2. The Committee had asked the Secretariat to ensure to all persons with disabilities full access to the work of the human rights mechanisms, and to the Committee's sessions in particular, in accordance with article 9 of the Convention. It had asked the Secretariat to ensure in particular that documentation and meetings were easily accessible to all, through the use of Braille and sign language but also new information technologies.
3. The Committee had also asked the Secretariat to study the possibility of holding one of its sessions immediately before or after the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, which took place each year in New York, and to set up a voluntary fund to help support the work of the members of the Committee, particularly between sessions.
4. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** proposed the establishment of a pre-sessional working group.
5. **Mr. Torres Correa**, supported by **Mr. Könczei**, said that measures should be taken to encourage countries which had not already done so to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to reconsider any declarations or reservations on certain articles.
6. **Mr. Chowdhuri** said that a deadline should be set for the drafting and adoption of the reporting guidelines since States parties were expected to submit their initial reports in 2010.
7. **Ms. Maina** said that it was important to provide States with technical support to encourage them to ratify the Convention or help them implement it. Particular attention should be paid to the implementation of article 12, which raised many concerns.
8. **Mr. Ben Lallahom** said that one of the Committee's immediate priorities was to adopt its rules of procedure, and he requested more information on the agenda for the Committee's next session.
9. **The Chairperson** said that the following items were envisaged for the agenda of the October 2009 session: draft programme of work; draft rules of procedure; draft reporting guidelines and other working methods; correspondence with States parties, and communications received; accessibility of information; administrative matters; relations with the press; dates of future sessions.
10. **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, supported by **Mr. Uršič**, proposed that each session should include a day of general discussion in order to examine and gain a better understanding of certain provisions of the Convention and to draft general comments.
11. **Mr. Ben Lallahom** noted that it would also be useful if the members of the Committee could set aside some time to take stock of information, statements or comments received from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders.
12. **Ms. Yang** proposed defining more specifically the responsibilities of Vice-Chairpersons, taking geographical criteria into account in the choice of subject areas and issues to be entrusted to them, in order to facilitate the organization of the Committee's work and enable it to be conducted effectively. She also suggested that all session documentation should be made available to Committee members two months in advance.

13. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** stressed the importance of dialogue and cooperation with the other treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders. All were eagerly awaiting the Committee's general comments, which would make it possible to interpret certain articles of the Convention on the basis of the conclusions from the days of general discussion. The first such day could be devoted to article 12.
14. The Committee should plan to send invitations to special rapporteurs whose work touched on issues that were also of interest to the Committee, such as education or housing, and to the chairpersons or representatives of other treaty bodies, so as to make the Committee better known and establish synergies. The first invitations, for the following session, could be addressed to the Special Rapporteur on disability and a Human Rights Council representative.
15. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** stressed the importance of deadlines for notification of the opening dates of sessions and the distribution of documentation, especially for persons using non-traditional media. She proposed that the Committee should decide immediately on the theme of the first day of general discussion so as to enable adequate preparation.
16. **The Chairperson** considered that it would be useful to invite to the proposed day of general discussion the various stakeholders such as interested States parties, NGOs, national human rights institutions and United Nations bodies; that would leave four days for discussions, at the Committee's second session, on the programme of work, rules of procedure, reporting guidelines and working methods.
17. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** proposed that the first day of general discussion should be devoted to article 12.
18. **Mr. Chowdhuri** asked whether any specific date had been set for sending the declaration adopted at the previous meeting to each State party to the Convention.
19. **Ms. Connors** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the declaration adopted by the Committee would be published as a press release, then sent to all the information services and the permanent mission of each State party. The text could be sent to all the permanent missions in Geneva as a way to encourage States to sign the Convention. The declaration would appear in the report of the United Nations General Assembly, which would be published in the Organization's six official languages. The field offices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would also have the text translated into local languages to ensure the broadest possible circulation.
20. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** said that the Chairperson should send the declaration to the respective chairpersons of the other treaty bodies, to give it more weight.
21. **Mr. Ben Lallahom** said that he expected the rate of ratification to accelerate and asked what would happen at the next session if the number of experts grew from 12 to 18.
22. **The Chairperson** said that during the day of general discussion the Committee could ask States parties for information on access to education.
23. **Ms. Maina** noted that if the Committee did not adopt its working methods and rules of procedure by its October session, it could be taken by surprise if States parties in transition from the medical model to a human rights-based model or facing difficulties in implementing article 12 of the Convention asked for assistance from the Committee. It should start by clarifying the way in which its assistance should be solicited and how technical assistance could be provided.
24. It was also urgently necessary to provide developing countries with specific information on implementation of the provisions concerning international cooperation. Moreover, discussions should perhaps be held specifically with States parties facing

particular difficulties. Since the Convention was the first one to be adopted in the 21st century, the Committee should try to proceed in such a way as to prevent States parties from having to submit reservations.

25. **The Chairperson** said that States parties could request information on the modalities for technical assistance from the Secretariat. There were a number of ways to ensure communication, in particular through local NGOs, national human rights institutions and international NGOs. Those issues would be discussed and clarified progressively as the working groups met, and the Committee would most likely have a much clearer idea of the rules of procedure and the working methods it intended to adopt well before its second session. As for the technical issues, the Secretariat was in a position to assist the Committee and States parties.

26. **Ms. Yang** asked whether the different statements made by NGOs, States parties, international organizations and national human rights institutions during the Committee's first session, and the statements made during the Conference of States Parties to the Convention would be available online.

27. **Ms. Connors** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) replied that all the statements would be available on the extranet in the original language and that the Secretariat had drawn up summaries of those statements which would be available in English, French and Spanish. All the statements made during the Conference of States Parties were available on the extranet.

28. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that the Committee should contact the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention to submit suggested items for the agenda of the Conference. Also, the Chairperson of the Committee could update the Bureau on the progress made during the Committee's first session. Lastly, it would be necessary to ascertain which Committee members would be participating in the forthcoming Conference of States Parties, which would take place prior to the Committee's second session.

29. **The Chairperson** said that the next intercommittee meeting would take place from 22 to 24 June in Geneva, and that he and another member of the Committee would participate. He recommended setting up a rotational system to enable all members of the Committee to participate in the future. Since Committee members would remain in contact via a discussion forum to be set up by the Secretariat, decisions on those matters would be taken in subsequent weeks.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.