



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
Forty-fourth session

**Summary record of the 887th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 20 July 2009, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Gabr

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the forty-fourth session of the Committee.
2. **Ms. Neuwirth** (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had held its first meeting and that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would find collaboration with it valuable, given the references to women in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
3. The Durban Review Conference, attended by the Committee's chairperson, had expressed concern in its outcome document at the persistence of discrimination against women and girls and stressed the need to combat it. The document also called for all forms of violence against women and children to be treated as criminal and punishable offences.
4. At its eleventh session, the Human Rights Council had devoted a full-day meeting, pursuant to its resolution 6/30, to the discussion of the human rights of women, focusing on equality before the law. The Council had also adopted resolutions on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women; trafficking in persons, especially women and children; the right to education; and preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights. The Council had also held a special session on the impact of the world financial and economic crisis on human rights, a subject on which the Committee had already adopted a statement at its forty-third session.
5. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had recently adopted its General Comment No. 20, describing the obligations of States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to guarantee the principle of non-discrimination, and sought to identify prohibited grounds of discrimination.
6. The High Commissioner had recently given a lecture in South Africa, in which she had highlighted the importance of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the influence of the Convention and its Optional Protocol on laws, policies and jurisprudence. She had also drawn attention to the continued discrimination suffered by women and had

urged that the next decade be dedicated to implementing women's rights, to relieving their suffering and to redressing injustice.

7. To mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention and the tenth anniversary of its Optional Protocol, the United Nations system was providing support for country, regional and global events.

### **Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/2009/II/1)**

8. **The Chairperson** drew attention to document CEDAW/C/2009/II/1 and said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposed provisional agenda and organization of work.

9. *It was so decided.*

### **Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the forty-third and forty-fourth sessions of the Committee**

10. **The Chairperson** reported that Qatar had become a party to the Convention, and Turkmenistan to its Optional Protocol, while Argentina had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1.
11. She had participated in the inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies and the meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies. Time would be allocated at the current session to allow for a thorough discussion of the outcomes of those meetings.
12. At the session of the Commission on the Status of Women, she had drawn attention to the outcomes of the Committee's past three sessions. The Committee's increased meeting time reflected its commitment to ensuring compliance with the Convention. She had given information on encouragement to States with overdue reports to submit them. The strengthened cooperation between the Committee and other human rights mechanisms had been highlighted.
13. The Committee had met with the Special Rapporteurs on violence against women and the right to health and with the Independent Expert on Haiti. Its bureau had met with the bureau of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and a joint working group had been formed.
14. At the Durban Review Conference, she had stressed the importance of greater Government efforts to combat poverty, which was a main cause of

discrimination and an obstacle to women's advancement. States parties must review and monitor the impact of laws and policies on migrant women, in order to take remedial measures.

15. She had met with the media and with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Egypt to discuss the new law on quotas for women in that country's parliament. She had also met with the League of Arab States concerning the Convention.

16. The anniversaries of the Convention and its Optional Protocol must be used to secure commitments from States to ratify the Convention and to withdraw reservations. In that connection, Committee members had met with representatives of the United States Government to discuss ratification.

17. The Committee's very full agenda included the consideration of 11 State party reports: seven to be taken up in parallel chambers and six in plenary meeting. It would also be considering cases under the Optional Protocol to the Convention; and would be discussing draft general recommendations on article 2, on older women and on the economic consequences of divorce. While in New York, the Committee would meet with representatives of many outside organizations that provided valuable input into its work: NGOs, national human rights institutions, and United Nations bodies such as the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and the Forum on Minority Issues.

#### **Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention**

18. **Ms. Patten**, speaking as Chairperson of the pre-session working group, said that the group had drawn up lists of issues and questions for eight of the States parties scheduled to report at the current session, one of which — Argentina — had subsequently requested a deferral. The lists and questions for the three other reporting States had been prepared intersessionally. In determining the issues and questions to be raised in each instance, the working group had relied on the State party reports and core documents, background information and analyses furnished by the secretariat, and written and oral information provided by NGOs, and, as mandated by

the Committee, had focused on the whole range of themes addressed by the Convention.

#### **Implementation of article 21 of the Convention** (CEDAW/C/2009/I/3 and Add.4)

#### **Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee** (CEDAW/C/2009/II/4)

19. **Ms. Connors** (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), referring to the implementation of article 21, said that work had continued on the draft general recommendation on article 2 of the Convention in the working group chaired by Mr. Flintermann; a concept note and a first draft general recommendation on older women had been prepared by the working group chaired by Ms. Begum; and a concept note on a general recommendation on the economic consequences of divorce had been prepared by the working group chaired by Ms. Halperin-Kaddari. The latter two issues would be discussed by the Committee during informal meetings in the course of the session with non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies. She also drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General on reports provided by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/2009/II/3) and to one such report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (CEDAW/C/2009/II/3/Add.4). Several other specialized agencies were reconsidering the content of their reports to make them useful to the Committee, in view of the growing practice of submitting joint United Nations country team reports.

20. The note on the ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2009/II/4) discussed developments relating to human rights treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council and the Review Conference for the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It provided information on States parties whose reports would be considered at future sessions and how other treaty bodies followed up on concluding observations. The Committee would be evaluating the effectiveness of its own follow-up procedure in 2011. The note also identified States which had not ratified or acceded to the Convention and States parties whose reports had been submitted but not yet considered. After the issuance of the note, two more States, Algeria and Belarus, had submitted their reports. Lastly, the note contained an updated overview of the

Committee's procedures with regard to the reporting process.

**Tribute to the memory of Ms. Saiga, judge of the International Criminal Court**

21. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

*The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.*