



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

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

**Summary record of the 960th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 17 January 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Temporary Chairperson:* Ms. Gabr

*Chairperson:* Ms. Pimentel

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. *The Temporary Chairperson declared open the forty-eighth session of the Committee.*

### **Statement by the representative of the Secretary-General**

2. **Ms. Dyfan** (Chief, Women's Rights and Gender Section, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), informing the Committee of developments since its previous session, said that, as part of the effort being made to strengthen the treaty body system, the first session of the inter-committee meeting working group on follow-up to concluding observations, inquiries, visits and decisions had been held from 12 to 14 January 2011 in Geneva. A consultation for States parties was scheduled for May 2011 in Sion, and consultations for United Nations entities and civil society actors were planned early in the year as well. A meeting to be held later in 2011 in Dublin was expected to close the consultative phase. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was also organizing a series of one-day consultations for two treaty bodies at a time in order to prepare for the inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies in June 2011 and to reflect on ways to strengthen their working methods.

3. In December 2010, the Security Council had held an open meeting to discuss sexual violence in situations of armed conflict and had expressed deep concern that such violence continued to occur and had, in some situations, become "systematic and widespread, reaching appalling levels of brutality". The Council had adopted resolution 1960 (2010), in which it encouraged the Secretary-General to supply it with detailed information on parties to armed conflict that were credibly suspected of being responsible for acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence. That information would then be used as a basis for action, including the consideration of sanctions and other targeted measures. The resolution would help ensure that mass rape was never again met with mass impunity.

4. For its part, in its report on the advancement of women (A/65/449), the General Assembly had recognized that violence against women and girls persisted in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of the enjoyment of human rights and had acknowledged the work carried out by the Committee and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

5. In conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, held on 25 November 2010, OHCHR had offered a workshop on violence against women whose outcome, together with a compilation by OHCHR of good practices on the prevention of violence against women, would be submitted to the Human Rights Council in June 2011. UN-Women was now officially up and running and would be represented at an informal meeting with the Committee on 22 January 2011. Both Ms. Bachelet, head of the new entity, and the High Commissioner had expressed support for implementation of the Committee's concluding observations.

6. In the face of growing demands on conference servicing units in Geneva that were unmatched by a commensurate increase in resources, she had welcomed the call made at the inter-committee meeting to enforce the page limitations set out in the harmonized and treaty-specific guidelines. It was, however, difficult for States parties to focus their reports or their replies if the Committee's recommendations or lists of issues were themselves not as focused as they could be. The efficiency of the follow-up procedure should also be examined in light of the extra strain it placed on resources and States parties and of the fact that States parties had questioned the legal basis for the procedure, since it was not explicitly referred to in the Convention.

7. OHCHR had made great progress in 2010 in stabilizing the staffing of the treaty bodies, and a solid team had been put in place to service the Committee. She looked forward to the outcome of the Committee's work with the Committee on the Rights of the Child on an outline for a draft joint general recommendation or comment on harmful practices.

8. **The Temporary Chairperson** said that Ms. Dyfan's statement could serve as a roadmap for addressing many of the issues raised. The Committee would welcome the opportunity to hold an interactive discussion with Ms. Dyfan at a subsequent meeting.

#### **Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/48/1)**

9. **The Temporary Chairperson** drew attention to the provisional agenda contained in document CEDAW/C/48/1 and said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt it.

10. *It was so decided.*

#### **Solemn declaration by new members of the Committee**

11. *Ms. Acar, Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla, Ms. Jahan and Ms. Schulz made the solemn declaration provided for in rule 15 of the Committee's rules of procedure.*

#### **Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the forty-seventh and forty-eighth sessions of the Committee**

12. **The Temporary Chairperson** said that the number of States parties to the Convention remained at 186. Poland had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, bringing the total number of States that had done so to 59. Cambodia had deposited its instrument of ratification to the Optional Protocol, making it the 100th State party to the instrument.

13. From 5 to 6 November 2010, she had attended the International Women's Meeting, organized by the Istanbul Research Centre for Women under the auspices of the Ministry of State of Turkey. At that meeting, which had focused on the violence, economic and social problems, and discrimination and inequality faced by women, she had been the keynote speaker on the issue of the progress made by the Committee over the past 30 years. Other conferences in which she had participated in her personal capacity included the third conference of the Arab Women's Organization, held in Tunisia in October 2010, the African Policy Dialogue Forum on Women, Peace and Security, held in Cairo in November 2010, and the International Forum Against Human Trafficking, held in Luxor in December 2010.

14. In November 2010, Ms. Šimonović had given a presentation on women's rights and on the subject of a general comment on the right to sexual and reproductive health during the general day of discussion organized by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Ms. Rasekh had participated in the hearing regarding the ratification of the Convention held by the Senate of the United States of America. In December, Ms. Patten had helped train staff of the Ministry of Women's Rights in Pakistan, after having organized a mock Committee session in Pretoria, South Africa. Ms. Bailey had presented a paper at a conference in Ottawa entitled "Coordinating Compliance Between Gender Rights and Trade Law: Issues and Opportunities", and Ms. Popescu had given a presentation on discrimination against minority women in the economic sphere at the Forum on Minority Issues. In January 2011, Ms. Bailey and Ms. Patten had represented the Committee at the inter-committee meeting working group on follow-up to concluding observations, inquiries, visits and decisions.

15. At its current session, the Committee would consider seven periodic reports, as well as communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and would continue its discussion on draft general recommendations. It would also consider reports and information received under its follow-up procedure and would meet with NGOs, representatives of national human rights institutions and United Nations bodies, all of which made valuable contributions to the Committee's work.

16. She welcomed the new members of the Committee: Ms. Acar, Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla, Ms. Pires, Ms. Schulz and Ms. Jahan. Ms. Pires and Ms. Jaising were, unfortunately, unable to attend the session. She thanked the Committee, which would now elect its new Chairperson, for all its support during her term of office.

#### **Election of officers**

17. **The Temporary Chairperson** invited nominations for the office of Chairperson in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure.

18. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez**, seconded by **the Chairperson**, said that, on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States and in line with the decision to rotate the office of Chairperson in line with geographical distribution, she wished to nominate Ms. Pimentel for the office of Chairperson.

19. *Ms. Pimentel was elected Chairperson by acclamation.*

20. *Ms. Pimentel took the Chair.*

21. **The Chairperson** said that it was an honour and joy to assume the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and that she hoped to put to good use her three decades of commitment to the struggle for equal rights for women. She looked forward to assisting the Committee to progress in a firm, vigorous and creative manner and to confront the most subtle forms of discrimination, violence and exclusion in a spirit of respect, solidarity and tolerance.

22. As an observer for the International Women's Rights Action Watch from the mid-1980s until the mid-1990s, she had had the opportunity to witness the work of the Committee at an early stage in its history. Much had changed since that time. The most recent of the 28 general recommendations formulated by the Committee over the years demonstrated its dynamic interest in newly emerging issues, such as those faced by women migrant workers and older women. In addition, the newly created follow-up procedure enabled the Committee to monitor advances made and difficulties encountered by States parties in complying with their obligations under the Convention, while the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which had been ratified by 60 countries and under which the Committee had begun to receive communications, was gradually becoming known throughout the world.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.10 a.m.*

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

##### *Report of the pre-session working group*

23. **Ms. Neubauer** (Chairperson of the pre-session working group) said that the group had met in New York from 2 to 6 August 2010 and had prepared lists of issues regarding the situation of women in Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Israel, Kenya, Liechtenstein, South Africa and Sri Lanka. In so doing, it had consulted all the relevant documentation, including information provided by United Nations entities, NGOs and a human rights institution. The lists of issues had been transmitted to the parties concerned.

### **Follow-up to the consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention**

24. **Ms. Šimonović** (Rapporteur on follow-up) reminded the members of the Committee that they had decided to extend the mandate of the Rapporteur on follow-up and the alternate until the end of 2012 and that thereafter the term of their mandate would be two years in length. At the previous session, the Committee had decided to add to the regular agenda an item entitled "Follow-up to the consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women". She would brief the Committee on that matter.

25. Since the last session, the Committee had received follow-up reports from Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Lithuania and Slovenia. Reminders would need to be sent to Belgium, Ecuador, El Salvador, Madagascar, Mongolia, Portugal and Uruguay, whose follow-up reports had been due in November 2010. Second reminders would need to be sent to Iceland, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania, Tuvalu and Yemen. In addition, there were several matters pending, including one regarding Canada, about which the Secretariat had prepared a summary. Lastly, she asked members of the Committee to volunteer to serve as rapporteurs for the reports of the countries just mentioned.

### **Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

#### **Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee**

26. **Mr. Smith** (Secretary of the Committee) said that 30 reports of States parties had been received since January 2010 and that the schedule for the consideration of reports had been established up through the fifty-second session. Committee members had already been informed of the schedules for the forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions; at the fifty-first session, in January 2012, the reports of Algeria, Brazil, Comoros, Congo, Grenada, Jordan, Norway, and Zimbabwe would be considered. At the fifty-second session, in July 2012, the reports of the Bahamas, Bulgaria, Guyana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mexico, New Zealand and Samoa would be considered.

27. Overdue initial reports had not yet been received from 15 States, and there were nine States parties whose periodic reports were five years or more overdue. Another 28 periodic reports, some of which were combined reports, that should have been submitted in 2010 or earlier were overdue. In addition, two exceptional reports had been requested: one from Guinea, in November 2009, and another from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in November 2010. Two inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol were also pending.

28. **Ms. Šimonović**, recalling that reminders had been sent to States parties whose initial reports were in some cases many years overdue, said that information would be welcome regarding their status. In her view, the Committee should take a decision regarding how it would address that continuing problem.

29. **Mr. Smith** (Secretary of the Committee) said that decisions would have to be made about sending reminders; such letters were sometimes not sent if the country in question was undergoing difficulties.

30. **The Chairperson** then announced that the Committee would now convene an informal meeting with United Nations entities and intergovernmental bodies in closed session.

*The public part of the meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.*