



# International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Distr.: General  
4 September 2014  
English  
Original: French

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## Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Eighty-fifth session

### Summary record of the first part (public) of the 2294th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 11 August 2014, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Calí Tzay

## Contents

Opening of the session

Statement by Ms. Edelenbos, Chief of the Petitions and Inquiries Section of the Human Rights Treaties Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Adoption of the agenda

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Opening of the session**

1. **The Chairperson**, declared open the eighty-fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Statement by Ms. Edelenbos, Chief of the Petitions and Inquiries Section of the Human Rights Treaties Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**

2. **Ms. Edelenbos** (Chief of the Petitions and Inquiries Section of the Human Rights Treaties Division), drew the attention of the members of the Committee to a number of new developments since its February 2014 session. First of all, on 2 April 2014 the State of Palestine had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, thereby bringing the number of States parties to the Convention to 177. In the same month, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. On the basis of the resolution, it had been decided to grant the Committee four extra weeks of plenary time in 2015 to enable it to deal with the growing number of periodic reports it received and to reduce its backlog. Discussions on the ways of implementing that resolution had begun at the meeting of the Chairpersons of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies held at the end of June. The Chairpersons had recommended that the international human rights treaty bodies should adopt the simplified reporting procedure as from 1 January 2015 and ensure that the concluding observations faithfully reflected the dialogue with States parties. In June 2014 the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and related forms of intolerance had presented to the Committee a thematic report on racism on the Internet and on social networks, in which he had particularly acknowledged the important contribution made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to analysing the phenomenon, notably thanks to the thematic discussion on racist hate speech it had organized in August 2012 and to general recommendation No. 35 on combating racist hate speech.

3. Since the Committee's previous session, the Petitions and Inquiries section had turned its attention to preparing a treaty body case law note. The quarterly note would be distributed to all the staff of the Human Rights Treaties Division in order better to acquaint them with the most recent decisions of the bodies. She then recalled that the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was to be held on 22 and 23 September 2014 in New York and that all the treaty bodies were called upon to take into account the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples and to strive to ensure their implementation.

4. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that the Committee would take the opportunity offered by the current session to examine and if necessary revise its methods of work in the light of General Assembly resolution 68/268. Recalling that the task of the Committee was considerably complicated by the fact that many States parties submitted their reports very late, he asked whether the Human Rights Treaties Division had considered or come up with any novel mechanisms for resolving that situation. If it had not, the Committee might be able to make a contribution to the consideration of the matter.

5. **Mr. Lahiri** asked whether, in view of the situation prevalent in Iraq, it was appropriate to consider that country's periodic report.

6. **Ms. Edelenbos** (Chief of the Petitions and Inquiries Section of the Human Rights Treaties Division), said, in reply to Mr. Avtonomov, that it had not been deemed necessary to develop a mechanism to encourage States parties to submit their periodic report within

the required deadline because General Assembly resolution 68/268 clearly encouraged all the treaty bodies to adopt the simplified reporting procedure which, because it set a limit of 21,200 words, should considerably ease the workload of States parties and enable them to submit their reports on time. It had been decided to make available, from 1 January 2015, consultative services and technical assistance for those States which still experienced difficulties in preparing reports.

7. **The Chairperson**, replying to Mr. Lahiri, pointed out that it was not for the Committee to dissuade a State party, in the case at hand Iraq, from submitting its report. Moreover, the Iraqi authorities had indicated that they intended to send to Geneva a 15-member delegation headed by the Minister for Human Rights. He took the view that, on the contrary, the Committee should grasp the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the State party's delegation on the situation besetting the country.

8. **Mr. Kemal** asked Ms. Edelenbos to explain how the four additional weeks assigned to the Committee in 2015 were to be shared out.

9. **Ms. Edelenbos** (Chief of the Petitions and Inquiries Section of the Human Rights Treaties Division) said that the Director of the Human Rights Treaties Division would shortly be sending a letter to all the members of the treaty bodies to inform them of the dates and duration of the sessions in 2015. As that information had not yet been made public, it would be inopportune to discuss it at a public meeting.

10. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** welcomed the presence of so large a number of non-governmental organizations, in particular from the United States of America, El Salvador and Peru at the opening of the current session. The large number of alternative reports which they would not fail to submit to the Committee would undoubtedly assist it in forming a more accurate and comprehensive idea of the situation in the countries concerned.

#### **Adoption of the agenda**

11. *The agenda was adopted.*

*The first part (public) of the meeting rose at 10:45 a.m.*