



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Sixty-fifth session

### Summary record (partial)\* of the 1431st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 24 October 2016, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Hayashi

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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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.

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

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chair** declared open the sixty-fifth session of the Committee.

### **Statement by the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

2. **Mr. Salama** (Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division), speaking on behalf of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that he was pleased that the Committee's efforts to ensure that women's rights and gender equality were mainstreamed across all Sustainable Development Goals and targets had been recognized and that the President of the Economic and Social Council had invited the Committee to provide input to the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development. The fact that the Committee would be the first of the treaty bodies to showcase its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a clear recognition of its engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals process, culminating in its recent work with UN-Women on developing an internationally accepted methodological framework for measuring Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.1.1., concerning legal frameworks to promote gender equality and non-discrimination. The linking of the 2030 Agenda to the Convention and other human rights treaties had the potential to strengthen States' accountability in respect of their undertakings to promote and protect women's rights and achieve gender equality.
3. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1) — the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants held in September 2016 — recognized the specific vulnerabilities of women on the move and undertook to ensure that responses to large population movements mainstreamed the gender perspective, promoted gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and respected and protected their rights. Annex II of the Declaration outlined a way forward for a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The compact, which was expected to be put forward for adoption in 2018, would seek to protect women migrant workers in all sectors.
4. At its thirty-third session, the Human Rights Council had held its annual half-day discussion on the integration of the gender perspective into the Council's work, focusing particularly on its resolutions and recommendations made in the context of the universal periodic review. The Council had appointed an independent expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and established the mandate of a Special Rapporteur on the right to development. It had also adopted a resolution on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights.
5. In May 2016 the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had established a high-level working group of global champions on health and the human rights of women, children and adolescents with a view to generating political support at the international and national levels for the implementation of the human rights-related measures called for under the 2016-2030 Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.
6. The OHCHR Country Office in Tunisia continued to promote the Convention, most recently by preparing a package for civil society organizations explaining the Convention and the work of the Committee, in French and, in the near future, in Arabic, and outlining the main challenges and giving facts and figures on discrimination against women in Tunisia. Lastly, OHCHR had recently published internal guidance on systematizing gender integration for commissions of enquiry and fact-finding missions.

### Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

7. *The agenda was adopted.*

### Report of the Chair on activities undertaken between the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions of the Committee

8. **The Chair** said that there had been no change in the number of States parties having ratified or acceded to the Convention or in the number of those having accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention. The Central African Republic had, however, acceded to the Optional Protocol, bringing the number of States parties to the Protocol to 108.

9. In September, she had attended a meeting organized by the Gender and Law Society of Japan and given a briefing on the process of updating general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women. The advantages and disadvantages of a new treaty on violence against women had also been discussed.

10. She had made a statement to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 10 October. Member States had welcomed the Committee's general recommendations on women's access to justice and on rural women, its efforts to update general recommendation No. 19 and its work on the Sustainable Development Goals; they had also asked questions about the monitoring of target 5.1 on non-discriminatory legal frameworks and about the Committee's position on issues such as reprisals, cooperation with Member States in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the impact of the treaty body strengthening process on its work.

11. While in New York, she had also met with UN-Women to discuss possible input by the Committee on the issue of data relating to the areas of law covered by sustainable development indicator 5.1.1, to be collected by the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (for its Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)) and assessed by the United Nations Statistical Division. Discussions had also covered the strengthening of the Committee's involvement in the Commission on the Status of Women. At a meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict she had been briefed on the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign that the Special Representative had launched jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

12. As to other members of the Committee, she said that Ms. Haidar and Ms. Schulz had recently met with the Executive Director of UN-Women on the occasion of the inauguration of the UN-Women Liaison Office in Geneva, while Ms. Halperin-Kaddari and Ms. Gbedemah had attended an OHCHR workshop on the harmonization of the various treaty body enquiry procedures. Ms. Pimentel and Ms. Gbedemah had attended a UN-Women expert group meeting on women's access to justice, to share their experiences on general recommendation No. 33. She invited Committee members to report on their activities since the previous session.

13. **Ms. Haidar** said that she had attended a workshop in August, organized by OHCHR and Asian civil society organizations dealing with access to justice, as a panellist on the topic of cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms, civil society organizations and human rights defenders. In early October, the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights had invited her to an event to share the Committee's experience with regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Later, OHCHR had invited her to a meeting on climate change and human rights, organized in conjunction with the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, as a panellist on the theme of mobilizing human rights machinery to monitor the impact of climate change and promote accountability for climate undertakings.

14. On 10 October she had taken part in an online debate to mark the International Day for Disaster Reduction, organized by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, on the specific role of women in adaptation and mitigation strategies; and, on 17 October, she had attended a Doha International Family Institute conference on the impact of war and conflict on Arab families. The previous week she had acted as moderator at a session of an OHCHR workshop on child, early and forced marriage.

15. **Ms. Schulz** said that, in late July, she had attended an expert group meeting on the rights of sex workers, held in Bangkok. In early October, she had given a presentation on the work of the Committee and its relations with other human rights mechanisms, the permanent missions and international and national NGOs at a meeting organized by the International Gender Champions and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. She had also met with a representative of the Japanese Embassy in Berne to discuss the issue of comfort women.

16. **Ms. Jahan** said that she had attended the second meeting of the drafting group on female genital mutilation and forced marriage of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights, held in Strasbourg from 21 to 23 September. She had been invited as a representative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) but had taken the opportunity to highlight the Committee's work in that context, notably the joint recommendation on harmful practices adopted with the Committee on the Rights of the Child. OIC took a very strong position on female genital mutilation: there was no religious sanction for the practice in Islam and, at the October session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, there had been a strong call for a ban. The Council of Europe drafting group was finalizing a guide to good practices in combating female genital mutilation and forced marriage in Europe for publication in the member countries and elsewhere.

17. At the invitation of the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, she had attended the inaugural meeting of the Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Phnom Penh from 27 September to 3 October. Given the importance of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in light of the provisions of the Convention, she had stressed the Committee's commitment to monitoring target 5.1, despite the fact that it had not reached agreement on the exact modality.

18. **Mr. Bruun** said that he had given a presentation on the Committee at a workshop on women's human rights in Stockholm, organized by the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs as part of the preparations for Sweden to join the Security Council in 2017. The meeting had been attended by various States, women's NGOs and international organizations, including the World Bank.

19. **Ms. Acar** said that, as President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), a body monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), she had participated in its most recent session, which had focused on preparations for the consideration of the forthcoming State party reports of Austria and Monaco. Country visits to both States parties were also in the process of being organized. The secretariats of the Committee and the Group had contacted one another with a view to increasing cooperation and communication between the two bodies. Given that they shared a number of common interests, enhanced cooperation would only serve to add to the strength of both bodies.

20. **Ms. Pimentel** said that she had participated in debates on the documentary *Tie and Red Nails*, which focused on transgender issues, and on the documentary *India's Daughter*, which recounted the 2012 case of the gang rape and murder of a young woman in New Delhi. In addition, in Brazil, she had been involved in the development and subsequent approval of a set of guidelines on psychological and sexual harassment, discrimination and

inequality at her university. She had also taken part in a meeting organized by the Secretary for Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice of Brazil, in which participants had discussed extending similar guidelines to universities throughout the country. An agreement on respect for diversity based on the guidelines that she had developed was in the process of being adopted by all universities in Brazil. Furthermore, she had attended a UN-Women expert group meeting to review draft guidance for practitioners on women's access to justice. The guidance captured the essence of general recommendation No. 33 of the Committee. However, more work needed to be carried out to emphasize the importance and authority of the general recommendations issued by the Committee.

21. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she agreed with the views expressed by Ms. Pimentel regarding the draft guidance. During a workshop on the inquiry procedures of the treaty body system, she and other representatives from a number of United Nations treaty bodies had sought to find points of convergence within the inquiry procedure system. Specific issues, such as the protection of victims and witnesses, country visits and follow-up procedures, had been considered. The participants in the workshop had managed to agree on areas of harmonization, and she looked forward to a more efficient inquiry procedure system in the future. In Ghana, following a presentation that she had delivered on general recommendation No. 33, interest in the document had increased, particularly among female judges who agreed to use it to enhance their work in the judiciary.

22. **Ms. Gabr** said that she had been working with the National Council for Women in Egypt on an informal basis to establish a body on women's rights within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. As head of the Interministerial National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Illegal Migration of Egypt, she had received the support of female parliamentarians and NGOs working to protect women's rights. Such support was crucial to the development of both a law and strategy to combat illegal migration. The law was based on the Palermo Protocol and on relevant United Nations conventions and had been approved by the Egyptian parliament. The success of the strategy was dependent on the implementation of the law, awareness raising and the political and economic empowerment of women.

23. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that she had attended a meeting in Costa Rica on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project to strengthen the role of female parliamentarians. Participants had discussed the progress that had been made and the challenges that remained with regard to women's political participation. During the event, she was able to consult with women's NGOs and human rights activists. She had also attended a number of events aimed at addressing the issue of femicide and violence against women, which had been organized by activist groups.

24. **Ms. Patten** said that she had recently participated in two workshops in Geneva organized by OHCHR. The first was a workshop on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights during which she had made a presentation on cooperation in the field of women's rights. The second workshop was held to finalize a guidance manual on commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions with a particular focus on information gathered on individual perpetrators. The manual, although primarily aimed at bodies with a mandate to carry out such investigations, could still be of use to the Committee in its own inquiries.

25. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that she had participated in a number of regional and national events. For instance, a project had recently been launched aimed at enhancing the involvement of civil society in Eastern European countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. A meeting had also been held with the support of the Government of Canada to initiate dialogue on security issues between female politicians in the Eastern European region. Representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey had participated in the meeting. She had also been

involved in the launch of the Georgian Women's Forum parliamentary elections monitoring campaign and in the development of a manual on monitoring elections from a gender perspective. Furthermore, she agreed with the view expressed by Ms. Pimentel that more awareness-raising efforts were required in order to improve understanding of the Convention and the general recommendations of the Committee.

26. **Ms. Pomeranzi** said that she had been invited by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to give a presentation on general recommendation No. 34 on the rights of rural women. The Committee and IDLO shared a common purpose in their desire to emphasize the importance of human rights in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She hoped that the Committee would discuss how its general recommendations could be used within the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

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

27. **Ms. Jahan**, introducing the report of the Chair of the pre-sessional working group for the sixty-fourth session, said that the working group had met in March 2016 in Geneva and had prepared lists of issues and questions with regard to the reports of Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Canada, Estonia, Honduras, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The working group had also prepared a list of issues and questions in the absence of a report from Antigua and Barbuda. Subsequently, Antigua and Barbuda had submitted its periodic report, but the report had been returned to the State party because it had exceeded the word limit established by General Assembly resolution 68/268. The consideration of Antigua and Barbuda had consequently been postponed to a future session.

28. Moreover, the Committee had prepared a list of issues prior to the submission of the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Romania under its optional simplified reporting procedure. The reports in question were due to be considered at the sixty-seventh session of the Committee.

29. In preparing the lists, the Committee had paid particular attention to States parties' follow-up to its concluding observations on their previous reports. The group had received written and oral information from entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, from NGOs and from national human rights institutions. The finalized lists of issues and questions had been transmitted to the States parties concerned.

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

30. **Ms. Zou Xiaoqiao** said that she wished to brief the Committee on the status of follow-up reports received from States parties. During the sixty-fourth session, she had met with representatives from Equatorial Guinea, whose responses had been positive. At the end of the session, follow-up letters outlining the outcome of assessments of follow-up reports had been sent to Cambodia, Finland, Guyana, Pakistan, the Republic of Moldova, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom. First reminders regarding overdue follow-up reports had been sent to Cameroon, Kazakhstan and Sierra Leone. Second reminders had been sent to Cabo Verde, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

31. The Committee had received follow-up reports from Afghanistan with a 9-month delay, Burkina Faso with a 43-month delay, Qatar with a 3-month delay, Serbia with a 7-month delay, Zimbabwe with an 18-month delay and from Bahrain, Colombia and Iraq on time. She invited the country rapporteurs for Bahrain and Qatar to assist in the assessment of the follow-up reports and called for volunteers to assist in the assessment of the follow-

up reports sent by Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Iraq, Serbia and Zimbabwe. During the current session, first reminders should be issued to India, Lithuania, Mauritania, Swaziland and Uganda and second reminders should be sent to Andorra and Benin. In addition, a meeting should be scheduled with representatives of the Comoros.

*The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 11.20 a.m.*