



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Sixty-second session

Summary record (partial)* of the 1333rd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 26 October 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: 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.



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the sixty-second session of the Committee.

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

2. **Mr. Nowosad** (Human Rights Treaties Division) said that he had the honour to welcome the members of the Committee on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly had adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Pursuant to Goal 5 of the Agenda, Member States committed to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The Goal was reinforced by a number of gender-sensitive targets, including target 3.7, whereby States undertook to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, and target 4.5, which dealt with the elimination of gender disparities in education.

3. Certain targets, such as target 5.a, which concerned women's equal rights to economic resources, land and other forms of property, contained caveats related to national law that could be seen as allowing for lower standards than those corresponding to States' international obligations. It was therefore of crucial importance that, in paragraph 18 of the Agenda, States Members had emphasized that the Agenda was to be implemented in a manner that was "consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law".

4. It was critical for the implementation of the Agenda to be based on a robust follow-up and review framework that was grounded in international human rights standards, including the Convention. While Governments bore primary responsibility in that regard, input for the follow-up and review of progress towards the Goals and targets should be provided through structured linkages with the United Nations human rights mechanisms in order to address any remaining gaps in the Agenda during the implementation phase.

5. In parallel to the Sustainable Development Summit, the People's Republic of China and UN-Women had co-hosted the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which was the culmination of an 18-month review by 167 States of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary. The meeting had been attended by 86 Heads of State or Government who had made personal commitments to accelerate the achievement of gender equality.

6. During its seventieth session, the General Assembly would devote time to discussing the situation of rural women and violence against women migrant workers. Both issues were of relevance to the Committee's current tasks of drafting a general recommendation on rural women and of updating its general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women. The General Assembly would also assess the reflection of gender perspectives in its own work and in that of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions.

7. On 15 September 2015, during its thirtieth session, the Human Rights Council had held its annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective in its work, with a focus on gender parity. The purpose of the discussion had been to analyse the main challenges in the achievement of gender parity in international human rights bodies, particularly the Council and its mechanisms. In his opening statement, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had pledged to serve as an

International Geneva Gender Champion and to attain greater gender balance in his Office, particularly at the senior management level.

8. On 14 October 2015, an independent global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security had been launched during the high-level review convened by the Security Council to assess 15 years of progress in implementing the resolution at the regional, national and global levels. In the study, it was stated that resolution 1325 had been conceived of as a human rights resolution and that any policy or programme on women, peace and security should be carried out with that in mind. The study contained numerous references to the Committee and its work and particularly to general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. Chapter 12 of the study explored the role of human rights mechanisms in holding Member States accountable for the fulfilment of their obligations in relation to the women, peace and security agenda. In his report on that subject, the Secretary-General had urged Member States to convene another high-level review in 2020.

9. The Security Council had also adopted resolution 2242 on women, peace and security, which reaffirmed the obligations of States parties to the Convention and its Optional Protocol, noted general recommendation No. 30 and contained strong language on access to justice for women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

10. In its resolution 68/268, the General Assembly had set forth its decision to review the entire human rights treaty body system by 2020. In that regard, one of the important outcomes of the meeting of treaty body chairpersons held in June 2015 had been the call made by the Costa Rican Minister of Foreign Affairs for academic institutions across the world to begin to explore options for the further strengthening of the system. That kind of analysis could build upon the successfully concluded treaty body strengthening process and would make a timely contribution to the General Assembly's 2020 review.

11. On behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), he wished to congratulate Ms. Acar, who had been elected in September as the first President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/62/1)

12. **The Chairperson** said that, if there were no objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the provisional agenda contained in document CEDAW/C/62/1.

13. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the Committee

14. **The Chairperson** said that Sri Lanka had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, bringing the total number of States parties that had done so to 70. The numbers of States parties that had ratified the Convention and the Optional Protocol remained at 189 and 106, respectively. Eight States parties had submitted their periodic reports since the beginning of the last session, namely Barbados, Costa Rica, the Federated States of Micronesia, Italy, the Niger, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda. In addition, two States parties — Germany and Ukraine — had resubmitted reports that had been returned to them because they had exceeded the word limit. No States parties had expressed a desire to submit their periodic reports under the simplified reporting procedure.

15. On 28 August 2015, she had moderated a panel discussion on multi-stakeholder partnerships for international cooperation at the World Assembly for Women, which had been organized by the Government of Japan. On 29 August, she had made a presentation on the empowerment of survivors of violence against women at a meeting of the Equal Futures Partnership, which was a coalition of 26 countries and the European Union. On 12 October, she had delivered a statement on behalf of the Committee to the Third Committee of the General Assembly in New York. She had focused on the Convention, the 2030 Agenda, the economic empowerment of women, gender-based violence against women and women's access to justice, and she had called on States Members to reach a strong universal climate agreement at the Paris 2015 Conference in order to reduce the risk of natural disasters, especially for women. From 20 to 22 October, she had participated in a workshop on regional and subregional courts that had been organized by OHCHR in Strasbourg, where she had spoken about women's access to justice and the synergy between the Committee's jurisprudence and that of regional human rights mechanisms.

16. She wished to congratulate Ms. Nwankwo, who was one of six recipients of the 2015 Women Have Wings Award for women of courage that was sponsored by the Tides Foundation. Ms. Nwankwo had been nominated for her work on women's access to justice and legal literacy.

17. She wished the members every success during the Committee's first-ever four-week session. The additional workload that had been assumed would help reduce the backlog of reports, which currently stood at 52.

18. **Ms. Schulz** enquired about the Committee's prospects of reducing the backlog, bearing in mind that the additional meeting time enabled it to consider 28 reports a year rather than 24.

19. **The Chairperson** invited the members to brief the Committee on their intersessional work activities.

20. **Ms. Jahan** said that, on 17 October, she had participated in a panel discussion on the gender dimension of migration that had been organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. On 21 October, she had taken part in a discussion organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, in which she had focused on the Committee's role in triggering policy change in States parties.

21. **Ms. Haidar** said that, on 5 and 6 September, she, Ms. Gabr and Ms. Jahan had participated in an international consultation organized in Morocco by Musawah, a non-governmental organization (NGO). The purpose of the consultation had been to consider ways of bringing together best practices from countries that applied sharia law and to examine the Committee's interaction with women's NGOs. The event had provided valuable insights into how civil society perceived the Committee and into how cooperation could be strengthened to advance shared goals related to women's rights.

22. **Ms. Gabr** said that at the international consultation in Morocco she had shared her experiences regarding the challenges that she and other women had faced in Egypt as a result of false interpretations of Islam. She had also attended an event organized at the initiative of Ms. Pomeranzi at Expo Milano 2015, during which she had explained how the Committee worked to promote the rights of rural women and to ensure that States parties complied with article 14 of the Convention. The event had offered her an opportunity to increase the visibility of the Convention, and she had been pleased to note a high level of interest in the Committee's work.

23. **Ms. Pomeranzi** said that, during the course of the 2015 Expo in Milan, she had been invited to speak on the human rights aspect of women's empowerment at

meetings with the Women for Expo group, who were very interested in the work of the Committee. She had also been invited by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva to a round table discussion on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the human rights of women. She had noted on that occasion that women's human rights needed to be better defined and that more active cooperation in that area of endeavour with international agencies was called for.

24. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she had been invited to speak on the legal empowerment of women in Africa, particularly as it related to inheritance law. The Committee's most recent communication concerning the United Republic of Tanzania (CEDAW/C/60/D/48/2013) had provided useful guidelines on customary inheritance law, and there was considerable interest in the role played by the Committee in addressing related issues in Africa. In addition, she had been invited as a "shero" (the female version of a hero) to speak on legal rights of women in Africa. The participants had been impressed with the work of the Committee and had called for its work to be made more visible. She had also been invited to join a board that was to study the cost of violence against women, working on the hypothesis that the campaign to end violence against women may be strengthened through the use of an economic argument relating to the quantitative and qualitative costs of such violence. She had specifically been requested to ask her colleagues on the Committee whether they were aware of any research on that subject which could be used to inform the board's efforts.

25. **Ms. Patten** said that, in addition to the previously mentioned panel discussion in New York, she had also attended a number of other meetings, including a meeting of experts organized by OHCHR on discrimination based on work and descent, including discrimination on the basis of caste, which was a subject pertinent to the Committee's work on intersectional discrimination. She had also attended a global conference in Bangkok on domestic workers in irregular situations and, in the United Kingdom, had given evidence before a House of Lords select committee on sexual violence in conflict situations.

26. **Ms. Schulz** said that she had moderated the annual panel discussion on the integration of a gender perspective into the work of the Human Rights Council, which had also touched upon the lack of gender parity within the treaty bodies. The high-level discussion had opened with an introduction from the President of the Human Rights Council and a keynote address delivered by the Queen of Belgium. An interactive panel discussion had featured experts such as Mr. Møller, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Ms. Tracey Robinson, the Rapporteur on Women's Rights from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and Mr. Subhas Gujadhur, Director and Senior Analyst at the Universal Rights Group. The corresponding report, which was to be published in the near future, set forth a number of practical proposals for action. She had also attended an expert meeting on the rights of intersex persons that had been organized by OHCHR where she had given a presentation on the potential application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the rights of intersex persons, who faced discrimination of an astounding extent and gravity.

27. The Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe, together with the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality, had organized a conference on access to justice for women. The discussions had covered the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and the Committee's general recommendation on women's access to justice. Presentations had been given on good practices, including the Argentine system for training judges. Ms. Gbedemah might wish to inform the board in which she had been invited to participate that an in-depth

study had been conducted in Switzerland on the cost of violence against women. She would be happy to provide the Committee with a summary of the study in English as soon as it became available.

28. **Ms. Arocha Dominguez** said that she had spent the previous year working in an advisory capacity as an expert on gender issues with the forum for dialogue that served as a framework for the peace talks between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). Although she was not working in her capacity as a member of the Committee, she had nevertheless expressed the Committee's views and concerns with regard, for example, to the post-conflict period and preventive measures. It was vital to ensure that peacebuilding efforts took women's rights and needs into account. Solutions designed to ensure a lasting peace needed to focus on human rights and to involve women in building that peace.

29. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she had attended a number of academic conferences, including events held by the International Society of Family Law and the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, where she had given presentations on the work of the Committee, potential links between international women's rights and the Committee's general recommendation on article 16 of the Convention, and academic research on women's rights in family and property law. She had also been asked by the Ministry of Justice of Israel to prepare an assessment relating to the potential ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

30. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that she had been involved in the GQUAL campaign, a global initiative focusing on the issue of gender parity in international representation. There had been calls for more information and transparency with regard to appointments to international bodies, including treaty bodies, and the recruitment processes used in both governmental and non-governmental sectors. She would like to urge her colleagues to sign the global initiative.

31. **Mr. Schneider** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, in an effort to reduce the backlog of reports, 11 of the outstanding reports would be considered during the current session. It was the duty of the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly every two years on measures taken to reduce the backlogs of the different treaty bodies. His first report was due in 2016. Decisions would then be taken, on the basis of that document, to readjust the amount of time and resources allocated for the consideration of State party reports. Moreover, a review of the entire treaty body system was due to take place in 2020, and calls had already been issued to academic institutions and other stakeholders to offer proposals for ways in which to improve the system in the future.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

32. **Ms. Schulz**, introducing the report of the pre-sessional working group for the sixty-second session, said that the working group had focused on the reports of Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen. In its examination of those reports, the group had devoted particular attention to the follow-up to recommendations made in previous reports and had reviewed the information submitted by specialized agencies, non-governmental agencies and national human rights institutions. The lists of issues adopted by the working group 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

33. **Ms. Zou** said that she had been asked to brief the Committee on the status of the follow-up reports received from State parties. During the sixty-first session of the Committee, a productive meeting had been held with representatives of Uganda. At the end of the session, follow-up letters had been sent to Chile, Cyprus, Hungary, Kuwait, Malta, Mexico, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkmenistan. A first reminder had been sent to Pakistan, while second reminders had been issued to Guyana, Indonesia, and Jamaica. A number of States parties, including Algeria, Austria, Togo and Nepal, had submitted reports with delays of between 2 and 13 months. It would be very useful for the country rapporteurs for Angola, Togo and Austria to assist in assessing the follow-up reports of those countries, and volunteers to assess the follow-up report submitted by Algeria were also needed. During the current session, first reminders would be issued to Afghanistan, Cabo Verde, the Central African Republic, the Dominican Republic, Serbia and the Syrian Arab Republic and second reminders would be sent to the Comoros and Equatorial Guinea. A second reminder regarding the submission of additional information should be sent to Lesotho. In addition, meetings needed to be scheduled with representatives of Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Grenada and Oman.

34. **The Chairperson** declared the public part of the meeting closed.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 11.05 a.m.