



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Sixteenth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 297th meeting**

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 2 September 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Cisternas Reyes

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

** No summary record was issued for the 296th meeting.

This record is subject to correction.

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The discussion covered in the summary record began at 5.05 p.m.

Other matters

1. **The Chair** said that the current meeting would be the last for a number of long-serving Committee members. She was certain that returning members would continue to do good work.
2. **Mr. Araya** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, at its sixteenth session, the Committee had adopted concluding observations on the initial reports of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Italy, the United Arab Emirates and Uruguay. It had also adopted Views on an individual communication submitted under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, a note on the communications received between the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions and a report on the follow-up to the Committee's Views. In addition, it had adopted two general comments: No. 3, on women and girls with disabilities (art. 6), and No. 4, on the right to inclusive education (art. 24). Likewise, it had adopted guidelines on independent monitoring frameworks and their participation in the work of the Committee. It had revised its guidelines on periodic reporting, including under the simplified reporting procedure, and it had considered matters connected to the procedures for inquiries under article 6 of the Optional Protocol.
3. **The Chair** said that the decision to set up an additional working group would be included in the final version of the report on the session.

Future meetings

4. **Mr. Araya** (Secretary of the Committee) said the Committee had decided that its seventeenth session would take place from 20 March to 12 April 2017 and that it would be preceded by the seventh meeting of the pre-session working group, from 13 March to 17 March 2017. The States parties whose reports would be considered were: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cyprus, Honduras, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan and the Republic of Moldova.

Closure of the session

5. **The Chair**, reviewing the Committee's achievements to date, said that, in terms of both substantive work and working methods, the Committee had been a pioneering treaty body. It had taken a number of steps to make its work accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, through its participation in a number of high-profile international events, it had done a considerable amount to mainstream a disability perspective throughout the United Nations system.
6. **Mr. Buntan**, on behalf of all the Committee members, paid tribute to the Chair for her exemplary leadership, her professionalism and her tolerance for difference.
7. **Mr. Tatić**, supported by **Mr. Babu** and **Mr. Pyaneandee**, expressed appreciation for the work of the outgoing Committee members.
8. **Ms. Quan-Chang** said that the current session was her last as a Committee member, but she intended to continue working for the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly women.
9. **Ms. Kingston** said that, although she was not a returning Committee member, she would continue working with NGOs and lobbying for gender equality, an issue that the Committee had been unable to agree on.
10. **Mr. Al-Tarawneh** said that, although he was from a part of the world not generally known for its efforts to promote the participation of women in public life, his country,

Jordan, had a number of women in prominent positions. He himself was in favour of gender parity, and he trusted that future elections would deliver greater gender balance in the Committee's membership. It was also to be hoped that universal ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol would soon be achieved.

11. **The Chair** noted that, as part of ongoing efforts to achieve universal ratification and in connection with the events held to commemorate the Convention's tenth anniversary, she and the members of the Committee from Africa would be travelling to Addis Ababa.

12. **Ms. Lee** (International Disability Alliance (IDA)) said that the representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities who had participated in the session had been grateful for the opportunity to exchange views with the Committee. The exchange had been empowering.

13. The Committee's newly adopted general comments were landmark texts with the potential to change lives. The tenth anniversary of the Convention provided an opportunity to celebrate a number of achievements, many of them made possible in part by the work of the departing Committee members. The rights of persons with disabilities, for example, had been made an integral part of the human rights agenda. There was still much to be done, however.

14. The 2016 elections, for example, had shown that efforts to maintain gender parity on the Committee would need to be sustained. In that connection, IDA, together with other organizations, had called for action to ensure that the Committee and other treaty bodies always had roughly equal numbers of male and female members. That call for action had won overwhelming support.

15. **Mr. Nowosad** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), noting that he worked with a number of treaty bodies, said that, in many ways, relating to its openness, its willingness to cooperate with other bodies, its general comments and its methods of work, the Committee could be considered a trailblazer. Remaining Committee members had a considerable legacy to build on.

16. After the customary exchange of courtesies, **the Chair** declared the sixteenth session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities closed.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.