

Statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the situation of women in Iraq

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, during its thirtieth session, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 12 to 30 January 2004, noted with concern recent developments with regard to the situation of women's human rights in Iraq. In particular, the Committee noted a decision by the Governing Council of Iraq dated 29 December 2003 to repeal existing civil statutes governing issues related to marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.

The Committee notes the fact that Iraq is a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In this regard, the Committee, at its twenty-ninth session, held from 30 June to 18 July 2003, had already sent a letter to the then Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, on the need to take into consideration the Convention with regard to the situation of women in post-war Iraq.

The Committee welcomes the resolve of the international community to assist Iraq in the reconstruction process. The Committee calls upon all parties concerned to place special emphasis in all their actions and activities on the respect for and protection of international human rights standards and norms, in particular those that specifically guarantee the rights of women and girls, and which are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The Committee considers such emphasis essential to the development of Iraqi society.

The Committee wishes to emphasize that women must be full and equal participants in all post-war reconstruction activities and in all spheres of life of Iraqi society and its development, and in particular in the drafting of Iraq's new Constitution and any revision of its legislative framework. All legislative reforms and decisions of all responsible authorities in Iraq must conform fully with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women so as to ensure de jure and de facto equality between women and men, and their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Committee calls on the international community and all responsible authorities in Iraq to ensure full compliance with and implementation of all the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its thirty-first session, July 2004

