

*Please check against delivery*

Closing remarks

By  
Ms. Rachel Mayanja

Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on  
Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

Thirty-third session of the  
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

New York, 22 July 2005

Madam Chairperson  
Distinguished members of the Committee  
Representatives of the United Nations system  
Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you Madam Chairperson and all the members of the Committee on the successful completion of the work of the thirty-third session which comes to an end today? Your expertise and experience have indeed resulted in a most productive session with many thoughtful discussions.

Madam Chairperson,

Among the achievements of this session is the successful consideration of the reports of a diverse group of eight States parties, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Gambia, Guyana, Ireland, Israel and Lebanon. While conditions in those States differ greatly, there were a number of common concerns that the Committee identified in many or all of them. For example, the prevalence of violence against women, sexual exploitation, trafficking in women and girls, low levels of women's participation in public life, limited resources for national machineries, lack of data disaggregated by sex, persistence of stereotypical attitudes and behaviour and women's disadvantages in the labour market. Women's and girls education was a common concern, as was poverty which continues to affect women disproportionately. However, each State has its own obstacles and concerns, which require serious measures for their eliminations.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

I am aware of the amount of work this has been for all of you, digesting hundreds of pages of reports, responses to lists of issues questions and background material submitted by United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations. I believe that the vibrant and constructive dialogue that has developed between the members of the Committee and the Government representatives provides a framework for better implementation of the Convention at the domestic level not only in the States reviewed, but the balance of the 180 States parties to the Convention.

Madam Chairperson, allow me to comment on some of the aspects of the work at this session.

I welcome the Committee's continuing attention to enhancing its working methods so as to ensure full implementation of all aspects of your mandate. The consideration of States parties reports is complemented by other responsibilities, especially those entrusted to you under the Optional Protocol, where you considered the reports of the fifth and sixth sessions of the Working Group on Communications, and discussed issues in relation to the inquiry procedure under article 8. You have discussed the extension of the Committee's meeting time, especially in light of the backlog of reports awaiting consideration. You have taken action in follow-up to the fourth Inter-Committee meeting and the seventeenth meeting of chairpersons of treaty bodies, and you have given consideration to the Plan of Action of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and engaged in a dialogue with the Director of the OHCHR New York Office. I am very pleased that you also provided comments and suggestions in regard to the Secretary-General's study on violence against women. Moreover, as requested by the Commission on the Status of Women, you provided views in regard to a special rapporteur on discriminatory legislation. The outputs of your current session will contribute to the promotion of gender equality, and they confirm your commitment and dedication to the implementation of the Convention.

Madam Chairperson and Distinguished Members of the Committee

Much as I would have liked to remain with you throughout the session, there were other commitments which required my attention. As you are aware, the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council is taking place in parallel to your session. I was called upon to introduce the report of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as a report of the Secretary-General on gender mainstreaming. The report is based on inputs received from United Nations entities and outlines gaps between policy and practice in gender mainstreaming. It also focuses on action plans as well as other measures to promote gender mainstreaming. It is expected that the Council will adopt a resolution on this topic.

I also moderated a panel discussion to mark the transfer of the Declaration adopted by the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Council. This Declaration recognizes synergies between the Convention and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, suggesting that they are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Madam Chairperson,

It has been a pleasure for me to work closely with the Committee during this session. Let me thank you very warmly, Mme. Chairperson, for the leadership you provided and the excellent manner in which you have chaired the proceedings of this Committee. I extend my appreciation to all the experts for their hard work and dedication. I will always look for new ways to assist the Committee as it strives to enhance its work. I would be grateful for any reflections that you might have on this session, in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of future sessions.

I wish you, Madam Chairperson, and all members of the Committee a safe journey back home, and we look forward to welcoming you back to New York in January 2006.

For those members of the Committee who will remain to prepare the lists of issues and questions to be sent to those States parties presenting their report at the thirty-fourth session in January 2006, I wish you well in your deliberations during those five days.

Thank you, Mme. Chairperson.

\*\*\*\*\*