

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Thirty-fourth session**

**Ms. Carolyn Hannan
Director, Division for the Advancement of Women**

Closing remarks

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Let me join Ms Mayanja in congratulating the Committee on the successful completion of the work of its thirty-fourth session. You have dealt with difficult issues, and a significant volume of work. Thanks to the commitment and hard work of all experts, under the able stewardship of the Bureau, skillfully guided by you, Mme. Chairperson, you have moved forward the cause of women's equality with men.

The year 2006 started most auspiciously for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Thanks to the approval by the General Assembly last December, you will hold 3 sessions this year, with meetings in parallel working groups in August. This increased meeting time will allow you to take up the reports of 31 States parties, as compared to the usual 16. You have held a preliminary discussion on the methods of work that will apply to the two working groups, and will further refine and expand those at the informal meeting that you will hold in Berlin in early May, thanks to the generous invitation of the Government of Germany.

Further adding to the auspicious start are the two additional accessions to the Optional Protocol since the beginning of the year, Tanzania on 12 January and St Kitts and Nevis on 20 January. Two States parties have so far submitted reports under article 18 of the Convention, namely Mexico, and Honduras.

All of this augurs well for a busy year, and a year that will once again require a significant focus on the promotion and protection of women's human rights.

Mme Chairperson,

I am very pleased that there have been opportunities also at this session for the Committee, or individual experts, to participate in various activities that have an impact on the implementation of the Convention. Several of you have taken an active interest in the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive and integral international convention on the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. There was a significant demand in hearing from, and learning about the experience of this Committee in furthering de facto equality between women and men. The Committee was also briefed on two important new publications that enhance the knowledge base for

gender equality, namely the “*World’s Women: Progress in statistics*”, by the United Nations Statistical Division, and the “*WHO Multi-country study on women’s health and domestic violence against women*”. It is our hope that these publications and the insights they convey will also further enhance the Committee’s examination of States parties’ reports.

The Committee has held a preliminary discussion on a general recommendation on migrant women. This is a very timely initiative as the question of international migration has a prominent place in the debates within the United Nations system. The Division for the Advancement of Women focused on the question of women and international migration in the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2005*, and the Commission on the Status of Women at its upcoming 50th session will hold an expert panel discussion on this question. The Committee will be able to make a unique contribution to this discussion from its perspective as a human rights treaty body. As you examine the question of migrant women in relation to the Convention, you will put forward an authoritative interpretation of the Convention and States parties’ obligations under the treaty in relation to migrant women.

Madame Chairperson,

The Commission on the Status of Women will hold its 50th session in four weeks, and we look forward to welcoming you back, Mme Chairperson. The Commission will examine the question of women’s participation, a topic that has received considerable attention in your consideration not only of the eight States at this session, but in many, if not all previous sessions as well. Articles 7 and 8 of the Convention, together with your general recommendations 23 on women in public life, and 25 on temporary special measures, remain the benchmarks against which progress is assessed. In past sessions, you have consistently and systematically been concerned about the low representation of women in decision making bodies in the various areas of political and public life; about the lack of women’s representation and access to high-level positions in government and governmental bodies at all levels, the diplomatic service, the legislature, as well as the judiciary. You have also voiced concern about the need to ensure women’s participation in the leadership of the economy, including the private sector, trade unions, and at the tertiary level of education. The Commission on the Status of Women will also address the question of an enabling environment for achieving enhanced participation of women in development, in particular in relation to health, education and work. I am sure that the outcome of the Commission’s session will enrich your work.

Dear members of the Committee,

I extend the appreciation of myself and of the Division for the Advancement of Women for the hard work and the dedication to the mandate entrusted to the members of this Committee. I wish you, Mme. Chairperson, and all members of the Committee a safe journey home, and we look forward to welcoming you back to New York in May.

Thank you very much.