

Check against delivery

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Thirty-fifth session
15 May-2 June 2006**

**Closing remarks by
Ms. Rosario Manalo, Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

**Dear Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen**

We have thus completed the work of the thirty-fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. I wish to thank all of you for the hard work and excellent spirit of cooperation that has helped us in completing our work.

We held constructive dialogues with eight States parties to the Convention and examined the progress in their implementation of the Convention. Four of these States parties, namely: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malaysia, Saint Lucia and Turkmenistan, reported to the Committee for the first time, while the other four States: Cyprus, Guatemala, Malawi and Romania, presented periodic reports. I extend my sincere appreciation to these States for their reports, the responses to our lists of issues and questions, and for their willingness to hold a constructive dialogue with this Committee about the status of the implementation of and compliance with the provisions of the Convention. I would like to thank all States parties for their useful and productive participation in this reporting exercise.

Some of these reports were significantly overdue. I wish to thank St Lucia who, based on a request of the Committee in accordance with our incremental measures for encouraging States with very long overdue reports, submitted its combined first to sixth periodic report at the date we had proposed, and subsequently fully cooperated with the Committee in sending written responses and a delegation to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Committee. This adherence to the Committee's request is a very important precedent in this Committee. It is a confirmation of the State party's willingness to participate in the monitoring procedure at the international level, and thereby enhance accountability in regard to its treaty obligations.

Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen

The Committee's concluding comments will be transmitted to the eight States parties early next week. I strongly encourage all of them to use the concluding comments

which we have adopted as basis for concrete and comprehensive follow-up action in the area of legislative initiatives, policy and programme development, awareness-raising and other measures. I also invite the reporting States to publicize the Committee's concluding comments widely to the public at large, and to ensure that Government officials, parliamentarians and other officials in the country including NGOs and civil society are made well aware of them.

Non-governmental organizations once again made a significant contribution to the work of the Committee, and I applaud their continuing and sustained advocacy for the promotion and protection of women's human rights and the implementation of the Convention. I also wish to emphasize the important role which the United Nations system must play in supporting the implementation of the Convention and realization of women's human rights in States parties. I encourage them to take the opportunity of examination of reports by the Committee to offer their support and assistance to States parties concerned as they proceed with the follow-up to concluding comments. I also encourage the entities of the UN system to support and encourage the use of the Convention as a general framework for all development efforts at the national level.

Dear colleagues,

We spent some time during this thirty-fifth session to prepare for the August session when the Committee will meet for the first time in parallel chambers. The very solid foundation was already laid at our informal meeting in Berlin, in early May, which was generously hosted by the Government of Germany. We also had a very fruitful meeting with States parties yesterday which allowed us to brief them on our working methods for the chambers, and the modalities of the constructive dialogue. While we are aware about the significant extra work that will await us in August, I am confident that we are very well prepared to face this challenge.

We continued our discussion concerning the reform of the human rights treaty bodies, and I am very pleased that the Committee has adopted a statement that puts forward our ideas as to how we should proceed to strengthen a harmonized and integrated human rights treaty bodies system, rather than focus solely on the proposal of a standing unified treaty body. I am grateful to the experts for the hard work and spirit of cooperation out into this matter.

Three experts will attend the fifth Inter-Committee meeting later in June, and these experts will be carrying our message of reform within a system rather than a single body to our colleagues from the six other treaty bodies. We hope that we will be able to gain their support for our ideas so that, as treaty bodies, we can help in broadening the range of viable options that are considered in this reform debate.

Colleagues,

The Committee is grateful to Ms. Rachel Mayanja for her support and encouragement of the work of this Committee. This time, we benefited especially from

her briefing on the United Nations reform process pertaining to gender equality. We also appreciate the additional opportunity of discussing these issues with Ms Hannan, and look forward to continue this exchange at our August session.

We held a preliminary discussion about our response to the invitation extended to us by the Commission on the Status of Women in regard to two aspects: one, our contribution to the Commission's annual theme and two, our views on the ways and means ways that could best complement the work of the existing mechanisms and enhance the Commission's capacity with respect to discriminatory laws. This is an important opportunity extended to the Committee by Member States to enhance the links between the treaty-monitoring body and the inter-governmental body charged with promotion of gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Based on the preliminary discussion we had, I anticipate that we will respond to it in a very constructive manner and finalize our inputs and suggestions at our August session.

Dear colleagues

2006 is the first year that we are holding three sessions. We will be back here at the United Nations very soon to consider the reports of 15 States parties. I thank all of you for your commitment and dedication.

I also thank Ms. Rachel Mayanja and Ms. Carolyn Hannan for all the support they have given to the Committee, and to the staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women, and other members of the Secretariat who worked very hard to support our work.

Dear experts, I wish you all a safe journey back home, and look forward to seeing you in August.

Thank you all very much.