

Closing remarks
by
Ms. Carolyn Hannan
Director, Division for the Advancement of Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
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Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to congratulate the Committee on the successful completion of the work of its thirty-sixth session. This was truly a historic and extraordinary session – with your meeting for the first time in parallel chambers. It has demonstrated the expertise and dedication of this Committee. The careful preparations for the parallel chambers brought a very positive outcome.

I am pleased to inform you that since the opening of this session the number of States parties to the Convention has increased by one. The Cook Islands acceded to the Convention on 11 August 2006, bringing the total number of States parties to the Convention to 184.

I join Ms Mayanja in expressing my appreciation for the quality, as well as the quantity of work you have completed at this session. Your consideration of the reports of 15 States parties has allowed you to start reducing the backlog, and we can expect further significant progress in this regard at your session in January 2007

In addition I wish to highlight in particular the two decisions on the merits of communications submitted under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Your views on communication 3/2004 (Ms. Dung Thi Thuy Nguyen v. the Netherlands) and communication 4/2004 (Ms. Andrea Szijjarto v. Hungary) have been eagerly awaited. Through the vehicle of the Optional Protocol procedure on individual communications, the Committee is making a valued contribution to the understanding of the provisions of the Convention and the related obligations of States parties, and is enhancing State accountability for the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

The Committee's general recommendations as authoritative interpretations of specific provisions of the Convention or particular issues falling within its scope provide essential guidance to States parties and other stakeholders in the constant and ongoing process of implementation of the Convention in all parts of the world. You have made significant progress on the substance of your general recommendation on women migrants at this session. With an estimated 90 million women migrants globally, I am pleased that the Committee will complete

its work on this critical general recommendation in January. I am also very pleased that your work on a general recommendation on article 2 – a cornerstone provision of the Convention – is expected to proceed expeditiously in the months ahead.

Chairperson, distinguished members,

I had the opportunity to thank the Chairperson, Ms Manalo, in my opening comments at this session for her leadership. I would like to here reiterate my sincere appreciation of her work in the Committee, including as its Chairperson. Let me also take this opportunity to thank all the members of the outgoing Bureau - Ms. Hanna-Beate Schöpp-Schilling, Ms. Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani, Ms. Dubravka Simonovic and Ms. Silvia Pimentel - not only for your dedicated work, but also for the skill and generosity with which you shared the work during this session where members of the Bureau chaired so effectively the Committee's chambers and Plenary sessions. It was truly in a spirit of teamwork and with great dedication that members of the Bureau – together – guided this Committee through this most demanding session.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their contribution to this session. My particular thanks go to Ms. Huguette Bokpe-Gnacadja, Ms Salma Khan, Ms Krisztina Morvai, Ms Victoria Popescu and Ms Manalo, who are completing their terms as members of this Committee. Your contributions to the protection and promotion of the human rights of women have been outstanding, and the Division for the Advancement of Women has been honoured to work with you. I am confident that there will be many future opportunities to benefit from your experience and commitment, and I wish you well.

I would also like to acknowledge the very hard work of the Chief of the Women's Rights Section, Ms Christine Brautigam, the Secretary of the Committee, Ms Philomena Kintu, and all the very dedicated staff of the Women's Rights Section and other colleagues in the Division. The third session and the introduction of parallel chambers has involved a significant challenge for the Women's Rights Section, one which has been taken on very willingly and with great efficiency and commitment. I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of staff from other parts of the United Nations during this session.

Chairperson, distinguished members,

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 all members of the Committee a safe journey home. I look forward to welcoming back those members who will return in January.

Thank you very much.
