

Closing remarks
Ms. Carolyn Hannan , Director Division for the Advancement of Women
Thirty-seventh session of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
New York, 2 February 2007

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and gentlemen.

I join Ms Mayanja in congratulating the Committee on the successful completion of the work of its thirty-seventh session, and in particular for the quality and depth of the constructive dialogues in the parallel chambers. Although this was only the second time that you met in chambers, this working method has been effectively established with very positive outcomes. I congratulate the Committee on the further significant reduction in the backlog of reports that await consideration.

I thank you, Mme Chairperson, and the members of the Bureau for the smooth and efficient manner in which you guided this first demanding session of your term of office. I commend the team spirit, skill and generosity with which you have all shared the work during this session, including the effective chairing of the Committee's chambers and Plenary sessions.

I would also like to commend the five new experts who have seamlessly immersed themselves into the proceedings and very actively contributed to all aspects of the Committee's responsibilities.

Madame Chairperson, Distinguished Experts,

The Committee's assessment of the principal areas of concern, and the detailed recommendations in the concluding comments addressed to the 15 States parties that came before you this session provides these States parties with a very clear indication of the work that remains to be done for the full implementation of the Convention, and women's and girls' enjoyment of their human rights.

Your work - and the significant public attention it generates at the national level in the reporting State - highlights the obligations of the States for action to enhance compliance with the Convention and serves as an increasingly visible and effective catalyst for change. It leads to the initiation or strengthening of multi-stakeholder dialogues among Government officials, elected representatives and members of civil society. It leads to a questioning of stereotypes, including - importantly, the roles of men and boys - and the types of attitudinal and behavioural change needed to ensure that discrimination and violence against girls and women is no longer acceptable. It promotes the political, economic and social change required at national level to ensure that the practical realization of the principle of the equality of women and men, as called for in article 2 a of the Convention, becomes a priority of all public action.

Madame Chairperson, Distinguished Experts

The Commission on the Status of Women will hold its 51st session in three weeks, and we look forward to welcoming you back, Mme Chairperson to speak at the opening meeting. The Commission will devote priority attention to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Ministers and other high-level representatives from national capitals will contribute to a high-level roundtable on the topic on 26 February, followed by two interactive expert panel discussions on 27 February.

The Commission will also review the status of implementation of its agreed conclusions of 2004 on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality through an interactive dialogue on 2 March. Under the agenda item “emerging issues”, there will be an interactive expert panel discussion on the elimination of all forms of violence against women in follow-up to the Secretary-General’s in-depth study at national and international levels.

The Committee pays significant attention to each of these topics. The question of violence against women, for example, is discussed with each reporting State. The Committee carefully examines progress, such as the adoption of comprehensive laws and policies, and identifies gaps and challenges, such as the fact that statistical data is lacking, services for victims are insufficient or absent, and/or public officials may not be trained to support victims of violence. The Committee has consistently noted in its concluding comments that much more work remains to be done as violence against women and girls persists in all parts of the world.

I am sure that the Commission will be enriched by your work in its deliberations on the themes under consideration at its forthcoming session. I am equally certain that the outcome of the Commission will provide valuable inputs to the future work of this Committee.

Madame Chairperson, Distinguished experts,

I extend the appreciation of myself and of the Division for the Advancement of Women for the hard work and dedication to the mandate entrusted to the members of this Committee during this session. We look forward to supporting those of you who will stay on for the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol and the pre-session working group next week.

I would also like to acknowledge the very hard work of the dedicated staff of the Women’s Rights Section, in particular the Chief of Section, Ms Christine Brautigam, and the Secretary of the Committee, Ms Philomena Kintu, as well as the other colleagues in the Division who have contributed to this session. I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of staff from other parts of the United Nations.

I wish members of the Committee a safe journey home and we look forward to welcoming you back for the 38th session in May.

Thank you.