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Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-first session

26 February-9 March 2007

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Results of the thirty-seventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

The present note reflects the results, including decisions taken, of the thirty-seventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was held in New York from 15 January to 2 February 2007.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 47/94 of 16 December 1992, the General Assembly recommended that the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women be scheduled, whenever possible, to allow for the timely transmission of the results of the Committee's work to the Commission on the Status of Women, for information.

2. In 2006, the Committee held three sessions (the thirty-fourth, thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth sessions) and met for the first time in parallel chambers at its thirty-sixth session. The results of those sessions are contained in the report of the Committee submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.¹

3. The Committee held its thirty-seventh session from 15 January to 2 February 2007. At that session, the Committee adopted one decision and took action on items 7, 8 and 9 of its agenda (CEDAW/C/2007/I/1 and Corr.1).

4. On 2 February 2007, the closing date of the thirty-seventh session, there were 185 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.² Eighty-four States parties had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention,³ and 48 States had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

II. Results of the Committee's thirty-seventh session

A. Reports considered by the Committee

5. The Committee considered the reports of 15 States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention, namely those of Austria, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Greece, India, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, Poland, Suriname, Tajikistan and Viet Nam. The Committee considered the periodic reports of 14 States parties in parallel chambers, whereas it considered the combined initial, second and third periodic report of Tajikistan in plenary meeting. The delegations of several reporting States were headed by ministers and included representatives with specialized technical expertise. The reports, the Committee's lists of issues and questions, the States parties' replies and their oral introductory statements (where electronically available), and the composition of delegations are posted on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/37sess.htm>).

6. In regard to each of the reporting States, the Committee adopted concluding comments. Those are also available on the above-mentioned website.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/61/38)*.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2131, No. 20378.

B. Decisions

7. The Committee adopted the following decision brought to the attention of States parties.

Decision 37/I

The Committee completed its second session during which it met in parallel chambers for purposes of considering periodic reports submitted by States parties. It expresses its appreciation to all States parties who participated in a very active manner in the constructive dialogues with the Committee, the in-depth manner in which the dialogues were conducted as well as the time management on the part of delegations and experts, which contributed to the quality of the constructive dialogues.

The Committee recalls its decision 36/I, in which it anticipated that effective and timely implementation of all its responsibilities beyond the biennium 2006/07 would require that it be provided with extended meeting time in 2008 and beyond. The Committee has undertaken an assessment of the status of submission of reports in accordance with article 18 of the Convention, and in particular of the remaining backlog of reports awaiting consideration, the projected future availability of reports and the Committee's request to States parties with very long overdue initial reports to submit those within a given time frame. The Committee has concluded that its workload, together with its other responsibilities under the Convention and those under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, make it necessary that the Committee be provided with the opportunity to hold three sessions per annum, of which at least one will meet in parallel chambers. The extended meeting time will ensure that the Committee can eliminate the backlog of reports awaiting consideration; ensure that incoming reports are considered in a timely manner; enhance its efforts at ensuring that monitoring of the implementation of the Convention in States parties with long overdue reports is undertaken; and discharge all its other responsibilities under the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

The Committee therefore requests that provisions be made, within the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, for three sessions per annum, of which one will meet in parallel chambers.

C. Action in relation to item 7

Implementation of article 21 of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

8. Members of task forces for a general recommendation on migrant women, and on article 2 of the Convention respectively provided updates on the status of their work.

D. Action in relation to item 8
Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

Future sessions

9. In the light of the authorization by the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/230, of the extension of the meeting time of the Committee in 2006 and 2007, the Committee confirmed the dates of future sessions, as follows:

- (a) Thirty-eighth session: 14 May to 1 June 2007;
- (b) Thirty-ninth session: 23 July to 10 August 2007;
- (c) Pre-session working group for the thirty-ninth session: 5 to 9 February 2007;
- (d) Pre-session working group for the fortieth session: 16 to 20 July 2007;
- (e) Ninth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 5 to 7 February 2007;
- (f) Tenth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 18 to 20 July 2007.

10. The Committee confirmed that, at its thirty-eighth session, it would consider the following initial reports:

Mauritania
Mozambique
Niger
Pakistan
Serbia
Sierra Leone
Syrian Arab Republic
Vanuatu.

11. The Committee decided to consider the following initial and periodic reports at its thirty-ninth session:

- (a) Initial report:
 - Cook Islands
- (b) Periodic reports:
 - Belize
 - Bolivia
 - Brazil
 - Estonia
 - Guinea
 - Honduras
 - Hungary

Indonesia
Jordan
Kenya
Liechtenstein
New Zealand
Republic of Korea
Singapore.

12. The Committee decided to invite the following States parties to present their reports at its fortieth and forty-first sessions, subject to any adjustments that may become necessary:

- (a) Fortieth session
 - Saudi Arabia (initial report)
 - Burundi
 - Finland
 - France
 - Lebanon
 - Lithuania
 - Luxembourg
 - Morocco
- (b) Forty-first session (to be completed)
 - Iceland
 - Nigeria
 - Norway
 - Portugal
 - Sweden
 - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
 - Yemen.

**Composition of parallel chambers for the thirty-ninth session of the Committee,
23 July-10 August 2007**

13. The Committee decided on the following composition of its parallel chambers for the thirty-ninth session:

<i>Chamber A</i>	<i>Chamber B</i>
Ferdous Ara Begum	Magalys Arocha Dominguez
Saisuree Chutikul	Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani
Naela Gabr Mohamed Gabre Ali	Dorcas Ama Frema Coker-Appiah
Françoise Gaspard	Mary Shanthi Dairiam
Tiziana Maiolo	Cornelis Flinterman
Violeta Neubauer	Hazel Gumede Shelton
Pramila Patten	Ruth Halperin-Kaddari
Silvia Pimentel	Dubravka Šimonović
Fumiko Saiga	Anamah Tan
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling	Maria Regina Tavares da Silva
Heisoo Shin	Xiaoqiao Zou
Glenda Simms	

The initial report of the Cook Islands (CEDAW/C/COK/1) will be considered in plenary meeting. The Committee also decided on the allocation of reports of States parties to its parallel chambers, as follows:

<i>States parties to be considered in chamber A</i>	<i>States parties to be considered in chamber B</i>
Belize (CEDAW/C/BLZ/3-4)	Bolivia (CEDAW/C/BOL/2-4)
Guinea (CEDAW/C/GIN/4-6)	Brazil (CEDAW/C/BRA/6)
Honduras (CEDAW/C/HON/6)	Estonia (CEDAW/C/EST/4)
Hungary (CEDAW/C/HUN/6)	Kenya (CEDAW/C/KEN/6)
Indonesia (CEDAW/C/IDN/4-5)	Liechtenstein (CEDAW/C/LIE/2 and CEDAW/C/LIE/3)
Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/3-4)	New Zealand (CEDAW/C/NZL/6)
Singapore (CEDAW/C/SGP/3)	Republic of Korea (CEDAW/C/KOR/5 and CEDAW/C/KOR/6)

14. The Committee identified meetings to be attended by its Chairperson or an alternate during 2007, namely:

- (a) The fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women;
- (b) The fourth session of the Human Rights Council;
- (c) The nineteenth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies;

(d) The sixth inter-committee meeting, together with two other members of the Committee;

(e) The sixty-second session of the General Assembly (Third Committee).

Action to enhance the Committee's working methods

15. The Committee discussed a number of issues aimed at enhancing its working methods under article 18 of the Convention and took action, including the following:

(a) Working methods in parallel chambers

The Committee undertook an assessment of its work in parallel chambers, and concluded that overall, the experience had been a very positive one.

Experts agreed that three sessions per annum, at least one of which would be held in chambers, would ensure that the Committee could discharge all its responsibilities under the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto in a timely manner. The Committee suggested that the first session after elections of new members should be convened in plenary meetings only so as to ensure their speedy familiarization with the Committee's working methods.

Experts confirmed that the working methods in regard to parallel chambers remained in place.⁴ At the same time, experts identified a number of areas for improvement. Further efforts would be made to enhance coordination among all experts in the preparation for the constructive dialogue, so as to ensure that all critical issues are satisfactorily raised with the reporting State.

Experts agreed that the country rapporteurs would take a stronger and more proactive role in coordinating the work in chambers and in ensuring that all experts would be able to contribute to the dialogue in a timely and meaningful manner. They agreed that country briefing notes would be circulated 7 to 10 days prior to the beginning of a session. Further efforts would be made to ensure that the briefing notes were succinct, and included all critical issues to be covered in the constructive dialogue. Country rapporteurs would also take a lead role in ensuring that all pending critical issues were brought up in follow-up questions. Experts also agreed that each country rapporteur would give a brief introduction of the draft concluding comments in plenary, prior to their consideration and adoption.

The Committee requested its Secretariat to include States parties' core documents, to the extent that they exist, in the session documentation that is sent to experts in advance of each session.

(b) Request for long overdue initial reports

The Committee reviewed the status of submission of reports by States parties (CEDAW/C/2007/1/2) and agreed to proceed in accordance with its decisions 29/I and 31/III (i). In doing so, the Committee also took into consideration its previous experience in inviting two States parties, Cape Verde and Saint Lucia, to submit all their overdue reports as combined reports. The Committee consequently decided to

⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/61/38)*, Part II, paras. 364-379.

send letters to the following 12 States parties that are more than 10 years overdue in submitting their initial report under article 18 of the Convention: the Bahamas, the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Dominica, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Lesotho, Liberia, Papua New Guinea and Seychelles. In addition, the Committee decided to request the four States parties that are more than 20 years overdue in submitting their initial report under article 18 of the Convention, that is, Dominica, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Liberia, to submit all their overdue reports as combined reports for consideration at its forty-third (January) session of 2009. As a measure of last resort, and failing the receipt of the reports within the suggested time frame, the Committee will proceed with consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the four States parties in the absence of a report.

16. The Committee also followed up on a number of recommendations of the fifth inter-committee meeting and the eighteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, in particular in regard to reservations to treaties, harmonization of working methods, harmonized guidelines for reporting, indicators for monitoring compliance with international human rights instruments and focal points.

17. The Committee held an exchange of views, on 15 January 2007, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on issues of common interest, and in particular on the decision of 11 October 2006 by the Secretary-General to transfer responsibility for servicing the Committee to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Committee also responded to the Secretary-General's letter of 11 October 2006, in which he informed the Chairperson of the Committee of his decision. The Committee also addressed a letter to the High Commissioner on the same matter.

18. On 29 January 2007, the Committee was briefed by and engaged in an interactive dialogue with the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and with the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women on matters pertaining to United Nations reform, and in particular proposals regarding a new gender equality architecture (see in particular A/61/583 and A/61/590).

E. Action in relation to item 9

Activities of the Committee under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

19. The Committee appointed the following five members to serve on the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol for a term of two years, until 31 December 2008:

Magalys Arocha Dominguez
Dorcas Coker-Appiah
Cornelis Flinterman
Pramila Patten
Anamah Tan

Action in respect to article 2 (communications)

20. The Committee took action on communication No. 11/2006, Constance Ragan Salgado v. the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.