

**Third Committee of the General Assembly  
Sixty-first session  
Agenda item 60**

**Statement by**

**Ms Rosario G. Manalo  
Chairperson of the  
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

**9 October 2006**

*[Note: presented on behalf of the Chairperson by Ms Carolyn Hannan, Director,  
Division for the Advancement of Women]*

Chairperson,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen

It is with great regret that I had to cancel my participation in the sixty-first session of the General Assembly due to reasons beyond my control. I therefore take the opportunity to brief the Third Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations in writing on behalf of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). I am pleased to present to you the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its thirty-fourth, thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth sessions, to be issued as document A/61/38.

184 States are now party to the Convention, an increase of four since the Committee's last report to the Assembly. 80 of these are also party to the Optional Protocol – an increase of six since last October. There were no additional acceptances of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1 concerning the Committee's meeting time.

Chairperson,

The Committee is very grateful to the General Assembly for granting the requested extension of the Committee's meeting time for 2006 and 2007 as a temporary measure (A/RES/60/230). We have used this opportunity to the maximum extent in 2006, when we considered the reports of 31 States parties. I am very pleased to inform you of the highly successful use of parallel chambers, and the very positive assessment of Committee experts of this working method. I would welcome the comments of States parties that reported at the thirty-sixth session so that the Committee could reflect on those as it continues to enhance its working methods.

I wish to draw your particular attention to decision 36/I, in which the Committee assesses its first experience of working in parallel chambers. We emphasize that the

extended meeting time in the biennium will allow for a significant reduction in the backlog of reports awaiting consideration. At the same time, the Committee anticipates that extended meeting time will be required in 2008 and beyond and it intends to submit another proposal to that effect to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

I thank States parties for submitting their reports and engaging in the constructive dialogue with the members of the Committee. I also extend the Committee's sincere appreciation to non-governmental organizations – most of which were national and local organizations – that provided information to the Committee. The Committee also welcomed and appreciated the contributions from entities of the United Nations system and especially the joint reports on several reporting States presented by United Nations country teams.

In addition to its three annual sessions, the Committee held an informal meeting in Berlin in May 2006. This was the Committee's fifth informal meeting, and the second invitation of the Government of Germany. The meeting afforded the Committee an opportunity to consider its working methods, particularly in connection with the consideration of periodic reports in parallel chambers. On behalf of the Committee, I extend our sincere appreciation to the German Government for hosting the Committee and thus supporting our work on a range of critical issues.

Chairperson,

I am very pleased to report about the important progress made by the Committee in discharging its responsibilities under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Committee adopted views (admissibility and merits) on two communications under article 2 of the Optional Protocol and declared one communication inadmissible. Communication no. 3/2004, Ms. Dung Thi Thuy Nguyen v. the Netherlands dealt with maternity benefits. The Committee declared the communication admissible and found no violation of the Convention. Three members of the Committee appended a dissenting opinion. Communication no. 4/2004, Ms. Andrea Szijjarto v. Hungary dealt with involuntary sterilization. The Committee declared the communication admissible and found a violation of the author's rights under articles 10 (h), 12 and 16, paragraph 1 (e) of the Convention. Communication no 8/2005, Ms. Rahime Kayhan v. Turkey was declared inadmissible. The Committee also brought to a close its follow-up activities on its views on communication no. 2/2003, A.T. v. Hungary.

The Committee adopted two statements, one entitled "Towards a harmonized and integrated human rights treaty bodies system" that it brought to the attention of the fifth Inter-Committee Meeting which took place in June 2006 in Geneva. In that statement, the Committee put forward a series of steps that should be taken to enhance the overall functioning of the treaty bodies as a system. The Committee looks forward to the continuing discussion of its proposal within the framework of treaty body reform. The Committee also adopted a statement on the situation of women in the Middle East, where it reflected on the impact of the hostilities on women, and emphasized the obligations of

all parties concerned under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Committee also made significant progress in the elaboration of a general recommendation on migrant women, where we held a first reading of the draft. Inter-sessionally, the draft will be further refined so that the Committee may be in a position to complete this work expeditiously in early 2007. I also had the honour, on behalf of the Committee, to send a letter to the President of the General Assembly on the occasion of the high-level dialogue on migration and development.

Let me now turn to Committee decisions and actions pertaining to working methods. Based on the work undertaken at the Berlin meeting, the Committee at its thirty-fifth session, adopted a series of measures, including clear, transparent and fair guidelines for determining membership in parallel chambers, assignment of office holders to chambers in a balanced manner, a strengthened and enhanced role for the country rapporteurs, coordination on issues and priorities for the constructive dialogue with reporting States parties, and effective time management and flexibility.

We adopted new guidelines for submission of reports by specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system. We also noted the important role of Parliamentarians in the implementation of the Convention, including follow-up to concluding comments, and encouraged the Inter-parliamentary Union to submit country-specific information pertaining to implementation.

This forum is well aware of the active role the Committee has always played in the annual meetings of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, as well as the Inter-Committee meetings. Also in 2006, the Committee continued to be represented in these meetings in Geneva, and we undertook follow-up steps on a number of recommendations and points of agreement that emanated from these meetings. The Committee was also represented at the meeting hosted by the Government of Liechtenstein in Malbun, in July 2006, on the question of treaty body reform.

The Committee held a dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights at its thirty-fourth session on matters pertaining to proposed reforms of the human rights treaty bodies.

The Committee also made suggestions on its contribution, where appropriate, to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, and in particular the priority themes that will be take up in 2007-2009.

Distinguished delegates

The Committee looks forward to the continuing support of all States parties and Member States of the United Nations to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and use of the Optional Protocol. We also count on your continuing support to the work of the Committee.

I wish you the best in your deliberations, and thank you.