



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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Note by the Secretariat

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* CEDAW/C/2007/III/1.

I. Introduction

1. The present report contains information that is relevant to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Section II contains information on developments in the United Nations human rights regime, including information concerning the work of the human rights treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council, follow-up to the sixteenth Inter-Committee Meeting and the nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies and the transfer of the servicing of the Committee to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Section III contains information on the reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions. Section IV summarizes the activities of the Secretariat in support of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol.

II. Developments in the human rights regime

A. Human rights treaty bodies

2. At its eighty-ninth session (12 to 30 March 2007), the Human Rights Committee continued its discussion of a draft revised general comment on article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Equality before the courts and the right to a fair and public hearing by an independent court established by law). It also discussed reinforcement of its activities concerning follow-up to its concluding observations and views under the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Committee expects to continue those discussions at its ninetieth session, to be held from 9 to 27 July 2007.

3. At its eighty-eighth session, the Human Rights Committee discussed the idea of creating a single human rights treaty body that would replace the seven existing treaty bodies. The Committee was of the view that the creation of such treaty body would raise legal and political problems that could not be solved in the short or medium term. The Committee considered that coordination among treaty bodies was critical, as was a harmonized approach. To that end, it proposed that the Inter-Committee Meeting and meeting of chairpersons be replaced by a single coordinating body, composed of representatives of the various treaty bodies, that would be responsible for the effective oversight of all questions relating to the harmonization of working methods. The coordinating body, whose activities and impact would be evaluated after four years of operation, would also be responsible for promoting an exchange of information and points of view between the Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies.

4. At its forty-fourth session (15 January to 2 February 2007), the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted general comment No. 10 on children's rights in juvenile justice (CRC/C/GC/10). At its forty-third session (11 to 29 September 2006), the Committee adopted general comment No. 9 on the rights of children with disabilities (CRC/C/GC/9) and the revised guidelines on reporting under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. On 15 September 2006, the Committee held its annual day of general discussion, on the theme "To speak, participate and decide: the child's right to be heard", based on article 12 of the

Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee decided that its next day of general discussion, which would take place during its forty-sixth session, in September 2007, would be devoted to the subject of resources for the rights of the child (article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

5. At its seventieth session (19 February to 9 March 2007), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination commenced its work towards the adoption of revised reporting guidelines for treaty-specific documents, in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents. The Committee expects to adopt the revised guidelines at its seventy-first session (31 July to 17 August 2007). The Committee requested the secretariat to prepare a paper for its consideration at the seventy-first session, reviewing the working paper prepared in 1993 on early warning and urgent action procedures. The Committee decided that beginning at its seventy-first session, time would be devoted on the first morning of the session to representatives of United Nations entities to brief the Committee on matters of common interest. The Committee also decided that focal points to enhance cooperation and facilitate more effective interaction on country-specific and thematic issues and follow-up with the United Nations specialized agencies would be identified prior to the seventy-first session. At its thirty-seventh session (6 to 24 November 2006), the Committee against Torture held a preliminary discussion of a draft general comment on article 2 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment.

B. Human Rights Council

6. At the fourth session of the Human Rights Council (4 to 30 March 2007), in its resolution 4/1 on the question of the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights, the Council expressed its appreciation for and encouraged the continuation of the work related to the promotion, protection and full realization of economic, social and cultural rights carried out by other human rights treaty bodies working on issues that bear upon the Covenant and United Nations bodies, specialized agencies or programmes; and encouraged enhanced cooperation and, as appropriate, increased coordination, between the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and United Nations bodies, specialized agencies or programmes, mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and other human rights treaty bodies whose activities bear upon economic, social and cultural rights in a manner that respects their distinctive mandates and promotes their policies, programmes and projects. In its resolution 4/3 on the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Review of Mandates, it requested the Coordinating Committee of the special procedures to extend until the closure of the fifth session of the Human Rights Council (11 to 18 June 2007), the deadline for the submission of comments on and inputs to the draft manual of special procedures. It also requested the Working Group on the Review of Mandates to present to the Council at its fifth session the outcome of its deliberations on the code of conduct regulating the work of the special procedures. On 19 March 2007, the Human Rights Council held a special event on violence against children that focused on follow-up to the Secretary-General's study on violence against children.

C. Follow-up to the sixth Inter -Committee Meeting and nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies

7. The Committee will be represented by its Chairperson and two experts at the sixth Inter -Committee Meeting. The Chairperson will attend the nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies. The Committee will be briefed by them on the outcome and follow-up required. All relevant documentation will be made available to the Committee.

8. At its thirty -eighth session, the Committee continued its discussion of the need for review and possible revision of its own reporting guidelines, taking into account the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (see HRI/MC/2006/3). The Committee was briefed by its task force, consisting of Hanna Beate Schöpp -Schilling, Naela Mohamed Gabr and Mary Shanthi Dairiam, on the work done so far on this issue. The task force indicated that it intended to work intersessionally to complete a proposal for consideration by the Committee at its thirty -ninth session. The Committee will be briefed by the task force on the results of their intersessional preparations.

9. The Committee also continued its discussion on follow-up to concluding comments. Information about follow-up procedures of other human rights treaty bodies was circulated to experts (excerpted from HRI/MC/2006/4). Updated information on this question will be available to the Committee at its thirty -ninth session.

D. Transfer of servicing of the Committee to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

10. At its thirty -eighth session, the Committee took note of the information provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the dates for its sessions in 2008, as reflected in the provisional calendar of conferences for 2008 (for the dates of the Committee's future sessions, see A/62/38 (forthcoming)).

III. Reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions

11. All States parties selected by the Committee for presentation of reports at the thirty -ninth session will be able to do so.

12. The following States parties are scheduled to present their reports at the fortieth session (14 January to 1 February 2008): Bolivia (combined second, third and fourth reports); Burundi (combined second, third and fourth reports); Finland (fifth periodic report); France (sixth periodic report); Lebanon (third periodic report); Luxembourg (fifth periodic report); Morocco (combined third and fourth periodic reports); Saudi Arabia (combined initial and second periodic reports).

13. The following States parties are scheduled to present their reports at the forty -first session (30 June to 18 July 2008): Iceland (fifth periodic report); Lithuania

(third periodic report); Nigeria (sixth periodic report); Slovakia (combined second, third and fourth periodic reports); Sweden (combined sixth and seventh periodic reports); United Kingdom (fifth periodic report); United Republic of Tanzania (combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports); Yemen (sixth periodic report). Portugal requested postponement of the consideration of its sixth periodic report to the forty-second session. The Committee will be informed about any further adjustments that may have become necessary.

14. The Committee continued its efforts to encourage States parties with long overdue initial reports to submit those within a specified time frame. At its thirty-first session, the Committee invited Cape Verde and Saint Lucia to submit all overdue reports by June 2005. Based on their receipt, the Committee proceeded with their consideration at its thirty-sixth and thirty-fifth sessions, respectively. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee invited Dominica, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Liberia to submit their initial (all of which are more than 20 years overdue) and all other outstanding reports in a combined report by March 2008, for consideration at the Committee's forty-third session, in 2009. As a last resort and failing the receipt of the reports within the suggested time frame, the Committee intends to proceed with consideration of the implementation of the Convention in those four States parties in the absence of a report. At its thirty-eighth session, the Committee invited four more States parties — Bahamas, Central African Republic, Grenada and Seychelles — to submit their initial and all other outstanding periodic reports in a combined report by the end of 2008, for consideration by the Committee in early 2010. The Committee also sent reminder letters to a number of States parties with long overdue initial reports.

15. The Committee's attention is drawn to annex II of the present report, which provides an overview of available reports and dates of previous consideration, as applicable.

IV. Secretariat activities in support of the implementation of the Convention

16. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat continued their efforts to encourage universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, acceptance of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention. Those aspects are regularly addressed by the Special Adviser, the Director and staff of the Division in meetings with and briefings for representatives of Member States, entities of the United Nations system and civil society organizations in training workshops and other outreach activities.

17. The Division continued its activities to support countries emerging from conflict to implement the Convention. Following a high-level consultation mission in Liberia in June 2006, a workshop on implementation and reporting under the Convention for staff of the national machinery for the advancement of women was held from 19 to 21 March 2007. The workshop was followed by meetings with the United Nations country team and Government officials from key line ministries to put in place a strategy and mechanisms for the preparation of the report under

article 18 of the Convention. A workshop for Government officials on the implementation of the Convention and preparation of the report is scheduled to take place from 18 to 22 June 2007. The Committee invited Liberia to submit all its outstanding reports by March 2008, for consideration by the Committee in early 2009.

18. Following an invitation from the Minister for the Status of Women, the Division conducted a high-level consultation mission to Haiti from 16 to 19 April 2007. Three experts on the Convention, including two members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, held consultations with high-level Government officials, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations country team and other stakeholders on implementation of the Convention, and discussed approaches for preparation of the report. The Committee invited Haiti to submit all its outstanding reports by March 2008, for consideration by the Committee in early 2009.

Annex I

States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention

Africa

Somalia
Sudan

Asia and the Pacific

Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Nauru
Palau
Qatar
Tonga

Western Europe and other

Holy See
United States of America

Annex II

States parties whose reports have been submitted but not yet considered by the Committee as of 7 June 2007 *

A. Initial reports

<i>State party (report)</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Date received</i>
Saudi Arabia (1 -2) ^a	7 October 2001	12 September 2006

B. Periodic reports

<i>State party (report)</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Date received</i>	<i>Previously considered</i>	<i>Previous report(s)</i>
Belgium (5)	9 August 2006	4 May 2007	2002, 27th session	3-4
Bolivi a (2-4) ^{a,b}	8 July 1995	16 December 2005	1995, 14th session	Initial
Burundi (2 -4) ^a	7 February 1997	29 September 2006	2001, 24th session	Initial
Canada (6 -7)	2 May 2007	9 January 2003	2002, 26th session	5
Cameroon (2-3)	22 September 1 999	28 March 2007	2000, 23rd session	Initial
Ecuador (6 -7)	9 December 2002	23 February 2007	2003, 29th session	4-5
El Salvador (7)	18 September 2006	15 March 2007	2003, 28th session	3-4, 5, 6
Finland (5) ^{a,b}	4 October 2003	23 February 2004	2001, 24th session	4
France (6) ^{a,b}	13 January 2005	17 March 2006	2003, 29th session	5
Iceland (5) ^b	18 July 2002	14 November 2003	2002, 26th session	3-4
Israel (4) ^b	2 November 2004	1 June 2005	2005, 33rd session	3
Kyrgyzstan (3)	12 March 2006	27 February 2007	2004, 30th session	2
Lebanon (3) ^{a,b}	16 May 2006	6 July 2006	2005, 33rd session	Initial, 2
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (2) ^b	15 June 1994	14 December 1998	1994, 13th session	Initial and Add.1
Lithuania (3) ^b	17 February 2003	16 May 2005	2000, 23rd session	Initial, 2
Luxembourg (5) ^{a,b}	4 March 2006	23 February 2006	2003, 28th session	4
Mongolia (5 -7)	3 September 1998	23 March 2007	2001, 24th session	3-4
Morocco (3-4) ^{a,b}	21 July 2002	18 August 2006	2003, 29th session	2

* Not including t he States parties whose reports the Committee will consider at its thirty -ninth session.

<i>State party (report)</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Date received</i>	<i>Previously considered</i>	<i>Previous report(s)</i>
Nigeria (6)	13 July 2006	4 October 2006	2004, 30th session	4-5
Portugal (6) ^b	3 September 2002	15 May 2006	2002, 26th session	4, 5
Slovakia (2 -4)	27 June 1998	27 February 2007	1998, 19th session	Initial and Add.1
Slovenia (4)	5 August 2005	10 August 2006	2003, 29th session	2 and 3
Sweden (6 -7) ^b	3 September 2002	5 December 2006	2001, 25th session	4, 5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (5 and Add.1 and 2) ^b	7 May 2003	7 August 2003	1999, 21st session	3 and Add.1 and 2; 4 and Add.1 -4
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (6)	7 May 2007	1 May 2007	1999, 21st session	3 and Add.1 and 2; 4 and Add.1 -4
United Republic of Tanzania (4 -6)	19 September 1998	8 February 2007	1999, 20th session	2-3
Uruguay (4-6)	8 November 1994	7 June 2007	2002, 27th session	2-3
Yemen (6)	29 June 2005	5 December 2006	2002, Exceptional session	4, 5

^a Report selected to be considered by the Committee at its fortieth session, to be held in January and February 2008.

^b Report has been translated, reproduced and made available in all official languages.