



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Meeting of States parties to the Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Twelfth meeting
New York, 29 August 2002

Comment:

Report of the meeting of States parties

1. The twelfth meeting of the States parties was called to order on 29 August 2002 by Mr. Milos Prica (Bosnia and Herzegovina), who acted as the temporary Chairperson.
2. The Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General, in which she drew attention to the exceptional session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was held from 5 to 23 August 2002 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. That session, authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/229 of 24 December 2001, sought to reduce the backlog of reports of States parties awaiting review by the Committee. She stated that, during the session, the reports of 11 States parties had been considered, thus eliminating the backlog of reports awaiting consideration. She also encouraged those States parties with overdue reports to submit their reports in accordance with article 18 of the Convention.
3. The Director observed that, since the eleventh meeting of States parties, on 31 August 2000, the Committee had held five sessions, including the exceptional session. In addition to considering the reports of 35 States parties, the Committee had adopted a number of decisions and suggestions, including new rules of procedure relating to the review of reports and the Committee's functions under the Optional Protocol¹ and the establishment of an Optional Protocol Working Group in accordance with those rules.² She stated that the Working Group, consisting of five members of the Committee, had met three times since its establishment and had devised working methods for the Committee with respect to its functions under that instrument. She drew particular attention to the draft model communications form³ for those submitting petitions under the Optional Protocol, which had been formulated by the Working Group and adopted by the Committee at its twenty-sixth session in January 2002.
4. The Director reported that, during the period since the previous meeting of States parties, the Committee had also adopted several statements relating to United

Nations conferences, summits and special sessions of the General Assembly which included a statement on gender and racial discrimination that was adopted at the Committee's twenty-fourth session and forwarded to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;⁴ a statement adopted at the Committee's twenty-fifth session that was forwarded to the special session of the General Assembly on children;⁵ statements adopted at the Committee's twenty-sixth session on gender and sustainable development⁶ and on ending discrimination against older women through the Convention,⁷ which were forwarded to the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to the World Assembly on Ageing, respectively. She also drew the attention of States parties to the Committee's statement of solidarity with Afghan women adopted at its twenty-sixth session,⁸ in which it expressed the hope that the human rights of women, as provided for in the Convention, would guide all actions in both the public and private spheres.

5. The Director reported that there were 254 reports under article 18 of the Convention which were overdue. She recalled the informal meeting that had been held on 17 June 2002 between States parties and the Committee to exchange views, particularly on the challenges confronting timely reporting. The Director reminded States parties that technical and advisory services, in particular with respect to reporting obligations, were available on request through the Division for the Advancement of Women. She indicated that, on 18 June 2002, Bahrain had acceded to the Convention, bringing the total number of States parties to 170. She also stated that 75 States parties had signed the Optional Protocol, while 43 States parties had ratified and acceded to it, and that 35 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Committee's meeting time.

6. Following the statement of the Director, Ms. June Yvonne Clarke (Barbados) was elected Chairperson of the Meeting. Mr. Chungong Ayafor (Cameroon), Ms. Mukta D. Tomar (India), Mr. Gilbert Laurin (Canada) and Ms. Ivana Grollova (Czech Republic) were elected Vice-Chairpersons. The provisional agenda (CEDAW/SP/2002/1) was adopted.

7. In accordance with article 17, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Convention, the States parties elected by secret ballot 12 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, of whom 3 were current members proposed for re-election. The three current members were: Naela Mohamed Gabr (Egypt); Rosario Manalo (Philippines); and Fumiko Saiga (Japan). The new members were: Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani (Algeria); Cornelis Flinterman (Netherlands); Huguette Bokpe Gnancadja (Benin); Salma Khan (Bangladesh); Akua Kuenyehia (Ghana); Krisztina Morvai (Hungary); Pramila Patten (Mauritius); Victoria Popescu Sandru (Romania); and Dubravka Šimonović (Croatia). The list of candidates and their curricula vitae were contained in documents CEDAW/SP/2002/3, CEDAW/SP/2002/3/Add.1, CEDAW/SP/2002/3/Add.2 and Corr.1 and CEDAW/SP/2002/3/Add.3.

8. The meeting had before it document CEDAW/SP/2002/2, submitted pursuant to article 28 of the Convention, which provides that "the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made at the time of ratification or accession". The article also provides that the Secretary-General shall inform all States of any reservations, declarations, objections and

notifications of withdrawal of reservations relating to the Convention. The document contained a list of those States parties that had deposited with the Secretary-General instruments of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, as well as those that had signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

Notes

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/56/38)*, part one, chap. I, decision 24/I.

² See *ibid.*, para. 366.

³ See A/57/38 (Part I), para. 407.

⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/56/38)*, part one, chap. I, decision 24/II.

⁵ See *ibid.*, part two, chap. I, decision 25/III.

⁶ See A/57/38 (Part I), chap. I, decision 26/II.

⁷ See *ibid.*, decision 26/III.

⁸ See *ibid.*, decision 26/I.