

**CEDAW, A/62/38 (2007)**

...

**Part one**

**Chapter I**

**Matters brought to the attention of States parties**

**Decisions**

**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 which 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.

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## **Chapter VI**

### **Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee**

640. The Committee considered agenda item 8, ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, at its 756th and 773rd meetings, on 15 January and 2 February 2007, and in closed meetings.

#### **Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 8**

##### **Members of the pre-session working group for the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions**

641. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions would be:

Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani  
Fumiko Saiga  
Maria Regina Tavares da Silva  
Xiaoqiao Zou

642. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the fortieth and forty-first sessions would be:

Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani  
Ferdous Ara Begum  
Françoise Gaspard  
Hazel Gumede Shelton  
Violeta Neubauer  
Silvia Pimentel  
Heisoo Shin  
Glenda Simms  
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling  
Dubravka Šimonović

##### **Dates of future sessions of the Committee**

643. In accordance with the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2007, the following schedule was confirmed:

- Thirty-eighth session: 14 May to 1 June 2007
- Thirty-ninth session: 23 July to 10 August 2007
- Pre-session working group for the thirty-ninth session: 5 to 9 February 2007

- Pre-session working group for the fortieth session: 16 to 20 July 2007
- Ninth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 5 to 7 February 2007
- Tenth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 18 to 20 July 2007

### **Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee**

644. The Committee confirmed that it will consider the reports of the following States parties at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions, and selected the following States parties to present their reports at the fortieth and forty-first sessions, subject to any adjustments that may become necessary:

(a) *Thirty-eighth session*

Mauritania  
 Mozambique  
 Niger  
 Pakistan  
 Serbia  
 Sierra Leone  
 Syrian Arab Republic  
 Vanuatu

(b) *Thirty-ninth session*

Cook Islands (initial report)  
 Belize  
 Bolivia  
 Brazil  
 Estonia  
 Guinea  
 Honduras  
 Hungary  
 Indonesia  
 Jordan  
 Kenya  
 Liechtenstein  
 New Zealand  
 Republic of Korea  
 Singapore

(c) *Fortieth session*

Saudia Arabia (initial report)

Burundi

Finland

France

Lebanon

Lithuania

Luxembourg

Morocco

(d) *Forty-first session (to be completed)*

Iceland

Nigeria

Norway

Portugal

Sweden

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Yemen

**Composition of parallel chambers at the thirty-ninth session**

645. The Committee decided on the following composition of its parallel chambers for the thirty-ninth session; and allocation of reports of States parties:

<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	Cees 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

<i>Chamber A</i>	<i>Chamber B</i>
Glenda Simms	
<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)

646. The initial report of the Cook Islands (CEDAW/C/COK/1) will be considered in plenary meeting.

### **United Nations meetings to be attended by the Chairperson or members of the Committee in 2007**

647. The Committee recommended that the Chairperson or an alternate attend the following meetings in 2007:

- (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).

### **Enhancing the Committee's working methods under article 18 of the Convention**

#### **Working methods in parallel chambers**

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

649. Experts agreed that three annual sessions, at least one of which would be held in chambers, would ensure that the Committee could discharge all its responsibilities under the Convention as well as the Optional Protocol 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.

650. Experts confirmed that the working methods in regard to parallel chambers remained in place.<sup>1</sup> 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.

651. 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.

652. 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.

### **Request for long overdue initial reports**

653. The Committee reviewed the status of submission of reports by States parties (CEDAW/C/2007/I/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 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 by March 2008, 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

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<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/61/38), part II, paras. 364-379.

with consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the four States parties in the absence of a report.

### **Follow-up to the recommendation of the fifth inter-committee meeting and the eighteenth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies**

654. The Committee was briefed by Beate Schöpp-Schilling on the results of the working group on harmonization of working methods (see A/61/38, part III, para. 638). The Committee held a discussion on the working group's preliminary points of agreement (HRI/MC/2007/2, paras. 22 to 33). Referring to its own statement "Towards a harmonized and integrated human rights treaty body system", the Committee supports the suggestion that a task force on working methods be established (see HRI/MC/2007/2, para. 23), for a period of not more than two years, with up to three meetings annually. The Committee emphasizes that at this stage, such a task force should not replace, nor overlap in its work, with the mandate and purpose of the ICM/MC. The Committee also agrees that the ICM should hold two meetings per year. The Committee does not support the suggestion that the task force consider the formation of a sub-group to address aspects of communications (see paras. 23 in fine and 26), including admissibility and routing to the most appropriate committee. The Committee would, however, welcome enhanced information exchange among experts of the different treaty bodies on communications procedures on issues such as working methods and review of past cases, for example in the form of workshops or seminars. The Committee also urges the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to cooperate with the Division for the Advancement of Women in the implementation of requests and recommendations for research, studies and dissemination campaigns, referred to in paragraphs 28 to 32.

### **Follow-up to concluding comments**

655. The Committee held a preliminary discussion on follow-up to concluding comments. It noted the current practice of other human rights treaty bodies and agreed to continue to review the issue at its next session.

### **Harmonized guidelines on reporting**

656. The Committee will continue to review its guidelines for preparation of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention, in the light of the acceptance, by the inter-committee meeting, of the revised harmonized reporting guidelines under international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/MC/2006/3; see also A/61/38, part III, para. 636). The Committee requested its secretariat to prepare a technical analysis of the Committee's current guidelines for reporting in the light of the guidelines for the expanded common core document, for intersessional consideration by the Committee's working group. The Committee agreed to take up the question of any possible revisions of its guidelines as a matter of priority at its thirty-eighth session.

### **Working group on reservations**

657. The Committee was briefed by Cees Flinterman on the results of the working group on reservations (see A/61/38, part III, para. 638). The Committee held a discussion on the working group's recommendations, and noted in particular that they are in line with the Committee's practice. Experts agreed to keep the question of reservations under review at future sessions.

### **Indicators for monitoring compliance with international human rights instruments**

658. Ms. Schöpp-Schilling briefed the Committee on an expert meeting, convened by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in December 2006, and to which she had been invited in her personal capacity, on the development of indicators for monitoring compliance with international human rights instruments. The report of a previous meeting on the same topic had been considered at the fifth inter-committee meeting (see HRI/MC/2006/7). She stressed the importance of the issue and encouraged the Committee to study the matter, and to convene an informal seminar at a future session.

### **Committee focal points**

659. The Committee discussed the possible purpose and terms of reference of Committee focal points vis-à-vis entities of the United Nations system. It agreed that in the light of its enhanced interaction with, and the efforts of such entities to provide the Committee with country-specific information, there was no need for a continuation of the practice of Committee focal points at that stage. That position will also be presented to the ICM/MC.

### **Other matters**

660. 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 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

661. 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).

662. The Committee held an exchange of views, on 1 February 2007, with the Special Rapporteur of the International Law Commission on the topic of "Reservations to treaties", Alain Pellet.

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## **Part Two**

### **Chapter I**

#### **Matters brought to the attention of States parties**

##### **Decision**

##### **Decision 38/I**

At its thirty-ninth session, the Committee will adopt a decision pertaining to extension of its meeting time. A statement of programme budget implications pertaining to this decision will also be before the Committee at its thirty-ninth session.

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### **Chapter VI**

#### **Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee**

401. The Committee considered agenda item 6, ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, at its 774th and 791st meetings on 14 May and 1 June 2007.

#### **Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 6**

##### **Members of the pre-session working group for the fortieth and forty-first sessions**

402. The Committee confirmed the following experts as members of the pre-session working group for the fortieth and forty-first sessions:

Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani

Ferdous Ara Begum

Françoise Gaspard

Violeta Neubauer

Silvia Pimentel

Heisoo Shin

Glenda Simms

Dubravka Šimonović

##### **Dates of future session of the Committee**

403. In accordance with the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2007, the following schedule was confirmed:

- (a) Thirty-ninth session: 23 July to 10 August 2007
- (b) Pre-session working group for the fortieth and forty-first sessions: 16 to 20 July 2007
- (c) Tenth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 18 to 20 July 2007

404. In accordance with the provisional calendar of conferences, the following dates are proposed for the Committee's sessions in 2008:

- (a) Fortieth session: 14 January to 1 February 2008, Geneva
- (b) Eleventh session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 9 to 11 January 2008, Geneva
- (c) Pre-session working group for the forty-second session: 4 to 8 February 2008, Geneva
- (d) Forty-first session: 30 June to 18 July 2008, New York
- (e) Pre-session working group for the forty-third session: 21 to 25 July 2008, New York
- (f) Twelfth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 23 to 25 July 2008, New York
- (g) Forty-second session: 20 October to 7 November 2008, Geneva, with parallel chamber
- (h) Pre-session working group for the forty-fourth session: 10 to 14 November 2008, Geneva
- (i) Twelfth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 14 to 17 October 2008, Geneva.

**Reports to be considered at future session of the Committee**

405. The Committee confirmed that it will consider the reports of the following States parties at its thirty-ninth session, and selected the following States parties to present their reports at the fortieth and forty-first sessions:

- (a) *Thirty-ninth session*
  - Cook Islands (initial report)
  - Belize
  - Brazil
  - Estonia
  - Guinea
  - Honduras
  - Hungary
  - Indonesia
  - Jordan
  - Kenya

Liechtenstein  
Norway  
Republic of Korea  
Singapore  
New Zealand

(b) *Fortieth session*

Saudi Arabia (initial report)  
Bolivia  
Burundi  
France  
Lebanon  
Luxembourg  
Morocco  
Sweden

(c) *Forty-first session*

Finland  
Iceland  
Lithuania  
Nigeria  
Slovakia  
United Kingdom  
United Republic of Tanzania  
Yemen

**Composition of parallel chambers at the thirty-ninth session**

406. The Committee confirmed the following composition of its parallel chambers for the thirty-ninth session, and allocation of reports of States parties:

<i>Chamber A</i>	<i>Chamber B</i>
Ferdous Ara Begum	Magalys Arocha
Saisuree Chutikul	Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani
Naela Gabr	Dorcas Coker-Appiah
Françoise Gaspard	Shanthi Dairiam
Tiziana Maiolo	Cees Flinterman

<i>Chamber A</i>	<i>Chamber B</i>
Violeta Neubauer	Ruth Halperin-Kaddari
Pramila Patten	Fumiko Saiga
Silvia Pimentel	Dubravka Šimonović
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling	Anamah Tan
Heisoo Shin	Maria Regina Tavares da Silva
Glenda Simms	Xiaoqiao Zou
<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)	Brazil (CEDAW/C/BRA/6)
Guinea (CEDAW/C/GIN/4-6)	Estonia (CEDAW/C/EST/4)
Honduras (CEDAW/C/HON/6)	Kenya (CEDAW/C/KEN/6)
Hungary (CEDAW/C/HUN/6)	New Zealand (CEDAW/C/NZL/6)
Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/3-4)	Norway (CEDAW/C/NOR/7)
Singapore (CEDAW/C/SGP/3)	Republic of Korea (CEDAW/C/KOR/5; CEDAW/C/KOR/6)
Indonesia (CEDAW/C/IND/4-5)	Liechtenstein (CEDAW/C/LIE/2; CEDAW/C/LIE/3)

The initial report of Cook Islands (CEDAW/C/COK/1) will be considered in plenary meeting.

### **Sixth inter-committee meeting and nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies**

407. The Committee decided that in addition to its Chairperson, two members of the Bureau, namely Ms. Glenda Simms and Ms. Naela Gabr, with Ms. Françoise Gaspard as backup, will attend the sixth inter-committee meeting, 18-20 June 2007, Geneva. The Chairperson will attend the nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, 21-22 June 2007, Geneva.

### **Enhancing the Committee's working methods under article 18 of the Convention Request for long overdue initial reports**

408. The Committee reviewed the status of submission of reports by States parties (CEDAW/C/2007/I/2), as well as steps taken at its thirty-seventh

session aimed at encouraging States parties to submit long overdue reports. The Committee proceeded in accordance with its decisions 29/I and 31/III (i), and 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. It also noted that at its thirty-seventh session, it had requested four States parties that are more than 20 years overdue in submitting their initial report under article 18 of the Convention, i.e., Dominica, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Liberia, to submit all their overdue reports as combined reports by March 2008, for consideration by the Committee at its forty-third session in 2009. The Committee agreed to request four more States parties with long-overdue reports - i.e., Bahamas, Central African Republic, Grenada and Seychelles - to submit their initial and all other outstanding periodic reports as combined reports by the end of 2008, for consideration by the Committee in early 2010. 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. The Committee also decided to send reminder letters to the following States parties: Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti and Tuvalu.

#### **Follow-up to the recommendation of the fifth inter-committee meeting and the eighteenth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, and preparation for the sixth inter-committee meeting and nineteenth meeting of chairpersons**

409. The Committee was briefed by Beate Schöpp-Schilling on the results of the second meeting of the working group on harmonization of working methods (see A/61/38, part three, para. 638), and the meeting's points of agreement, and the Committee discussed its position on those points. It agreed on the importance of its statement "Towards a harmonized treaty bodies system", in the light of which it expressed a preference for option (a) in regard to a mechanism to be established to work on harmonization of working methods. It also expressed its readiness to work in a constructive manner with other treaty bodies on the matter.

#### **Harmonized guidelines on reporting**

410. The Committee was briefed by its working group (Ms. Schöpp-Schilling, Ms. Gabr and Ms. Dairiam) on the review of its guidelines for preparation of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention, in the light of the acceptance, by the inter-committee meeting, of the revised harmonized reporting guidelines under international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/MC/2006/3; see also A/61/38, part three, para. 636). Based on the working group's proposal, the Committee agreed to continue its work on the revisions at its thirty-ninth session with a view to their adoption.

#### **Meeting of the International Law Commission on reservations**

411. The Committee was briefed by Mr. Flinterman on the meeting held on 15 and 16 May 2007 by the International Law Commission with representatives of human rights treaty bodies and other experts. He also briefed the Committee

on the results of the working group on reservations (see HRI/MC/2007/5, and A/61/38, part three, para. 638), drawing attention to its recommendations and noting in particular that they were in line with the Committee's practice. Following a discussion of various aspects, the Committee agreed to support the proposal for a further meeting of the working group in the future. It also agreed to keep the question of reservations under review at future sessions.

## **Other matters**

412. On 30 May 2007, the Committee was briefed by, and engaged in an interactive dialogue with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, on matters pertaining to United Nations reform and, in particular proposals regarding a new gender equality architecture (see in particular A/61/836, A/61/583 and A/61/590).

413. The Committee agreed to convene, at its thirty-ninth session, an informal meeting with States parties to the Convention, in order to update States parties on the Committee's request for extension of meeting time; its efforts to encourage States parties to submit long-overdue initial reports; its work in parallel chambers; and other matters pertaining to its responsibilities under the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

414. The Committee agreed to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Committee on 23 July, at the opening meeting of its thirty-ninth session. It extended an invitation to the Secretary-General to address the Committee on the occasion, as well as to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, and a non-governmental organization representative, as well as to Ms. Schöpp-Schilling, as the most senior member of the Committee to address the gathering.

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## **Part Three**

### **Chapter I**

#### **Matters brought to the attention of States parties**

#### **Decisions**

#### **Decision 39/I**

The Committee refers to its decisions 36/I, 37/I and 38/I, pertaining to its future meeting time. It reiterates that effective and timely implementation of all its responsibilities beyond the biennium 2006/2007 will require that it be provided with extended meeting time in 2008 and beyond. The Committee has undertaken a further assessment of the scope of its responsibilities under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women and has come to the conclusion that it is imperative that the Committee be provided, on a permanent basis, with the opportunity to hold three annual sessions, of three weeks each, and each preceded by a one-week session of a pre-session working group. This is in view of the number of States parties to the Convention, which now stands at 185, and their reporting obligations; the current 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; as well as the Committee's request to States parties with very long-overdue initial reports to submit those within a given time frame; together with its other responsibilities under the Convention and those under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Committee has also concluded that as a temporary measure, in order to eliminate the remaining backlog of reports of States parties awaiting consideration (30 as of 10 August 2007), one of the annual sessions in 2008 and in 2009, should be held in parallel chambers. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that one of its three annual sessions take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York so as to facilitate and encourage ongoing cooperation between the Committee and the United Nations gender equality bodies.

This 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 the General Assembly:

- (a) To authorize the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as a permanent measure from 2008 onwards, to hold three annual sessions of three weeks each, with a one-week pre-session working group for each session;
- (b) To authorize the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to meet, as a temporary measure in the biennium 2008-2009, for up to seven days, in parallel chambers during one of its annual sessions in each year of the biennium, for the purpose of considering reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

The Committee notes that its Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol currently convenes twice a year, for up to one week each. In order to ensure the expeditious discharge of its responsibilities under article 2 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee requests that its Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol be granted the opportunity to meet three times a year, for a total of 10 working days, immediately prior to, or after the scheduled sessions of the Committee.

## **Decision 39/II**

The Committee refers to its decision 39/I, requesting the General Assembly at its sixty-second session to approve an extension of the meeting time of the Committee. Having taken note of the statement of programme budget implications of the decision, and in an effort to reduce the overall costs of its sessions, the Committee decides that summary records of its meetings are to be issued in English only, as a temporary measure for the biennium 2008-2009. The Committee also decides to revisit this decision in 2009, when it will assess its requirements for meeting time. The Committee requests that the basis for calculating the costs for the requested extended meeting time reflected in the statement of programme budget implications be revisited so as to ensure that they are in line with the Committee's actual requirements and that the statement clearly explains the different parameters used for calculating the current requirements as compared to those of a similar request of the Committee in 2005 (see A/60/38, annex IX).

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## **Chapter V**

### **Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

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#### **A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising from article 2 of the Optional Protocol**

653. The Committee took action on communications 5/2005, 6/2005 and 7/2005 (see annex VII).

654. The Committee endorsed the reports of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its ninth and tenth sessions (see annexes VIII and IX).

655. The Committee adopted amendments to rule 60, paragraph 1, rule 63, paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, rule 64, paragraph 2, and rule 69, as follows:

- (a) Rule 60 - replace the word "may" in paragraph 1 with the word "shall";
- (b) Rule 63 - delete the words "or rapporteur" in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4;
- (c) Rule 64 - replace the phrase "provided that it is composed of five members and all of the members so decide" with the phrase "provided that all members eligible to participate so decide" in paragraph 2;

(d) Rule 69 - change “explanation or statement” to “explanations or statements” throughout the rule in order to bring it into line with article 6, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol.

*[For the text of the revised rules, see appendix below.]*

656. The Committee requested its Working Group to prepare a discussion note on the formulation and format of concurring and dissenting opinions, to serve as a basis for discussion by the Committee at its fortieth session.

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## **Appendix**

### **Amendments to rules of procedure**

#### **Rule 60**

##### **Inability of a member to take part in the examination of a communication**

1. A member of the Committee shall not take part in the examination of a communication if:

- (a) The member has a personal interest in the case;
- (b) The member has participated in the making of any decision on the case covered by the communication in any capacity other than under the procedures applicable to this Optional Protocol;
- (c) The member is a national of the State party concerned.

2. Any question that may arise under paragraph 1 above shall be decided by the Committee without the participation of the member concerned.

#### **Rule 63**

##### **Interim measures**

1. At any time after the receipt of a communication and before a determination on the merits has been reached, the Committee may transmit to the State party concerned, for its urgent consideration, a request that it take such interim measures as the Committee considers necessary to avoid irreparable damage to the victim or victims of the alleged violation.

2. A working group may also request the State party concerned to take such interim measures as the working group considers necessary to avoid irreparable damage to the victim or victims of the alleged violation.

3. When a request for interim measures is made by a working group under the present rule, the working group shall forthwith thereafter inform the

Committee members of the nature of the request and the communication to which the request relates.

4. Where the Committee or a working group requests interim measures under this rule, the request shall state that it does not imply a determination of the merits of the communication.

**Rule 64**  
**Method of dealing with communications**

1. The Committee shall, by a simple majority and in accordance with the following rules, decide whether the communication is admissible or inadmissible under the Optional Protocol.

2. A working group may also declare that a communication is admissible under the Optional Protocol, provided that all members eligible to participate so decide.

**Rule 69**  
**Procedures with regard to communications received**

1. As soon as possible after the communication has been received, and provided that the individual or group of individuals consent to the disclosure of their identity to the State party concerned, the Committee, working group or rapporteur shall bring the communication confidentially to the attention of the State party and shall request that State party to submit a written reply to the communication.

2. Any request made in accordance with paragraph 1 of the present rule shall include a statement indicating that such a request does not imply that any decision has been reached on the question of admissibility of the communication.

3. Within six months after receipt of the Committee's request under the present rule, the State party shall submit to the Committee written explanations or statements that relate to the admissibility of the communication and its merits, as well as to any remedy that may have been provided in the matter.

4. The Committee, working group or rapporteur may request written explanations or statements that relate only to the admissibility of a communication but, in such cases, the State party may nonetheless submit written explanations or statements that relate to both the admissibility and the merits of a communication, provided that such written explanations or statements are submitted within six months of the Committee's request.

5. A State party that has received a request for a written reply in accordance with paragraph 1 of the present rule may submit a request in writing that the communication be rejected as inadmissible, setting out the grounds for such inadmissibility, provided that such a request is submitted to the Committee within two months of the request made under paragraph 1.

6. If the State party concerned disputes the contention of the author or authors, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol, that all available domestic remedies have been exhausted, the State party shall give details of the remedies available to the alleged victim or victims in the particular circumstances of the case.

7. Submission by the State party of a request in accordance with paragraph 5 of the present rule shall not affect the period of six months given to the State party to submit its written explanations or statements unless the Committee, working group or rapporteur decides to extend the time for submission for such a period as the Committee considers appropriate.

8. The Committee, working group or rapporteur may request the State party or the author of the communication to submit, within fixed time limits, additional written explanations or statements relevant to the issues of the admissibility or merits of a communication.

9. The Committee, working group or rapporteur shall transmit to each party the submissions made by the other party pursuant to the present rule and shall afford each party an opportunity to comment on those submissions within fixed time limits.

...

## **Chapter VI**

### **Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee**

665. The Committee considered agenda item 6, ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, at its 792nd and 809th meetings, on 23 July and 10 August, and in closed meetings.

### **Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 6**

#### **Members of the pre-session working group for the forty-second session of the Committee**

666. The Committee designated the following experts as members of the pre-session working group for the forty-second session:

Ferdous Ara Begum  
Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani

Pramila Patten  
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling  
Glenda Simms  
Anamah Tan  
Dubravka Šimonović

### **Dates of future sessions of the Committee**

667. In accordance with the provisional calendar of conferences, the following dates are proposed for the Committee's sessions in 2008:

- **Fortieth session:** 14 January to 1 February 2008, Geneva
- Eleventh session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 9 to 11 January 2008, Geneva
- Pre-session working group for the forty-second session: 4 to 8 February 2008, Geneva
- **Forty-first session:** 30 June to 18 July 2008, New York
- Twelfth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 21 to 23 July 2008, New York
- Pre-session working group for the forty-third session: 21 to 25 July 2008, New York
- **Forty-second session:** 20 October to 7 November 2008, Geneva, with parallel chambers
- Thirteenth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 14 to 17 October 2008, Geneva
- Pre-session working group for the forty-fourth session: 10 to 14 November 2008, Geneva.

### **Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee**

668. The Committee confirmed that it will consider the reports of the following States parties at its fortieth and forty-first sessions, and selected the following States parties to present their reports at the forty-second session:

- (a) **Fortieth session**
  - Saudi Arabia (initial report)
  - Bolivia
  - Burundi
  - France
  - Lebanon
  - Luxembourg
  - Morocco
  - Sweden
- (b) **Forty-first session**

Finland  
Iceland  
Lithuania  
Nigeria  
Slovakia  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
United Republic of Tanzania  
Yemen

(c) **Forty-second session (list to be completed)**

Belgium (5-6)  
Cameroon (2-3)  
Canada (6-7)  
Ecuador (6-7)  
El Salvador (7)  
Kyrgyzstan (3)  
Mongolia (5-7)  
Myanmar (2-3)  
Portugal (6)  
Slovenia (4)  
Uruguay (4-7)

**Enhancing the Committee's working methods under article 18 of the Convention**

**Extension of the Committee's meeting time**

669. The Committee reviewed its requirements for discharging all its responsibilities under the Convention and the Optional Protocol. It concluded that in order to ensure a sustainable basis for its work, three annual sessions of three weeks each, and each with a one-week session of its pre-session working group were necessary on a permanent basis. The Committee further concluded that as a temporary measure, additional time was necessary to eliminate the remaining backlog of reports awaiting consideration. It was of the view that such additional time may be necessary from time to time, in response to the workload. Therefore, the Committee requested the General Assembly to approve a permanent extension of its meeting time; as well as a temporary measure to meet in chambers for parts of its sessions in 2008 and 2009 (see chap. I above, decision 39/I).

670. The Committee has been provided with a statement of programme budget implications in conjunction with the draft decision, and has taken note of it (see annex X). The Committee requested that the basis for calculating the costs for the extended meeting time be revisited so as to ensure that they are indeed

in line with the Committee's actual requirements and that the statement clearly explains the different parameters used for calculating the current requirements as compared to those of a similar request of the Committee in 2005 (see A/60/38, part two, annex IX). As a temporary measure for the biennium 2008-2009, the Committee decided that summary records of its meetings should be issued in English only, in order to reduce the overall costs of its sessions. The Committee decided to revisit the decision in 2009, when it will also assess its requirements for meeting time (see chap. I above, decision 39/II).

### **Follow-up to the recommendations of the sixth inter-committee meeting and the nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies**

671. The Committee discussed the results of the sixth inter-committee meeting and the nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies and of the recommendations and points of agreement contained therein (A/62/224 forthcoming). It supported the proposal of the inter-committee meeting that it meet twice annually, including for purposes of making recommendations for the improvement and harmonization of working methods of the human rights treaty bodies. It agreed that the chairpersons should participate in those meetings *ex officio*, and that the criteria of rotation and continuity be used by all committees in identifying other participants.

672. The Committee emphasized that harmonization of working methods should also aim to enhance the efficiency of the committees' working methods. It proposed that the inter-committee meeting, at its next meeting, establish a list of issues for discussion, within a specified time frame, and in order of priority. It also strongly encouraged the inter-committee meeting to conduct a self-assessment of its working methods and efficiency.

673. The Committee proposed the following issues for discussion, in order of priority, and submitted it to the next inter-committee meeting for consideration:

- Finalization of revised reporting guidelines in the light of the harmonized reporting guidelines by all treaty bodies
- Relationships between the treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council
- Interaction with national human rights institutions
- Follow-up to concluding observations
- Interaction with non-governmental organizations
- Joint general recommendations
- Interaction between the treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders
- Periodicity of periodic reports
- Use of indicators

### **Harmonized guidelines on reporting**

674. The Committee was informed that its working group consisting of Shanthi Dairiam, Naela Mohamed Gabr and Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling had been unable to consider further a draft revision of the Committee's own reporting guidelines in the light of the harmonized reporting guidelines. The Committee agreed to consider these proposals at its informal meeting in the fall of 2007 (see para. 676 below).

### **Request for long-overdue initial reports**

675. The Committee reviewed the status of submission of reports by States parties (CEDAW/C/2007/III/2), as well as steps taken at its thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions aimed at encouraging States parties to submit long-overdue reports. The Committee proceeded in accordance with its decisions 29/I and 31/III (i), and 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. It also noted that at its thirty-seventh session, it had requested four States parties that are more than 20 years overdue in submitting their initial report under article 18 of the Convention, i.e., Dominica, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Liberia, to submit all their overdue reports as combined reports by March 2008, for consideration at its forty-third session in 2009. The Committee also noted that, at its thirty-eighth session, it had requested four more States parties with long-overdue reports - i.e., Bahamas, Central African Republic, Grenada and Seychelles - to submit all their overdue reports as combined reports by the end of 2008, for consideration by the Committee in early 2010. The Committee decided to request four more States parties - Chad, Comoros, Lesotho, and Papua New Guinea - to submit all their overdue reports as combined reports by July 2009, for consideration by the Committee in the second half of 2010. As a 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 States parties concerned in the absence of a report.

### **Informal working session of the Committee**

676. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Switzerland for having invited the Committee to hold an informal working session in Switzerland during the second half of 2007. The Committee proposed to hold that meeting from 24 to 26 October 2007, and identified the following issues for discussion: revised guidelines on reporting; general recommendation on article 2 of the Convention; follow-up to the Committee's concluding comments; interaction with national human rights institutions; relationship with the Human Rights Council. The Committee also intends to hold an orientation session with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pertaining to the transfer of the servicing of the Committee to that Office as of 1 January 2008.

### **Interaction with specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system**

677. The Committee noted with appreciation that United Nations country teams submitted information in regard to six States parties whose reports were considered at the present session, namely, Belize, Brazil, Guinea, Honduras,

Indonesia and Jordan. It encourages the entities of the United Nations system, through country teams, to expand the practice and, in particular, consider making such information available to the Committee's pre-session working group tasked with preparing lists of issues and questions for reporting States, and to keep such information relatively short and succinct. The Committee also encourages the United Nations country teams to undertake follow-up activities on the basis of the Committee's concluding comments and to support States parties in their implementation of the concluding comments at the country level, and to submit further information the next time the respective State party reports.

### **Other matters**

678. On 10 August 2007, the Committee was briefed by, and engaged in an interactive dialogue with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women on matters pertaining to proposals regarding a new gender equality architecture, and in particular the concept paper prepared by the Deputy Secretary-General, dated August 2007.

679. On 8 August 2007, the Committee held an informal meeting with States parties to the Convention, for a discussion on the Committee's working methods, and in particular the Committee's request for an extension of its meeting time.

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### **Annex VIII**

#### **Report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on its ninth session**

1. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women held its ninth session from 5 to 7 February 2007. Magalys Arocha Dominguez, Cees Flinterman, Pramila Patten and Anamah Tan attended the session. Dorcas Coker-Appiah did not attend.

2. Ms. Tan was elected Chairperson of the Working Group. Mr. Flinterman was elected Vice-Chairperson.

3. The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in the annex.

4. The Working Group discussed correspondence that had been received by the secretariat since its eighth session and reviewed the status of five pending communications. It discussed correspondence from an author who had requested that her case be reopened, and decided that the grounds for

inadmissibility still applied and that the author should be so informed. The Working Group also turned down one request for interim measures.

5. The Working Group continued to review its working methods, which should henceforth take into account the work being undertaken by the human rights treaty bodies to harmonize their working methods. It held a discussion of a number of rules of procedure that might need revision.

6. The Working Group held a preliminary discussion on reservations related to individual communications and used the report of the meeting of the Working Group on Reservations (HRI/MC/2007/5) as its starting point.

7. The Working Group noted that the databases of Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (<http://sim.law.uu.nl>) and the human rights index (<http://www.universalhumanrightsindex.org/>) developed by the Institute of Public Law of the University of Bern, Switzerland, provided access to collections of information on human rights, including decisions of human rights treaty bodies under individual complaints procedures.

#### **Action taken**

8. The Working Group:

(a) Decided that its tenth session would be held from 18 to 20 July 2007 and adopted the provisional agenda for that session;

(b) Registered communications 12/2007, 13/2007 and 14/2007;

(c) Requested its secretariat to make arrangements for it to hold an informal two-day session, with one day of interpretation, for work on draft recommendations on communications, to be held immediately following the thirty-eighth session of the Committee;

(d) Requested its secretariat to provide, as might be relevant, monthly updates on new correspondence received as well as on the status of pending cases. The secretariat should also provide the Working Group at its tenth session with statistical information on correspondence received and cases registered, by region and country;

(e) Recommended that the Committee appoint Ms. Tan and Ms. Patten as Rapporteurs on follow-up to the views on communication 4/2004, *Ms. A.S. v. Hungary*;

(f) Recommended that the Committee request the United Nations Secretariat to make continuous efforts to further disseminate information about and develop training materials, including leaflets and checklists, on the Optional Protocol, in cooperation with entities of the United Nations system, including regional commissions and United Nations country teams;

(g) Recommended that the Committee consider amending its rules of procedure as follows:

(i) *Rule 60*. In paragraph 1, replace the word “may” with the word “shall”;

- (ii) *Rule 63*. In paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, delete the words “or rapporteur”;
- (iii) *Rule 64*. In paragraph 2, replace the words “provided that it is composed of five members and all of the members so decide” with the words “provided that all members eligible to participate so decide”;
- (iv) *Rule 69*. Throughout the rule, replace the words “explanation or statement” with the words “explanations or statements” in order to bring the rule into line with article 6, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol.

## **Annex**

### **Agenda of the ninth session of the Working Group**

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Review of steps and activities undertaken since the last session.
4. Review and discussion of working methods.
5. Update of communications.
6. Any other matters.
7. Adoption of the provisional agenda and dates for the tenth session of the Working Group, and of the report of the Working Group on its ninth session.

## **Annex IX**

### **Report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on its tenth session**

1. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women held its tenth session from 18 to 20 July 2007. All members attended the session.
2. The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in the annex.

3. The Working Group discussed correspondence that had been received by the Secretariat since its ninth session and reviewed the status of eight pending communications.

4. The Working Group discussed its working methods in relation to the transfer of the servicing of the Committee and the Working Group to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva in order to facilitate a smooth transition.

5. The Working Group stressed the importance for its work of the provision of translation services and interpretation in all working languages of its members so that it can function properly.

6. The Working Group discussed the need to give consideration to the formulation and format of future dissenting and concurring opinions to decisions and views adopted by the Committee in order to ensure that those opinions reflected the views of individual members and not of the Committee.

7. The rapporteurs on follow-up to the views on communication 4/2004, *Ms. A. S. v. Hungary*, Ms. Anamah Tan and Ms. Pramila Patten, briefed the Working Group on the latest submission of the State party submitted in response to the Committee's request for further information.

#### **Action taken**

8. The Working Group:

(a) Decided that its eleventh session would be held from 9 to 11 January 2008 and adopted the provisional agenda for that session;

(b) Requested the Secretariat to add a section to its note to the Working Group for each session to cover academic and other commentary on the decisions and views of the Committee with respect to communications;

(c) Requested the Secretariat to indicate, under the section of its note to the Working Group on correspondence received, whether incoming letters came from individuals or organizations;

(d) Reminded the Secretariat to implement the Working Group's earlier requests, as follows:

(i) That it be provided, as might be relevant, with monthly updates on new correspondence received as well as on the status of pending cases;

(ii) That it be provided with statistical information on correspondence received and cases registered, by region and by country;

(e) Suggested that the Committee discuss the formulation and format of future dissenting and concurring opinions to decisions and views adopted by the

Committee, drawing upon the experience of other treaty bodies. It stressed that dissenting and concurring opinions should be published simultaneously with the decisions and views of the Committee;

(f) Requested the Division for the Advancement of Women to convey to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the Working Group's request for a thorough briefing by the petitions team about its work, about the servicing of treaty bodies regarding communications and about the procedures for routing correspondence to various staff members within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights who work on communications, petitions and appeals. The Working Group would like the briefing to take place during its first meeting in Geneva;

(g) Recommended that the Committee request the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to budget for outreach and training activities on the Optional Protocol procedure and allocate sufficient human and financial resources to carry out capacity-building activities on the submission of communications for relevant stakeholders, including women's organizations, lawyers' associations and other interested civil society actors. It also recommended that the Committee request that the Division for the Advancement of Women continue to disseminate information on the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

## **Annex**

### **Agenda of the tenth session of the Working Group**

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Review of steps and activities undertaken since the last session.
3. Review and discussion of working methods.
4. Update of communications.
5. Any other matters.
6. Adoption of the provisional agenda and dates for the eleventh session of the Working Group, and of the report of the Working Group on its tenth session.

## **Annex X**

### **Request for extension of the meeting time of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

### **Programme budget implications of draft decision 39/I submitted in accordance with rule 23 of the rules of procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

## **I. Requests contained in the draft decision**

1. By its draft decision 39/I, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would request the General Assembly to:

(a) Authorize the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to hold three annual sessions of three weeks each, with a one-week pre-session working group for each session, in the biennium 2008-2009 and beyond;

(b) Authorize the Committee to meet, as a temporary measure in the biennium 2008-2009, for up to seven days in parallel chambers during one of its annual sessions for the purpose of considering reports of States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention;

(c) Authorize the Committee to hold one of the three annual sessions at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to facilitate and encourage ongoing cooperation between the Committee and the United Nations gender equality bodies.

## **II. Relationship of the proposed decision to the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2008-2009 and the programme of work contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009**

2. The activities to be carried out relate to programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights bodies and organs, of programme 19, Human Rights; and subprogramme 4, Support services, of programme 24, Management and support services, of the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2008-2009. They also fall under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; section 23, Human Rights; and section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

3. Provisions have been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 for travel and per diem costs of the 23 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to attend its two annual regular sessions of 15 working days each and, for each session, a five-day pre-session working group meeting, and the cost of attendance at two annual meetings of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol, as well as for substantive, conference and support services to the Committee, the pre-session working group and the Working Group on Communications.

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/230 of 23 December 2006, authorized the Committee to hold a third annual session in 2006 and 2007 as a temporary measure, and to meet in parallel chambers during its third annual session in 2006 and its first and third annual sessions in 2007 on an

exceptional and temporary basis. The related one-time additional provisions were included in the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

### **III. Activities by which the requests would be implemented**

5. The additional annual session, and meetings in parallel chambers, called for in the draft decision, referred to in paragraph 1 above would allow the Committee to consider a greater number of States parties' reports annually. Prior to resolution 60/230, which authorized the Committee in 2006-2007: (a) to hold three annual sessions of three weeks each, with a one-week pre-session working group for each session, two annual sessions of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol; and (b) to meet for up to seven days in parallel working groups during three of its six sessions during 2006 and 2007, the Committee considered the reports of 16 States parties annually. During 2006 and 2007, the Committee would have considered the reports of 69 States parties (31 in 2006 and 38 in 2007) and would have been able to eliminate a significant amount of the accumulated backlog of reports awaiting review.

6. By its decision 36/1, the Committee anticipated that effective and timely implementation of all of its responsibilities beyond the biennium 2006-2007 would require that it be provided with extended meeting time in 2008 and beyond. During its thirty-seventh session, the Committee undertook an assessment of the status of submission of reports under article 18 of the Convention, and in particular of the remaining backlog of reports awaiting consideration, the projected future availability of reports, as well as the Committee's request to States parties with very long overdue initial reports to submit those within a given time frame. The Committee concluded that this 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 annual sessions, at least one of which with parallel working group. This extended meeting time would ensure that the Committee could eliminate the backlog of reports waiting consideration, which now stands at 27; ensure that incoming reports are considered in a timely manner; enhance its efforts at ensuring that monitoring of the Convention in States parties with long overdue reports is undertaken; and discharge of all its other responsibilities under the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

7. In 2008-2009, a staff member at the P-4 level would serve as Secretary of the Committee, assisted by one General Service (Other level). In addition, the incumbents of one P-4, one P-3 and one P-2 posts would provide substantive support for the work of the Committee and for the Optional Protocol to the Convention. In order to support the additional workload of the Committee consequent on three sessions, in particular in view of the additional time, that would be required for preparations for the consideration of State parties reports during the Committee's sessions in the biennium 2008-2009, general temporary assistance resources, equivalent to 12 work-months at the P-3 level, would also be required to assist with:

- (a) Analysis of States parties' reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, drawing upon prior reports, and other relevant information, in particular from United Nations sources;
- (b) Preparation of draft lists of issues and questions on States parties' reports under consideration by the Committee;
- (c) In-session support to Committee experts in the preparation of draft concluding comments on States parties' reports; and
- (d) Provision of substantive support, especially during the session of the Committee with parallel working groups.

8. The current mandate of the Committee is to meet twice per year for three weeks each time. A one-week pre-session working group would precede each session. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol is currently convened twice a year, for a total of up to 10 days. The session meetings would require interpretation services in all six official languages and the pre-session working group meetings would require interpretation services in English, French and Spanish only. The total documentation required for translation into all six official languages is estimated at 6,600 pages for pre-session, 800 pages for in-session, and 800 pages for post-session relating to the two three-week sessions each year of the biennium, and a total of 800 pages for post-session documentation relating to the two one-week sessions each year of the pre-session working group for the biennium. Summary records would be provided for all the meetings of the Committee, with the exception of the pre-session working group meetings.

9. Should the draft decision be adopted, it would entail one additional three-week session in each year of the biennium on a recurrent basis, which would require interpretation services in all six official languages. On a temporary basis, the parallel working groups during one of the three annual sessions in 2008-2009, would also require interpretation services in all six official languages. The additional one-week pre-session working group meeting to be held prior to the additional three-week session would require interpretation services in English, French and Spanish only. The total additional documentation required for translation into all six official languages is estimated at 3,000 pages for pre-session, 400 pages for in-session, and 400 pages for post-session relating to the one additional three-week session each year of the biennium; a total additional 560 pages for pre-session, 105 pages for in-session, and 105 pages for post-session relating to the parallel working groups for the 2008-2009 biennium only; and a total additional 400 pages for post-session documentation relating to the additional one-week pre-session working group meeting each year of the biennium. Summary records would be provided for all the meetings of the Committee, with the exception of the pre-session working group meetings.

10. Should the draft decision be adopted, the exact dates for all the meetings of the Committee, consisting of three three-week annual sessions of the Committee, three one-week annual pre-session working group meetings and three parallel working group meetings to be held in 2008-2009, will be

determined by consultation between the substantive secretariat and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, subject to the availability of conference facilities and services.

11. With regard to paragraph (c) of the draft decision, in which the Committee would request the General Assembly's authorization to hold one of the three annual sessions at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Committee's attention is drawn to paragraph 4 of resolution 40/243 whereby the General Assembly reaffirms the United Nations bodies shall plan to meet at their respective established headquarters.

#### **IV. Modifications required in the programme of work and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009**

12. The adoption of the draft decision would result in modifications in the number of meetings and reports cited in the programme of work contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. In the narrative of section 23, subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights bodies and organs, of document A/62/6 (Sect. 23), paragraph 23.66 (a) (xvi) would be revised as follows:

##### **Paragraph 23.66**

(a) (xvi) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

- a. Substantive servicing of meetings. *Replace* "Committee plenary and chamber meetings (60 meetings per year). (120);" with "Committee plenary and chamber meetings (104 meetings per year). (208);"
- b. Parliamentary documentation. *Replace* "lists of issues and questions (38 reports annually). (76);" with "lists of issues and questions (31 reports annually). (62);"

#### **V. Estimated resource requirements**

##### **A. Conference-servicing requirements**

13. It is estimated that additional conference-servicing requirements of \$14,597,600 would arise under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. The table below provides the details of these requirements.

*Additional conference-servicing requirements for: I. Plenary meetings; II. Pre-session working groups; and III. Plenary parallel meetings [temporary]*

	<i>I. Plenary session meetings 2008-2009</i>	<i>II. Pre- session working groups 2008-2009</i>	<i>III. Plenary parallel meetings 2008-2009*</i>	<i>Total 2008-2009</i>
I. Meetings servicing	464 000	73 100	216 600	<b>753 700</b>
II. Pre-session documentation	6 370 300	—	2 389 200	<b>8 759 500</b>
III. In-session documentation	890 400	—	467 300	<b>1 357 700</b>
IV. Post-session documentation	890 400	518 700	467 300	<b>1 876 400</b>
V. Summary records	1 243 300	—	580 500	<b>1 823 800</b>
VI. Other conference services	14 600	4 900	7 000	<b>26 500</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 873 000</b>	<b>596 700</b>	<b>4 127 900</b>	<b>14 597 600</b>

\* One-time provision for 2008-2009.

## **B. Non-conference-servicing requirements**

### **Section 23, Human rights**

14. It is also estimated that additional resources of \$680,900 for travel, per diem and terminal expenses for the members of the Committee to attend a third annual session of three weeks in New York in each year of the biennium 2008-2009, with a one-week pre-session working group meeting for each session, effective from January 2008, would be required under section 23, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. Provision for general temporary assistance equivalent to 12 work-months at the P-3 level, estimated at \$150,000 is also required under section 23, Human rights.

### **Section 28D, Office of Central Support Services**

15. An additional amount of \$35,100 would be required to provide for contractual services of sound technicians to service the additional sessions and meetings of the pre-session working group.

16. Should the Committee adopt the draft decision, the total additional requirements relating to the additional sessions of the Committee and the pre-session working group meetings would amount to \$15,463,600 enumerated in the table below.

	2008	2009	Total
	<i>(United States dollars)</i>		
<b>Section 23, Human rights</b>			
Travel, per diem and terminal expenses	340 450	340 450	680 900
General temporary assistance	75 000	75 000	150 000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>415 450</b>	<b>415 450</b>	<b>830 900</b>
<b>Section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management</b>			
Meetings servicing, interpretation and documentation	7 298 800	7 298 800	14 597 600
<b>Section 28D, Office of Central Support Services</b>			
Common support services	17 500	17 600	35 100
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 731 750</b>	<b>7 731 750</b>	<b>15 463 600</b>

## VI. Contingency fund

17. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditure were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

## VII. Summary

18. Should draft decision 39/I be adopted by the Committee, additional resources in the total amount of \$15,463,600 would be required under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, including \$830,900 under section 23, Human rights, \$14,597,600 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and \$35,100 under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require additional appropriations for the biennium 2008-2009 to be approved by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

19. **The General Assembly would also be required to approve the proposed modifications to the outputs to be incorporated into the programme of work of section 23, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/62/6 (Sect. 23)) under subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights bodies and organs, paragraph 23.66 (a) (xvi).**

## **Annex XI**

### **Statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on United Nations reform pertaining to the gender equality structure**

The Committee has taken a consistent interest in the question of United Nations reform and in particular the discussion pertaining to the strengthening of the architecture for gender equality and empowerment of women. It notes that as of 1 January 2008, the Committee's servicing will be transferred from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Division for the Advancement of Women to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Committee is of the view that strong institutional linkages need to be safeguarded as well as reinforced between the Committee and the Division for the Advancement of Women, as well as any future United Nations gender equality architecture. The Committee emphasizes that the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be made an integral part of the work of any gender equality structure within the United Nations reform process.