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## **XII. WORKING METHODS OF THE COMMITTEE AND REFORM OF THE TREATY BODY SYSTEM**

557. The working methods of the Committee are based on its Rules of Procedure, adopted in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as amended,<sup>i</sup> and the Committee's established practice, as recorded in its relevant working papers and guidelines.<sup>ii</sup>

558. At its seventy-third session, the Committee further discussed its working methods, and in particular possible ways and means to address its increasing workload. While noting with appreciation that the high workload of the Committee was a result of the improved reporting rate for periodic reports submitted by States parties as well as the high number (173) of States parties to the Convention, the Committee expressed concern at the persisting backlog of reports awaiting consideration. In light of the fact that the Committee's total annual meeting time is only six weeks, the Committee felt severely constrained in its efforts to reduce the backlog and thus to consider the periodic reports of State parties in a timely manner and without undue delay. Accordingly, after having been advised of related financial implications, the Committee decided to request the General Assembly to approve one additional week of meeting time per session as of 2010.<sup>iii</sup>

559. Also at the seventy-third session, after having heard a briefing by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council and in light of relevant recommendations adopted at the seventh inter-committee meeting and the twentieth meeting of chairpersons of treaty bodies held in June 2008, the Committee acknowledged the complementarity and mutually reinforcing nature of the treaty body system and the universal periodic review and discussed the need to establish a continuing dialogue and effective cooperation with the Human Rights Council, in particular on matters related to the universal periodic review. The Committee decided to include in its agenda for the seventy-fourth session an item on its cooperation with the universal periodic review process, which would remain a permanent agenda item for future sessions.

560. In connection with discussions on the dissemination of information on the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the work of the Committee, the Committee took note of the increasing use by the United Nations of new technologies, including the webcasting of several of its public meetings, such as those of the Human Rights Council. Noting the potentially important role which these new technologies may play in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, the Committee decided to request the Secretariat to take all possible measures to have its public meetings webcasted in the near future.

561. At its seventy-third session, the Committee also had before it the decisions and recommendations of the twentieth meeting of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, held at Geneva on 21 and 22 June 2008, and the points of agreement of the seventh inter-committee meeting, held at Geneva from 23 to 25 June 2008. The meetings were attended by Ms. Fatimata-Binta Victoire Dah (chairperson), Mr. Régis de Gouttes and Mr. Anwar Kemal, who reported on their participation in these meetings and on the discussions held on matters of particular interest to the work of the Committee. At the same session, the Committee also heard a briefing by Ms. Jane Connors of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the decisions and recommendations of the twentieth meeting of chairpersons, including with regard to the further development and harmonization of the working methods of the human rights treaty bodies.

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<sup>i</sup> Compilation of Rules of Procedure adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies (HRI/GEN/3/Rev.3).

<sup>ii</sup> This includes in particular the overview of the methods of work of the Committee (*Official Records of the General Assembly, fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 18 (A/51/18)*, chap. IX); the working paper on working methods (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 18 (A/58/18)*, annex IV); the terms of reference for the work of the coordinator on follow-up to the Committee's observations and recommendation, (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 18 (A/60/18)*, annex IV); and the Guidelines for the Committee's early warning and urgent action procedure, (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 18 (A/62/18)*, annex III).

<sup>iii</sup> As an interim measure, the Committee further decided to request the Secretariat to consider all possible measures to enable the Committee to meet for one additional meeting week at its seventy-fifth session, to be held in August 2009.