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**Committee on the Elimination of  
Discrimination against Women**

**Pre-session working group**

**Forty-second session**

20 October-7 November 2008

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under  
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms  
of Discrimination against Women**

**Report of the pre-session working group**

1. At its ninth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session of the Committee to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to the periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at one of its next sessions.
2. At its thirty-first session, the Committee decided that the pre-session working group would also prepare lists of issues and questions for initial and periodic reports. In preparing the lists of issues and questions for periodic reports, particular attention would be paid to the States parties' follow-up to the Committee's previous concluding observations, and previous reports would be taken into consideration. The Committee also decided that each list would contain not more than a total of 30 clear and direct questions. The practice of clustering questions under priority topics would continue for periodic reports.
3. At its thirty-ninth session, the Committee decided that the pre-session working group for the forty-second session would meet from 4 to 8 February 2008, immediately after the fortieth session, in order to ensure that sufficient time would be available to States parties to submit their written replies to the lists of issues and questions, as well as to ensure their timely translation.
4. At its thirty-ninth session, the Committee designated the following experts as members of the pre-session working group for the forty-second session:

Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani

Ferdous Ara Begum

Pramila Patten

Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling

Glenda Simms

Dubravka Šimonović

Anamah Tan

5. The pre-session working group elected Ms. Patten to be the Chairperson of that group.

6. The pre-session working group prepared lists of issues and questions with respect to the periodic reports of Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Portugal, Slovenia and Uruguay. The pre-session working group also agreed to prepare two lists of issues and questions intersessionally for the following States parties, namely: Bahrain (initial report) and Madagascar (periodic report), since the reports were not available in translation for their consideration by the pre-session working group.

7. To assist in the preparation of the lists, the pre-session working group had before it the reports of the 11 States parties listed above; the core documents, if available as submitted by States parties; the general guidelines for the preparation of the reports by States parties (CEDAW/C/7/Rev.3); the general recommendations adopted by the Committee; background information and draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the Secretariat (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), based on an analytical comparison of current States parties' reports and the Committee's discussion thereon; and other relevant information, including concluding observations of the Committee and other treaty bodies. The pre-session working group also benefited from the input provided by the country rapporteurs. In preparing the lists of issues and questions for periodic reports, the pre-session working group paid particular attention to the States parties' follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations to previous reports.

8. The pre-session working group benefited from written and oral information submitted by United Nations entities and specialized agencies. It also received written information from non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, the pre-session working group heard an oral presentation from one non-governmental organization regarding one State party under consideration.

9. Lists of issues and questions drawn up by the pre-session working group were transmitted to the 11 States parties concerned and are contained in the following documents:

List of issues with regard to the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Belgium (CEDAW/C/BEL/Q/6)

List of issues with regard to the combined second and third periodic reports of Cameroon (CEDAW/C/CMR/Q/3)

List of issues with regard to the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Canada (CEDAW/C/CAN/Q/7)

List of issues with regard to the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ecuador (CEDAW/C/ECU/Q/7)

List of issues with regard to the seventh periodic report of El Salvador (CEDAW/C/SLV/Q/7)

List of issues with regard to the third report of Kyrgyzstan (CEDAW/C/KGZ/Q/3)

List of issues with regard to the combined fifth to seventh periodic report of Mongolia (CEDAW/C/MNG/Q/7)

List of issues with regard to the combined second and third periodic reports of Myanmar (CEDAW/C/MMR/Q/3)

List of issues with regard to the sixth and seventh periodic reports of Portugal (CEDAW/C/PRT/Q/7)

List of issues with regard to the fourth periodic report of Slovenia (CEDAW/C/SVN/Q/4)

List of issues with regard to the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Uruguay (CEDAW/C/URY/Q/7)

10. In accordance with previous decisions of the Committee, the lists of issues and questions prepared by the pre-session working group focused on themes included in the Convention. The themes included the constitutional and legislative framework and national machinery for the advancement of women; participation in decision-making; education and training; gender stereotypes; poverty and employment; violence against women, including domestic violence; trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution; health, including sexual and reproductive health; equality before the law, marriage and family relations; and women in vulnerable situations, such as older women, rural women, women belonging to ethnic and racial minorities, refugee and migrant women.

11. The pre-session working group recommends that the Committee review its decisions on working methods of the pre-session working group.