

CLOSING REMARKS

BY

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***Forty-sixth session of the Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women
New York, 12 July – 30 July 2010***

Dear Colleagues,

We have thus come to the end of the forty-sixth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. It is customary for the Committee's Chairperson to sum up the work completed and offer some reflections on our proceedings.

Let me start from the beginning of this session and assess our results. We considered the reports of seven States parties, namely Albania, Argentina, Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation and Turkey. The exceptional report of India has been rescheduled to the 47th session to take place in Geneva in October 2010 for procedural reasons.

We held an informal meeting with the entities of the United Nations system, national human rights institutions and non governmental organizations. We also attended several lunchtime briefings organized by non governmental organizations on country specific situations as well as thematic issues relating to the work of the Committee. The Committee was pleased by the high level of attendance of NGOs, which once again made a significant contribution to the work of the Committee.

The Committee also is thankful to those UN entities which provided us with detailed information, and I encourage both the UN entities and NGOs to deepen their advocacy for the promotion and protection of women's human rights and the implementation of the Convention.

During this session, we have held very fruitful meetings with Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and Ms. Lee Waldorf, human rights advisor of UNIFEM. We also met with Ms. Rashida Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. The Committee also held an informal meeting with States parties.

In addition to adopting concluding observations on these seven States parties, we have also continued our discussions on the draft general recommendations on older women, on the economic consequences of divorce and on article 2 of the Convention. The Committee also discussed activities under its Optional Protocol and adopted a decision on the merits of a case.

We also adopted a statement on the 10th Anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325.

May I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation and congratulations to the States parties that engaged in excellent constructive dialogues with the Committee, especially one that presented its report for the first time, Papua New Guinea. All States sent high level delegations many of which were headed by Ministers or Senior Government officials. This allowed us to examine in great detail the current status of implementation of the Convention in their respective countries. We identified gaps and challenges and in all instances Committee experts together with representatives sought to identify strategies for future action and to find solutions to the challenges of persistent discrimination. These dialogues confirmed the importance of regular and timely reporting and consideration so as to ensure a consistent monitoring of progress. In all cases, we recommended that the Convention form the basis for the States parties' efforts aimed at achieving gender equality.

Dear Colleagues,

During our constructive dialogues with the seven States party delegations, we have been informed about revisions of marriage and family laws, protection of women's rights in employment, new initiatives to enhance women's and girls educational opportunities and achievements, the elimination of discrimination and stereotypes and the participation of women in public life. We have also heard the significant steps which States are taking to address violence against women including domestic violence, and strengthen support services for women victims of violence. At the same time, the Committee had found continuing discrimination against women in relation to the many substantive provisions of the Convention. As always, the Committee paid attention to a specific situation in each country and elaborated its concluding observations that include concerns and recommendations for narrowing and closing gender equality gaps. In all cases, we recommended that the Convention be fully integrated in their domestic legislation. All States need to check the compatibility of their legislation with the Convention, especially after the ratification of the Optional Protocol. In many States the CEDAW Convention should be rediscovered and used as a central legally binding instrument for the development of policies for the advancement of women and the elimination of discrimination against them. It is also important to connect the implementation of CEDAW Convention with the implementation of other human rights treaties as well as with other complementary policy documents such as the Beijing Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals and Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1888. Our Follow-up procedure is also very important in this regard. I would like to urge States parties to ensure that their concluding observations are discussed in Parliament and that the preparation of the next periodic reports, as well as

reports in the context of our follow-up procedure, be made available to parliament and all ministries.

Dear Colleagues,

Before I conclude, may take this opportunity to sincerely thank all experts for the hard work accomplished during the past three weeks, in particular the country rapporteurs who have greatly contributed to our discussions during the dialogues with the representatives of the States parties. I am also grateful to my colleagues in the Bureau for their wise counsel and advice on the many issues that we have tackled. I hope that with our joint efforts, and with the support of the Secretariat, we are giving States parties clear guidance on the implementation of the Convention and with that, we as a Committee are making a difference in the lives of many women victims of discrimination.

I would also like to extend the Committee's appreciation to our Secretariat who supported us, for their dedication and hard work, to the interpreters, précis- summary-writers, conference officers and all those who made this session successful. I wish you all a safe journey home and I look forward to seeing you in Geneva in October 2010, at our forty-seventh session.

Thank you very much.
