

CLOSING REMARKS

by

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***Forty-seventh session of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Geneva, 4 to 22 October 2010***

Dear Colleagues,

We have thus come to the end of the forty-seventh 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 six States parties, namely Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, India, Malta, Tunisia and Uganda.

We held informal meetings 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. 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. We are particularly grateful to International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific for their support.

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 Mr. Ibrahim Salama, Director of the Human Rights Treaties Division in OHCHR, Ms. Farida Shaheed, Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights; Ms. Lee Waldorf of UNIFEM; and Ms. Jane Connor, Director of the Division for Special Procedures in OHCHR.

In addition to adopting concluding observations on these six States parties, we have also adopted two general recommendations: one on older women and

protection of their human rights, and one on article 2 of the Convention. The Committee has worked very hard on these general recommendations for a number of years and I would like to thank the members of the working groups and especially Ms. Begum and Mr. Flinterman, respectively, for all their efforts.

The Committee also issued a joint press release with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities with respect to the flooding in Pakistan and its effect of vulnerable groups, including women. The Committee also issued a statement on the establishment of UN Women. The Committee additionally decided to elaborate a general recommendation on women in armed conflict and post conflict situations and will establish a working group in January 2011. Furthermore, the Committee is working on a joint general recommendation on harmful practices with the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Committee considered follow-up information provided by States with respect to the implementation of the Convention. Upon recommendation of the Working Group, the Committee decided to close its follow-up procedure in relation to communication no. 4/2004 as it was satisfied with the implementation of the recommendations. The Committee adopted the report of the Rapporteur on follow-up, including reminders sent to several States that had not submitted their follow-up reports within the established deadlines.

May I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation and congratulation to the States parties that engaged in the excellent constructive dialogues with the Committee. Many of the States sent high level delegations 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 the respective countries. We identified gaps and challenges and in all instances Committee experts together with representatives sought to identify strategies for further 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 six States parties' 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 of the significant steps which States are taking to address violence against women including domestic violence, and to 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 the specific situations in each country and elaborated its concluding observations which 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 parties are obliged to ensure that their domestic legislation is in harmony with the provisions of the Convention. It is also important to connect the implementation of the 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, the Millennium Development Goals and Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1888. 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, are made available to the 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 advise on the many issues that we have tackled. I hope that with our joint efforts, and with the support of the Secretariat, we are providing States parties clear guidance on the implementation of the Convention in order to make a difference in the lives of many women and girls that are victims of discrimination.

At this time, I would like to recognize four members that will leaving the Committee – Ms. Ferdous Ara Begum, Ms. Saisuree Chutikul, Ms. Dorcas Coker-Appiah and Ms. Cornelis Flinterman. Could these four members please stand-up. I would like to recognize and thank them for their significant

contributions to the work of the Committee, and their tireless efforts on behalf of women and girls everywhere. On behalf of the Committee, please know that you will be missed very much. Let's give them a big round of applause.

I would also like to extend the Committee's appreciation to Mr. Bradford Smith, our Secretary, and the Human Rights Officers – Ms. Catherine de Preux de Baets, Ms. Harumi Fuentes, Ms. Helle Iversen, Mr. Jakob Sneider, and Ms. Nathalie Stadelmann. I would additionally like to thank CEDAW's very capable Administrative Assistant, Irene and the two interns, Izabella and Haruka. On behalf of the Committee, we thank you for your dedication, efficiency and hard work. We would also like to thank 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 the new year - January 2011 at the forty-eighth session.

Thank you very much.
