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## Commission on the Status of Women

### Sixty-first session

13-24 March 2017

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters**

## **Results of the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

### **Note by the Secretariat**

#### *Summary*

The present note reflects the results, including decisions taken, of the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, held in Geneva from 4 to 22 July and from 24 October to 18 November 2016, respectively. Information on the sixty-third session, held in Geneva from 15 February to 4 March 2016, can be found in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly ([A/71/38](#), part III).

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\* [E/CN.6/2017/1](#).



## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [47/94](#), the General Assembly recommended that the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be scheduled, whenever possible, to allow for the timely transmission of the results of those sessions for information to the Commission on the Status of Women.
2. The Committee held its sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions from 4 to 22 July and from 24 October to 18 November 2016, respectively. At its sixty-fourth session, the Committee sent a letter to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in which it reiterated its commitment to engaging in the reporting process for proposed Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.1.1 (“Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex”) and indicated its support for the proposal that the substantive provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women serve as the basis for the identification of those legal frameworks. The Committee also reviewed a statement on addressing gender dimensions in large-scale movements of refugees and migrants, which was subsequently adopted jointly with the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN-Women, and held a side event together with the Committee on Migrant Workers on promoting and protecting women migrant workers’ labour and human rights through the Convention, organized by OHCHR and UN-Women.
3. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee met the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, to discuss strengthened cooperation, especially in relation to updating its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women. The Committee welcomed the development of a draft list of questions prepared by UN-Women, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Social Institutions and Gender Index and the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law database for proposed Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.1.1 and decided to test the questions by integrating them into its lists of issues and questions and constructive dialogues with States parties, beginning in 2017. It also decided not to accept any new requests from States parties to be considered under the simplified reporting procedure until it had assessed the effectiveness of the procedure.
4. The Committee continued to engage with partners. Directly following the sixty-third session, the Chair of the Committee, Yoko Hayashi, delivered a statement to the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixtieth session, in New York. Before the sixty-fifth session, on 10 October 2016, the Chair presented the report of the Committee on its sixty-first, sixty-second and sixty-third sessions ([A/71/38](#)) to the Third Committee of the General Assembly in New York.
5. At its sixty-fourth session, the Committee received a briefing from Amnesty International on the organization’s new sex workers policy, which advocated the decriminalization of women in prostitution.
6. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee heard a briefing via videoconference from a representative of the UN-Women Training Centre in Santo Domingo on the

new online training tool on the Convention developed by UN-Women. It also received a briefing via videoconference from the Chief of the Statistical Services Branch of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat on the development of indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular indicator 5.1.1. The Committee also privately met the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and parliamentarian from Bangladesh, Saber Chowdhury, who was accompanied by parliamentarians active in promoting gender equality who had participated in the 135th IPU Assembly, held in Geneva, and the Committee against Torture to discuss issues relating to gender-based violence against women. It further held an informal public meeting with the States parties to the Convention, which was attended by representatives of 71 States parties. The Committee briefed the States parties on the implementation of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto in the context of General Assembly resolution [68/268](#) on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, its engagement with UN-Women on indicator 5.1.1 and its recent work on draft general recommendations.

7. The Committee continued to benefit from country-specific information received from United Nations country teams, entities and specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations (the last-mentioned coordinated by International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific).

8. As at 18 November 2016, the closing date of the sixty-fifth session of the Committee, there were 189 States parties to the Convention and 108 States parties to the Optional Protocol. A total of 71 States had accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee. To bring the amendment into force, two thirds of the States parties to the Convention (currently 126 States parties) must deposit their instruments of acceptance with the Secretary-General.

## **II. Results of the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions of the Committee**

### **A. Reports considered by the Committee**

9. At its sixty-fourth session, the Committee considered the reports of eight States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon: Albania ([CEDAW/C/ALB/4](#)), France ([CEDAW/C/FRA/7-8](#)), Mali ([CEDAW/C/MLI/6-7](#)), Myanmar ([CEDAW/C/MMR/4-5](#)), the Philippines ([CEDAW/C/PHL/7-8](#)), Trinidad and Tobago ([CEDAW/C/TTO/4-7](#)), Turkey ([CEDAW/C/TUR/7](#)) and Uruguay ([CEDAW/C/URY/8-9](#)).

10. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee considered the reports of 11 States parties and issued its concluding observations thereon: Argentina ([CEDAW/C/ARG/7](#)), Armenia ([CEDAW/C/ARM/5-6](#)), Bangladesh ([CEDAW/C/BGD/8](#)), Belarus ([CEDAW/C/BLR/8](#)), Bhutan ([CEDAW/C/BTN/8-9](#)), Burundi ([CEDAW/C/BDI/5-6](#)), Canada ([CEDAW/C/CAN/8-9](#)), Estonia ([CEDAW/C/EST/5-6](#)), Honduras ([CEDAW/C/HND/7-8](#)), the Netherlands ([CEDAW/C/NLD/6](#)) and Switzerland ([CEDAW/C/CHE/4-5](#)).

11. Representatives of United Nations country teams, entities and specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations attended the sessions. The reports of the States parties, the Committee's lists of issues and questions, the States parties' replies thereto and their introductory statements are posted on the website of the Committee under the relevant session, as are the concluding observations of the Committee.

## **B. Action taken in relation to the implementation of article 21 of the Convention**

### **Working group on the right to education**

12. The working group met during the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions and discussed the draft general recommendation on women's and girls' right to education.

### **Working group on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate**

13. The working group met during the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions. At the sixty-fourth session, it discussed a first draft of the general recommendation, which was presented to the Committee. At the sixty-fifth session, it decided to send a note verbale inviting States parties to comment on the draft general recommendation, which was subsequently shared online with stakeholders intersessionally, and to extend the deadline for the submission of comments to 31 January 2017 for all stakeholders.

### **Working group on working methods**

14. The working group met during the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions. At the sixty-fourth session, it considered and submitted draft decisions to the Committee on the time limit for the submission of follow-up information and the maximum number of follow-up issues, the adoption of lists of issues and questions prior to reporting under the simplified reporting procedure, the continuation of operation in country task forces and a running list of model questions for the constructive dialogue. At the sixty-fifth session, the working group considered and submitted to the Committee draft decisions on coordination meetings of country task forces and revised standard paragraphs in the concluding observations of the Committee. All draft decisions were adopted by the Committee. The working group also revised a guidance note for country rapporteurs.

### **Working group in charge of updating general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women**

15. The working group met during the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions. At the sixty-fourth session, it finalized the first draft of the general recommendation on gender-based violence against women (updating general recommendation No. 19), which was presented to the Committee and shared online with stakeholders intersessionally. At the sixty-fifth session, the working group considered comments on the draft that had been received from numerous stakeholders and decided to

continue to consider them intersessionally. The Committee endorsed the proposal of the working group to continue its close collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in its continuing work on the draft general recommendation until the adoption of the draft.

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/UN-Women/  
Sustainable Development Goals working group**

16. The working group met during the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions. At the sixty-fourth session, it discussed the outcome of a workshop on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.1.1, organized by UN-Women on 14 and 15 June 2016 in New York, and decided to continue its cooperation with UN-Women on the matter intersessionally. At the sixty-fifth session, it discussed a draft list of questions prepared by UN-Women, the Social Institutions and Gender Index and the Women, Business and the Law database to test the indicator. It also decided to provide the Committee, at its sixty-sixth session, in February/March 2017, with a first draft of the substantive input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017.

**Working group on the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

17. The working group met during the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions. At both sessions, it discussed the priorities for its cooperation with IPU. At the sixty-fourth session, it focused on increasing the representation of women in political and public life through the Sustainable Development Goal process, in particular measurement and indicator 5.1.1; the establishment of independent national accountability mechanisms to oversee elections; delivering technical assistance to countries to better understand the link between development and human rights; and its recommendations on quotas for political parties. At the sixty-fifth session, the working group focused on institutionalizing annual joint meetings between the Committee and the IPU Assembly, building the capacity of parliaments to assess their own gender sensitivity and increasing collaboration on the issues of migration and refugee flows, women and peace and security and the monitoring of the implementation of the Goals.

**C. Action taken in relation to ways and means of expediting the work  
of the Committee**

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

18. At its sixty-fourth session, the Committee decided that only members having submitted comments in writing within 10 days of the receipt at the beginning of a session of draft lists of issues and questions prior to reporting prepared under the simplified reporting procedure (decision 58/II) by the pre-sessional working group, to be convened after each regular session, would be able to propose amendments for discussion during the adoption of such lists in plenary meeting at the Committee's next regular session. It also decided that lists of issues and questions prior to reporting would be limited to a maximum of 25 paragraphs, including a standard paragraph asking States parties to provide information on the measures taken to

implement the Committee's previous concluding observations, and would not raise more than 75 issues. The Committee further decided to continue, on a permanent basis, to operate in country task forces for its constructive dialogues with States parties.

19. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee decided, to avoid having overdue periodic reports cover only the period up to the due date, to amend the standard paragraph in its concluding observations concerning the date for the submission of the next periodic report of the State party concerned by adding the following sentence: "In case of delay, the report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission." It also decided, with immediate effect, to hold its biennial informal meetings with the States parties to the Convention in public meeting with live webcasting and summary record coverage.

### **Follow-up procedure**

20. The Committee continued its work under the follow-up procedure at its sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions, adopting the reports of the Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and considering the follow-up reports of Algeria, Angola, Austria, Chile, Cyprus, Hungary, Kuwait, Malta, Mexico, Nepal, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo and Turkmenistan. The reports are posted on the web page of the Committee. At its sixty-fourth session, the Committee decided to limit the number of issues in the concluding observations designated by the Committee for follow-up to a maximum of four issues or subparagraphs. At its sixty-fifth session, it decided to appoint Hilary Gbedemah as Rapporteur on follow-up and Lia Nadaraia as alternate Rapporteur, both for a period of two years from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018. The Committee also adopted the assessment of the follow-up procedure presented by the outgoing Rapporteur on follow-up, Xiaoqiao Zou, recommending that the procedure should be continued and the next assessment made at the seventy-first session, to be held in October/November 2018.

### **Overdue reports**

21. The Committee decided that the secretariat should systematically remind States parties whose reports were five years or more overdue to submit their reports as soon as possible. As at 18 November 2016, the closing date of the sixty-fifth session, there were 12 States parties whose reports were overdue by five years or more: Belize, Cook Islands, Dominica, Kiribati, Latvia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe and Suriname. With regard to long-overdue reports, the Committee decided that, as a last resort, and failing receipt of the long-overdue reports by a specified date, it would proceed with the consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the State party in the absence of a report. In 2017, the Committee is scheduled to review the implementation of the Convention in Saint Kitts and Nevis in the absence of a report. States parties have been responsive to the reminders transmitted by the secretariat, as evidenced by the number of reports submitted and scheduled for consideration. The Committee currently has 36 reports scheduled for consideration between the sixty-sixth session (February/March 2017) and the sixty-ninth session (February/March 2018).

**Dates of future sessions of the Committee**

22. The Committee confirmed the tentative dates of its sixty-sixth, sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth sessions as follows:

*Sixty-sixth session*

- (a) Thirty-seventh session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 7 to 10 February 2017, Geneva;
- (b) Sixth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 9 and 10 February 2017, Geneva;
- (c) Plenary: 13 February to 3 March 2017, Geneva;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the sixty-eighth session: 6 to 10 March 2017, Geneva;

*Sixty-seventh session*

- (a) Thirty-eighth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 28 to 30 June 2017, Geneva;
- (b) Seventh session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 29 and 30 June 2017, Geneva;
- (c) Plenary: 3 to 21 July 2017, Geneva;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the sixty-ninth session: 24 to 28 July 2017, Geneva;

*Sixty-eighth session*

- (a) Thirty-ninth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 18 to 20 October 2017, Geneva;
- (b) Eighth session of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol: 19 and 20 October 2017, Geneva;
- (c) Plenary: 23 October to 17 November 2017, Geneva;
- (d) Pre-sessional working group for the seventieth session: 20 to 24 November 2017, Geneva.

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

23. The Committee confirmed that it would consider the reports of El Salvador, Germany, Ireland, Jordan, Micronesia (Federated States of), Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Ukraine at its sixty-sixth session and the reports of Barbados, Costa Rica, Italy, Montenegro, the Niger, Nigeria, Romania and Thailand at its sixty-seventh session.

**D. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising from article 2 and article 8 of the Optional Protocol**

24. At its sixty-fourth session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its thirty-fifth session. The Committee adopted inadmissibility decisions with regard to communications Nos. 57/2013 and 64/2013 concerning Denmark and No. 67/2014 concerning Austria, by consensus.

25. Also during the sixty-fourth session, the Committee decided to put the follow-up dialogue to a close with regard to a communication concerning Denmark (No. 53/2013), having found a satisfactory resolution of the recommendations contained in its views.

26. With regard to inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee, among other things, endorsed the report of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol on its fourth session. In relation to inquiry 2011/1 concerning Canada, the Committee decided to mandate the designated members to assess information received from the State party pursuant to article 9 (2) of the Optional Protocol on the measures that it had taken in response to the Committee's inquiry intersessionally and to make a recommendation to the Committee at the sixty-fifth session.

27. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its thirty-sixth session. The Committee adopted views finding violations with regard to communication No. 66/2014 concerning Slovakia and declared communications Nos. 61/2013 and 71/2014 concerning Denmark and communication No. 74/2014 concerning Norway inadmissible, by consensus.

28. With regard to inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol on its fifth session. In relation to inquiry 2010/1 concerning the Philippines, the Committee decided to send a note verbale informing the State party that the follow-up information requested in its concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/PHL/7-8](#), para. 56) in relation to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the inquiry report on the Philippines ([CEDAW/C/OP.8/PHL/1](#), paras. 49-52) would at the same time constitute the information to be submitted by the State party under article 9 (2) of the Optional Protocol. In relation to inquiry 2011/1 concerning Canada, the Committee decided to request the State party to submit an interim follow-up report in November 2018 and a comprehensive follow-up report in November 2020 on measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee contained in its inquiry report.