

CLOSING REMARKS

by

Ms. Dalia Leinarte

Sixty-eighth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Dear Colleagues,

As we are coming to the end of the sixty-eighth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, it is customary for the Chair to sum up the work completed during this session.

Let me start from the beginning of this session and assess our results. We considered the reports of twelve States parties, adopted concluding observations on these States, and approved the list of issues prior to reporting concerning one State party under the simplified reporting procedure.

We held informal meetings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and also attended several lunchtime briefings organized by NGOs. The Committee was pleased by the high level of engagement of NHRIs and local NGOs. Many of the latter were supported by the global to local programme of IWRAW-Asia Pacific and once again made significant contributions to the work of the Committee.

The Committee is also thankful to those UN entities and other inter-governmental bodies which provided us with detailed information, including the Inter-Agency Group on CEDAW Reporting (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO and UN Women), as well as OHCHR desk officers, UNHCR, IOM and IPU. I am pleased to note that UN Country Teams have contributed their reports through the Inter-Agency Group and that several UNCTs either sent representatives or briefed us via video link.

One highlight of this session was our adoption yesterday of general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on girls' and women's right to education, in the presence of our colleague and friend Barbara Bailey, whom I want to thank wholeheartedly for all the work she has put into this general recommendation. I wish to congratulate the working group on the right to education and especially

its new Chair, Hilary Gbedemah, for the excellent work done, with support from Janna who has unfortunately left the CEDAW core team.

I also wish to acknowledge the good progress made by the Working Group on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, which enabled us to finalize our first reading of the draft General Recommendation on the topic that I am confident we will be able to adopt at our next session.

We were also able to adopt the joint statement on the occasion of the International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which further reinforces our good cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Dubravka Simonovic, as well as with the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice. In that regard, I also wish to express my satisfaction with our productive meeting with the Chair of the Working Group, Alda Facio, during this session.

Another highlight was the expert panel that we hosted on Tuesday this week to launch our new General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19. The large number of States parties and UN as well as NGO representatives in attendance attest to the importance of the new General Recommendation. I would like to acknowledge the support received from the Women's Rights and Gender Section as well as from Céline Georgi for making this a successful event.

I also thank Lia Nadaria for her work on the report of inquiry 2014/1, with support from the Secretariat, which enabled us to finalize our first reading of the report at this session. I trust that we will be able to adopt the report at our next session when I hope our dear colleague and friend Oby Nwankwo, who undertook the inquiry visit together with Ms. Nadaria, will be with us again. I take this occasion to once again extend our heartfelt recovery wishes to Oby.

I am satisfied with the progress we have achieved in implementing General Assembly resolution 68/268 on treaty body strengthening by acknowledging the submission by a State party of its follow-up report in our concluding observations, or regretting the non-submission of such report, respectively, as well as by refining the assessment criteria for follow-up information received from States parties.

I thank our Working Group on SDGs for having prepared the briefing by UNFPA on SDG indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 relating to women's sexual and reproductive health. The Chair of the Working Group, Nicole Ameline, has taken an important initiative by proposing the organization of a side-event at the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2018, with a view to disseminating the Committee's work in reinforcing the implementation and promotion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its inextricable linkage to the Convention.

Special thanks go to Hilary Gbedemah and Lia Nadaraia for their important work as Rapporteur and alternate Rapporteur on follow-up which enabled us to adopt four follow-up assessments at this session.

We also made good progress in our work under the Optional Protocol on individual communications. Thanks to the excellent drafts prepared by our Working Group on Communications, we were able to adopt three final decisions, again in record time.

During the session, we again had interesting exchanges at the lunch briefing on women and HIV/AIDS hosted by UNAIDS as well as at the reception hosted by the Permanent Representative of Turkey, His Excellency Ambassador Koru, for the launch of General Recommendation No. 35 on GBVAW and at the working breakfast hosted by the Permanent Mission of Lithuania at the International Labour Organization whose senior staff time and expertise were deeply appreciated.

Dear Colleagues,

Before I conclude, please allow me to sincerely thank all experts for the hard work accomplished during the past four weeks, including the country rapporteurs who guided our dialogues with the representatives of the States parties and drafted the concluding observations on sometimes very complex legal issues, as well as the adoption of our LOIPR on Mauritius. I also wish to acknowledge the active participation of country task force members in the constructive dialogues with States parties, which again were represented by high-level delegations with relevant expertise.

I cannot conclude this session before having thanked Sulini Sarugasar and Janna Iskakova for the brilliant support that they have provided to the Committee over the years. While Janna has moved to the OHCHR Capacity Building Team,

Sulini will leave the Secretariat to join her family in Bangalore, India. I wish both of them the best of luck and hope that we will have the pleasure to work with them again one day in the future. Janna and Sulini will be greatly missed by the Committee.

Lastly, I thank all our colleagues from the Secretariat who again provided excellent support to us, with the help from our interns Stephany Caro Mejia and Sanne Lennartson, as well as the interpreters, précis writers, press officers, translators, conference room officers, technicians and all others who made this session successful.

After a long sixty-eighth session with sometimes exhausting debates, I wish you a safe journey home, a relaxing end-of-the-year period, and look forward to seeing you in Geneva in February next year for our sixty-ninth session.
