

CLOSING REMARKS

by

Ms. Nicole Ameline

***Fifty-ninth session of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women***

Dear Colleagues,

As we are coming to the end of the fifty-ninth 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.

Let me start from the beginning of this session and assess our results. We considered the reports of eight States parties, including the largest country in the world, population-wise, China. We held informal meetings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and also attended several lunchtime briefings organized by non-governmental organizations. The Committee was pleased by the high level of attendance of NGOs, both international and national, which 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, and I am pleased that we have had an opportunity today to discuss ways of further enhancing our engagement with the Inter-Agency Group on CEDAW Reporting (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO and UN Women) which coordinates the submission of country-specific information by UN country teams. I particularly wish to thank the UN country teams that have contributed their reports through the Inter-Agency Group or even came to attend the session, as well as UNHCHR, ILO and IPU.

I am satisfied with the progress we have achieved in implementing General Assembly resolution 68/268 on treaty body strengthening, in particular our decision on the application of the simplified reporting procedure as from 1 January 2015 on a pilot basis. I am also satisfied that we were able to decide on our three working languages (English, French and Spanish) and to determine our additional fourth working language for the coming two years (Arabic). In that

regard, I would like to thank the working group on working methods and in particular the chair of the working group, Patricia Schulz, for the progress made. Our informal meeting with the States parties to the Convention yesterday once more confirmed that CEDAW is a performer when it comes to strengthening and streamlining the working methods of human rights treaty bodies. It also confirmed that we are comprehensively covering very relevant issues in our work, including violence against women and the integration of women's rights and gender in the post-2015 development agenda.

Among the major achievements during this session was the adoption of the Joint CEDAW/CRC General Recommendation on harmful practices, the first ever document of this type adopted by two different treaty bodies. I wish to congratulate Violeta Neubauer and the other members of the working group on this success. Similarly, I wish to congratulate Dubravka Simonovic on the successful adoption of our General Recommendation on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women. Both GRs will form part of the legacy that Violeta and Dubravka will leave behind. Let me also congratulate Silvia Pimentel on the progress achieved by her working group with regard to the draft general recommendation on access to justice, as reflected by our successful first reading of this document today.

Similarly, I was impressed with the progress we have made by adopting four decisions on individual communications thanks to the quality work of our Working Group on Communications, ably chaired over the past two years by Yoko Hayashi. At this point, I would like to emphasize how important it was for us to have Olinda Bareiro on the Working Group (and, of course, on the Committee), which benefitted from her legal expertise on the Latin American system of human rights protection. Equally important, Dubravka Simonovic greatly contributed to the Working Group which she chaired prior to Ms. Hayashi.

I also want to pay tribute to our dear colleague Milena Pires, who so professionally contributed to CEDAW's work on concluding observations, lists of issues and many other aspects. We will miss her as we will miss Meriem Zerdani, our passionate and eminent women's rights advocate from Algeria. Chère Meriem, dear Dubravka, Violeta, Milena, querida Olinda, I wish you only the best for your future endeavours.

We made progress in many other respects during this session, such as by establishing a Working Group on Inquiries, and in relation to follow-up on concluding observations, with our new Rapporteur on follow-up, Xiaoqiao Zou,

and her alternate Hilary Gbedemah, who are stepping into the big footsteps that Barbara Bailey leaves as Follow-up Rapporteur. We are also privileged that UNRISD, the Director of Amnesty International France and other partners briefed us on such important topics as gender and social development, and new forms of violence against women during our session. Also during the session, Pramila Patten ably represented CEDAW on the High-Level Advisory Group for the Global Study on Security Council resolution 1325.

In addition to our work, we also had many pleasant social events during the session, the receptions by the Ambassador of Japan, by UNHCR and by the City of Geneva at Palais Eynard, as well as our Committee dinner.

At the end of my term as Chairperson, I would also like to make a few personal remarks, which I will make in French: [...]

Dear Colleagues,

Before I conclude, please allow me to sincerely thank all experts for the hard work accomplished during the past three weeks, including the country rapporteurs who have greatly contributed to our discussions during the dialogues with the representatives of the States parties. I also wish to extend my appreciation to the States parties that engaged in excellent constructive dialogues with the Committee, often represented by very high-level delegations.

Last but not least, I would like to thank our Secretariat and the interpreters, précis writers, translators, conference room officers, technicians and all the others who made this session successful.

I wish you a safe journey and Happy Holidays and look forward to seeing you in Geneva in February for our sixtieth session, when we will also receive the new members of the Committee.

Thank you very much.
