

## ***CLOSING REMARKS***

*by*

*Ms. Magalys Arocha*

### ***Sixty-seventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women***

Dear Colleagues,

As we are coming to the end of the sixty-seventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, our Chairperson, Dalia Leinarte, has requested me to deliver these remarks in her place 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 eight 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 on Tuesday of general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, in the presence of our colleague and friend Dubravka Simonovic, who has collaborated with the Committee in this

process in her capacity as Special Rapporteur on violence against women. The adoption of this new landmark general recommendation, 25 years after the adoption of general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women in 1992, has been long awaited by many stakeholders and provides important guidance to States parties on their due diligence and other obligations to prevent and protect women from all forms of gender-based violence, including violence committed in the cyberspace and violent extremism. I wish to congratulate the working group on gender-based violence against women and especially the Chair of the working group, Feride Acar, for the excellent work done, with support also from the OHCHR Women's Rights and Gender Section.

I also wish to acknowledge the good progress made by the Working Group on the right to education, which enabled us to finalize our first reading of the draft General Recommendation on the right to education of girls and women today, as well as by the Working Group on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate in further refining the draft General Recommendation on this topic.

We were also able to endorse the “Recommendations for addressing women’s human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration” that had been adopted at an expert meeting hosted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Women in November last year, in which Nahla Haidar and our former colleagues Pramila Patten and Bianca Pomeranzi participated.

Another highlight was the adoption of our findings, comments and recommendations in relation to inquiry No. 2011/2 which will be transmitted to the State party concerned. I wish to thank Ruth Kaddari for her dedicated work on this excellent report which will remain confidential until the lapse of the six-month period for the State party to submit its observations on the inquiry report.

I also thank Lia Nadaria for introducing the report of inquiry 2014/1 which will be further considered at our next session, when our colleague and friend Oby Nwankwo, who undertook the inquiry visit together with Ms. Nadaria, will hopefully be with us again.

I am satisfied with the progress we have achieved in implementing General Assembly resolution 68/268 on treaty body strengthening by extending the scope of our concluding observations to include issues raised in the list of issues in

addition to those raised during the dialogue, and by amending our previous decisions concerning the membership of country task forces and the designation of country rapporteurs.

I thank our Working Group on SDGs for having prepared the briefings by the World Bank, OECD and UN-Women on the refinement of the methodology of and collection of data on 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 by FAO on indicator 5.a.2 ("percentage of countries where the legal framework, including customary law, guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control"). The Chair of the Working Group, Nicole Ameline, has taken important initiatives by proposing to establish a Steering Committee with the World Bank, the OECD and UN Women to regularly exchange information on progress made in refining the methodology of SDG indicator 5.1.1, and by requesting both the World Bank and the OECD to submit country-specific information for the consideration of States parties' reports.

In addition, UNFPA gave us an instructive briefing via video link on women's rights issues related to surrogacy.

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 nine 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 four final decisions in record time.

During the session, we again had interesting exchanges at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights where we met with the members of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Human Rights Council for an informal consultation, as well as at the receptions by the Permanent Representatives of Lithuania and France.

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 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 Liechtenstein. 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.

Lastly, I thank our colleagues from the Secretariat who again provided excellent support to us, with the help from our interns Lucía Domínguez Cisneros, Isabel Süß and Jimena Sarmiento, as well as the interpreters, précis writers, press officers, translators, conference room officers, technicians and all others who made this session successful.

I wish you a safe journey and look forward to seeing you in Geneva in October for our sixty-eighth session.

---