

CLOSING REMARKS

by

Ms. Yoko Hayashi

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

Dear Colleagues,

As we are coming to the end of the sixty-first 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. We held informal meetings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and also attended several lunchtime briefings organized by non-governmental organizations. The Committee was pleased by the high level of attendance of local NGOs 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, including 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, as well as UNHCR, ILO and IPU. I am pleased to note that UN country teams have contributed their reports through the Inter-Agency Group or even sent representatives to attend the session.

I am satisfied with the progress we have achieved in implementing General Assembly resolution 68/268 on treaty body strengthening, in particular our decisions on the San José guidelines on reprisals adopted at the 27th meeting of Chairpersons and on the elaboration of and consultations on general comments/general recommendations. I am confident that we will be able to find ways to adapt the guidelines to our specific mandate. 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, as well as Nahla Haidar, for the progress made.

One of the highlights of this session was the adoption of General Recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice, which represents a milestone on the long path towards a more effective protection of women's rights. I take this opportunity to congratulate Silvia Pimentel on this success and to thank her and all the members who contributed to the work on the General Recommendation.

One big step forward during this session was our first reading of draft General Recommendation No. 34 on rural women. I am sure that with Naela Gabr's able guidance and the support of the other members of the working group it will be possible to adopt the GR at our next session.

Similarly, I wish to thank Feride Acar and the working group in charge of updating General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women for the progress made in deciding on the process for updating GR No. 19.

I also wish to acknowledge the good progress we have made by adopting four decisions on individual communications, based on the quality drafts from the Working Group on Communications. Thanks to the preparatory work of the Working Group on Inquiries, which met for the first time prior to this session, we also made progress in our methodological work on inquiries, including by amending our Standard Operating Procedures.

Special thanks go to Xiaoqiao Zou and Hilary Gbedemah for their hard work as Rapporteur and alternate Rapporteur on follow-up which enabled us to adopt eight follow-up assessments at this session.

During this session, we again had interesting exchanges, such as our meeting with the Chairperson and gender focal point of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues, Ms. Megan Davis, and our video conference with the Chief of UN Women's Research and Data Section, Ms. Shara Razavi, on monitoring the proposed indicators for SDG target 5.1 on gender equality. We were also privileged that the Geneva Academy for International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law organized an expert discussion on international development practice and women's economic and social rights for us under the Swiss-sponsored Geneva Platform for Treaty Bodies.

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. Special thanks go to Hilary Gbedemah, who once again stepped in as country rapporteur – this time for the Gambia. 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 would also like to thank all of you for your support and my colleagues on the Bureau for their invaluable advice during this session.

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

I wish you a safe journey home and look forward to seeing you again in October for our sixty-second session.

Thank you very much.
