COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

Participation by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

79th (online) session (21 June-1 July 2021) and Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session (5-9 July 2021)

**I. Consideration of reports by States parties**

 Due to the ongoing **COVID-19** pandemic, the Committee again decided to **postpone** its consideration of the reports of the following States parties that had been rescheduled for consideration during the 79th session of the Committee: **Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, South Sudan, Spain and Yemen**. Subject to possible restrictions on travel and in-person meetings that may be required by the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, it decided to postpone the review of these States parties **to the 80th session**, with the exception of Bahrain, which had requested postponement of its review to 2022.

 The **pre-sessional working group for the 81st session** will adopt lists of issues in relation to the periodic reports of the following States parties: **Armenia, Djibouti, Finland, Georgia, Honduras and Turkey**. In addition, the pre-sessional working group will adopt lists of issues prior to reporting on **Estonia, the Netherlands and Niger.**

**II. Documentation**

 The reports of the States parties that were scheduled for consideration at the 79th session, the provisional agenda (CEDAW/C/79/1) and other documents pertaining to the session are available online at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2488&Lang=en

**III. Venue, dates and events**

The **79th session** of the Committee **will be held online** from 21 June to 1 July 2021, with the exception of Friday 25 June 2021, when the Committee will not meet. The **consideration of the reports** of the States parties that had been rescheduled for consideration at the 79th session has been **postponed to the 80th session** of the Committee, scheduled to take place from 18 October to 12 November 2021 at the United Nations Office at Geneva, subject to possible restrictions on travel and in-person meetings that may be required by the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Exceptionally, the consideration of the fourth periodic report of **Bahrain** has been postponed to 2022 at the request of the State party.

 **Please note that the opening and closing of the 79th session, the interactive day of general discussion on the rights of indigenous women and girls on 24 June 2021 (**[**https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/DGDRightsIndigenousWomenAndGirls.aspx**](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/DGDRightsIndigenousWomenAndGirls.aspx)**) and the informal public meeting of the Committee with the Secretary-General of FIFA on 23 June 2021 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm (Geneva time) will be publicly webcast on the following website:** [**http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/**](http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/)

In this regard, NGOs are invited to consult the **draft programme of work for the 79th session** on the following website: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2488&Lang=en

 The **pre-sessional working group for the 81st session** **will be held online** in closed meeting from 5 to 9 July 2021.

**IV. NGO participation**

 The Committee has emphasized the importance it attaches to its cooperation with NGOs in its statement on its relationship with non-governmental organizations, which was adopted in 2010 (goo.gl/Ye2KnB). In light of the postponement to the 80th session of the dialogues with the States parties that had been rescheduled for consideration at the 79th session, the Committee invites representatives of national and international NGOs to **provide country-specific information only on the aforementioned States parties scheduled for consideration at the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session** **at this stage**. This can be done orally and/or in writing. Due to the volume of documentation received, written submissions should not exceed 3,300 words (6,600 words for submissions by NGO coalitions). They must be in one of the working languages of the Committee **(English, French or Spanish).** They must not follow any specific structure or template and may be organized thematically and/or on an article-by-article basis.

 NGOs can avail themselves of the support of **IWRAW-Asia Pacific** to submit their written information electronically (in **Word** format) to the Secretariat. IWRAW-Asia Pacific also provides advice to local NGOs seeking to engage with the Committee. For details and deadlines, please contact IWRAW-Asia Pacific:

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 The Committee encourages international NGOs and United Nations agencies, funds, programmes, and specialized agencies to facilitate written and oral submissions by representatives of national NGOs to the Committee’s plenary and pre-sessional working group sessions.

 As both the 79th session and the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session will be held online and no physical meetings will take place, there is **no need for NGO representatives to travel to Geneva**.

**V. Written submissions for the 79th session (21 June to 1 July 2021)**

Irrespective of the postponement of the dialogues with the States parties whose reports were scheduled for consideration during the 79th session of the Committee, NGOs that have already started preparing written submissions are encouraged to include:

* Information on the implementation of some or all of the substantives articles (articles 1 to 16) of the Convention;
* Comments on the report of the State party and its written replies to the list of issues;
* Information on the implementation by the State party of previous concluding observations of the Committee;
* Information highlighting priority concerns and suggesting country-specific recommendations to facilitate the work of the Committee; and
* **Information on the impact of measures taken by the States parties concerned in relation to the COVID-19 crisis on women's rights and gender equality and the integration of a gender perspective in COVID-19 recovery plans.**

 NGOs wishing to make written submissions to the Committee are requested to:

* Indicate the full name of the NGO;
* Indicate the State party to which the information relates;
* Indicate whether or not the submission can be posted on the CEDAW website for public information purposes;
* Ensure that any alleged victims, witnesses and perpetrators are referred to in the report by their initials only and that no photographs of alleged victims, witnesses or perpetrators are included, unless written agreement has been obtained from these persons;
* Submit the written information not exceeding 3,300 words (6,600 words in case of NGO coalitions) in Word format by e-mail; and
* Submit the written information in one of the working languages of the Committee (English, French or Spanish).

 All submissions should be received by the Secretariat of the Committee at the latest **four weeks prior to** the beginning of the 79th (online) session by the Secretariat of the Committee, i.e., no later than 24 May 2021.

 The written submissions should be sent electronically in Word format to the following e-mail address: cedaw@ohchr.org. Please indicate in the subject of the email: “submission” and the “name of the country” (i.e. “Submission Bahrain”).

 In line with the UN greening policy, hard copies of submissions are no longer necessary.

**VI. Written submissions for the Pre-Sessional Working Group (5-9** July **2021)**

The pre-sessional working group will be held online in closed meeting. It will prepare lists of issues for the following States parties that are scheduled to be considered at future sessions of the Committee: **Armenia, Djibouti, Finland, Georgia, Honduras and Turkey**. In addition, it will prepare **lists of issues prior to reporting for Estonia, the Netherlands and Niger** under the simplified reporting procedure. The pre-sessional working group prepares lists of issues and questions for States parties that normally are scheduled to be reviewed two sessions later (does not apply to lists of issues prior to reporting), except that this sequence has been delayed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

 Receiving information from NGOs at an early stage of the reporting process is of critical importance. NGOs are therefore invited to submit written contributions for the development of the lists of issues and lists of issues prior to reporting by the pre-sessional working group. NGOs wishing to submit written information to the pre-sessional working group should follow the same procedure as for the submission of written information for the session (see above). Written NGO submissions must be **in one of the working languages of the Committee (English, French or Spanish),** **must** not exceed 3,300 words (6,600 words for submissions by NGO coalitions) and should be sent **by 7** June 2021 at the latest electronically in Word format to the following e-mail address: cedaw@ohchr.org.

**VII. Written submissions under the follow-up to concluding observations procedure**

 In its concluding observations adopted at the end of the consideration of a State party report, the Committee identifies up to four sub-paragraphs, requiring the State party concerned to submit **follow-up information** in relation to these sub-paragraphs within two years or, exceptionally, within one year.

 The follow-up procedure allows for the consideration of information received from NGOs. **NGO submissions** shall be in one of the working languages of the Committee (English, French or Spanish), as concise as possible, must not exceed a maximum length of **3 500 words** and should be sent electronically in Word format to cedaw@ohchr.org. The deadline for the submission of written information by NGOs is four weeks before the beginning of the session at which the State party’s follow-up report is scheduled to be assessed.

 For more information on the follow-up to concluding observations procedure see: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2488&Lang=en

**VIII. Informal remote public meeting with NGOs during the 79th session**

 **Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 79th session of the Committee will be held online and no physical meetings will take place in Geneva. As the dialogues with the States parties that had been rescheduled for consideration at the 79th session have now been postponed to the 80th session, the Committee also decided to postpone its informal public meetings with NGOs wishing to brief the Committee on the implementation of the Convention in the States parties concerned.**

**IX. Informal remote private briefings by NGOs during the Pre-sessional Working Group**

 Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, **the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session will be held online in closed meeting** from 5 to 9 July 2021. As no physical meetings will take place, there is no need for NGO representatives to travel to Geneva to brief the Pre-sessional Working Group.

 However, the pre-sessional working group invites NGOs to make oral interventions to provide country-specific information on the States parties scheduled for consideration at the 81st pre-sessional working group. This **remote** **informal private meeting** will take place on Monday 5 July 2021 from 14h30 to 15h30 (Geneva time). The meeting will be held on an online meeting platform (WebEx) **without interpretation** services. All NGOs that wish to intervene should contact the CEDAW secretariat at cedaw@ohchr.org **by 7 June 2021** so that the meeting link can be sent to them. Prior to the presentation, NGOs are requested to send an electronic version of their statement in Word format to cedaw@ohchr.org (in one of the working languages of the Committee (English, French or Spanish) but preferably in English, as no interpretation will be available during the meeting).

 **Oral interventions by NGOs must be concise.** A maximum of 10 minutes will be available **per country to be shared by all NGOs** wishing to make an intervention on that country. In view of the possible time constraints, NGOs should be prepared to provide their **answers** to the questions posed by Committee members **in writing within 24 hours following the** remote informal private **meeting** rather than orally during the meeting. In addition, any duplication of information should be avoided in the interventions made by NGOs during the meeting.

**X. Unauthorized filming, recording, dissemination of audio-visual materials and webcasting**

 The unauthorized filming, recording and dissemination of audio-visual materials during the 79th session and Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session is prohibited.

**XI. Allegations of intimidation or reprisals**

 NGO representatives have the right of unhindered access to and to communicate with the Committee and its members for the effective implementation of the Committee’s mandate. Individuals or groups of individuals facing **intimidation or reprisals** for seking to cooperate or cooperating with the Committee, or their representatives, can inform the Rapporteur on reprisals and alternate Rapporteur on reprisals appointed by the Committee of any alleged incident of intimidation or reprisals. Such **complaints should be sent** electronically to cedaw@ohchr.org, copy to reprisals@ohchr.org

**XII. Registration**

 Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 79th session and Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session of the Committee will be held online. As no physical meetings will take place, **no observers will be accredited** for the 79th session and the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session. However, all public meetings of the Committee will be webcast live on the following website: <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/>

**XIII. Ground Pass**

 For the same reason, **no ground passes will be issued** for purposes of attending the 79th session and the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 81st session.

**XIV. Thematic briefings and side events**

 With a few exceptions, the thematic briefings that were scheduled to take place during the 79th session **will be postponed** to a future session of the Committee.

**XV. Additional Information**

 For further information about the treaty bodies in general, specific information on CEDAW and COVID-19 and on the participation and role of civil society in the reporting procedure, please consult the following links:

* <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>
* <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25818&LangID=E>
* http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx