

CLOSING REMARKS
by
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Forty-third session of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
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Dear Colleagues,

We have thus come to the end of the forty-third 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 and offer some reflections on our proceedings.

If we go back to the beginning of this session and assess our results we must say that this session was marked by a heavy workload. We have considered the reports and adopted concluding observations for 7 States parties from all regions of the world: Armenia, Cameroon, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Rwanda. For the first time, we have examined the implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report, and in the presence of the delegation, as it was the case for Dominica, following which we have adopted Concluding Observations with respect to that State party.

I would like to extend my appreciation and congratulations to all States parties that engaged during this session in a constructive dialogue with the Committee. We have identified gaps and challenges and in all instances have sought to identify strategies for further solutions to the challenges of persistent discrimination. These dialogues confirmed the importance of regular and timely reporting and consideration so as to ensure a consistent monitoring of progress achieved. This regular interaction also strengthens the State's accountability for their compliance with its international treaty obligations.

As always, the Committee paid attention to a specific situation in each country and elaborated its concluding observations that include concerns and recommendations for narrowing and closing gender equality gaps. Our follow-up procedure is also important in this regard. I would like to urge State parties to ensure that their concluding observations are discussed in Parliament and that the preparation of the next periodic report, as well as reports in the context of our follow-up procedure, are made available to parliament.

Dear Colleagues,

We are also thankful for contributions received by United Nations entities on the States parties before us.

I would also like to express the entire Committee's gratitude to NGOs for their contributions during our regular informal meetings with representatives from NGOs but also during many lunchtime briefings from NGOs. I encourage them to deepen their

advocacy for the promotion and protection of women human rights and the implementation of the Convention.

Dear Colleagues,

During this session, we have held very fruitful meetings with the Special rapporteur on Violence against Women, and the Special rapporteur on Health to exchange information on our respective mandates and identify areas for strengthened cooperation. We have found these meetings very informative and wish that they can be organized on an annual basis. In addition, the Committee has met with the Independent Expert on Haiti and heard information on his last visit to the country, which very much contributed to the quality of the dialogue with the State party.

Some of us have also met informally with the Working Group of the Advisory Committee on the draft guidelines on gender mainstreaming and have agreed to provide input on the guidelines after their adoption by the Advisory Committee.

The forty-third session of our Committee coincided with the fiftieth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This has allowed both Committees to meet through an event hosted and facilitated by UNICEF which has set the ground for specific areas of cooperation between the two Committees. The first concrete outcome of this encounter was a joint bureau meeting of both Committees where it was decided that each Committee would establish a working group entrusted with the identification of substantive and operational areas of cooperation.

Dear colleagues,

We have started to work on the general recommendation on the economic consequences of divorce. We have planned the adoption of draft general recommendations on older women, and article 2 for the forty-fourth session in July 2009.

We have also adopted a statement on Gaza as well as a statement on the consequences of the financial crisis on women, which we hope will increase the visibility of the Committee and its work in favour of the protection of the human rights of women.

We also discussed ways to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention and the tenth anniversary of the Optional Protocol which take place this year and I would like to call State parties to consider possibility to provide their support for such important anniversary that could raise visibility and implementation of the CEDAW Convention and the Optional Protocol.

Dear Colleagues,

Before I conclude, I would like to sincerely congratulate all members of the Committee on the work accomplished during the past three weeks, in particular the new members who have greatly contributed to our discussions and have become acquainted with our methods of work in a very short time.

I would also like to extend the Committee's appreciation to the High Commissioner and her staff for their support to our work. My thanks also goes to Ms. Jane Connors and all staff members that supported us, to the interpreters, precis-writers, press officers and conference officers and all others who made this session successful. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Members of my Bureau (Ms. Pimentel, Ms. Zou, Ms. Kaddari and Ms. Neubauer).

To conclude, I wish you all a safe trip home, and I look forward to you again in New York, in July 2009.

Thank you very much