

**OPENING STATEMENT
BY
Ms. Naéla Gabr
Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against
Women
at the
Forty-eighth session**

17 January 2011

**Excellencies
Distinguished colleagues
Ladies and Gentleman**

I am very pleased to wish you a very happy new year and to welcome you once again to the United Nations Office in Geneva for the forty-eighth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Although the number of States parties to the Convention remains at 186, I am happy to report that Poland deposited its instrument of acceptance to the amendment to the Convention, which currently has 59 Contracting States, and on 13 October 2010, Cambodia deposited its instrument of ratification to the Optional Protocol making it the 100th party to the instrument.

Distinguished Colleagues,

It has only been two months since the forty-seventh session ended. I wish to highlight some of the activities that I have engaged in as Chairperson of the CEDAW Committee and other issues that may be of interest to the Committee.

From 5 to 6 November 2010, I attended the International Istanbul Women's Meeting, organized by the Istanbul Research Centre for Women under the patronage of the Ministry of State of the Turkish Republic, which focused on violence, economic and social problems, and discrimination and inequality faced by women. The meeting was opened by, *inter alia*, Ms. Diane Wallis, Vice President of the European Parliament and Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey. I was the keynote speaker for the session entitled "CEDAW +30/How Much Progress in Thirty Years?" The meeting was attended by numerous high-level government officials, parliamentarians, members of the UN family, including UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, and UNESCO, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, and the media.

I have also participated in my personal capacity at several conferences and meetings in the area of enhancing the human rights of women and the empowerment of

women, namely the third conference of the Arab Women's Organization in Tunisia in October 2010, the African Policy Dialogue Forum on Women, Peace and Security" in Cairo on November 2010 which was held in the spirit of celebration to mark the 10th Anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, and the International Forum Against Human Trafficking, held in Luxor on December 2010".

Committee Members have also been personally active in participating in panel discussions and seminars relating to women's issues. Ms. Simonovic delivered a presentation on "Women's Rights and a General Comment on the Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health" during the general day of discussion of the CESCR Committee held on 15 November 2010. CRC was also present.

Ms. Rasekh participated in the Senate hearing regarding the ratification by the United States of CEDAW in November 2010.

Ms. Patten was in Pretoria between 29 November and 1 December for a mock CEDAW session and participated in a CEDAW training of the Ministry of Women's Rights in Pakistan from 20 to 21 December.

Ms. Bailey was invited by the Human Rights Centre of the University of Ottawa and the North South Institute to participate in a conference entitled "Coordinating Compliance Between Gender Rights and Trade Law: Issues and Opportunities" that was held on 2 December in Ottawa.

Ms. Bailey presented a paper “Gender Equality Rights and Trade Policy” at the conference and also to the Canadian International Development Agency on 2 December.

Ms. Popescu attended the Minority Forum from 14 to 15 December and delivered a presentation on discrimination against minority women in the economic sphere.

Ms. Barbara Bailey and Ms. Pramila Patten attended the Inter-Chairpersons Meeting working group on follow-up from 12 to 14 January 2011, which focused on both follow-up to concluding observations and follow-up to individual communications.

Distinguished Colleagues,

We have a very full, but interesting agenda during this session. The Committee will consider seven periodic reports, namely from Bangladesh, Belarus, Israel, Kenya, Liechtenstein, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

The Committee will also consider cases under the Optional Protocol to the Convention and discuss various issues, such as the draft general recommendation on the economic consequences of marriage and its dissolution, the draft joint CEDAW/CRC general recommendation on harmful practices and the draft general recommendation on violence against women in armed conflict and post conflict situations among other matters. The Committee will also consider reports and information received under its follow-

up procedure to concluding observations. We will also meet with many non-governmental organizations, representatives of national human rights institutions and parts of the UN family. I would like to pay particular tribute to these stakeholders who provide such valuable input into our work.

Colleagues and friends,

As you are aware, we will shortly be formally inducting new members to the Committee and in this regard, on behalf of the entire Committee, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Ms. Feride Acar, Ms. Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla, Ms. Maria Helena Lopes de Jesus Pires, Ms. Patricia Schulz and Ms. Ismat Jahan.

Following the induction of the new members, we will also elect a new Chairperson of the Committee as well as three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur. The election of the Chairperson will be my last official act as Chairperson and I want to thank you all for your support during my tenure.

I also would like to convey that Ms. Jaising informed me that she will not be able to attend this session. Unfortunately, Ms. Lopes de Jesus Pires is also not present.

At this juncture, I would also be delighted to hear from Committee members who have represented the Committee at official meetings or undertaken work related to the activities of the Committee during our closed meetings.

Thank you very much for your attention.
