

CLOSING REMARKS

by

Ms. Yoko Hayashi

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

Dear Colleagues,

As we are coming to the end of the sixty-fifth 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 eleven States parties. We held informal meetings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and also attended several lunchtime briefings organized by non-governmental organizations. The Committee was pleased by the high level of attendance of local NGOs, many of them supported by the global to local programme of IWRAW-Asia Pacific, which – like the NHRIs – 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 and IPU. I am pleased to note that UN Country Teams have contributed their reports through the Inter-Agency Group and that one UNCT sent a representative to attend the session and three engaged with us via VCT.

Our informal meeting with the States parties to the Convention yesterday, which was attended by 71 States parties, showed that States are closely following our work and take CEDAW seriously. While many see us as a pioneer in strengthening treaty bodies' working methods, some also expressed that they feel over-scrutinized to the point of fatigue. For me, this shows that we must continue rationalizing our work, including by setting clear priorities. Often, less is more, and this should also reflect in the length of our documents. Our meeting with the

States parties also confirmed that we are comprehensively covering very relevant issues in our work, such as gender-based violence against women, disaster risk reduction and climate change, girls' and women's right to education, as well as our contribution to monitoring SDG indicator 5.1.1, with support from OHCHR and in collaboration with UN Women.

We had many stimulating and interesting meetings during this session, both professionally and socially. We met with Parliamentarians including the IPU President to discuss national implementation of the Convention and strategized the work of our respective mandates with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, our friend Dubravka Simonovic. We also discussed the development of SDG indicator 5.1.1 with Ms. Perucci, Chief at the UN Statistics Division, and exchanged experiences in addressing violence against women with the Committee against Torture by holding a joint meeting. We had the privilege of being invited to the residence of His Excellency Ambassador Ihara of Japan and, last but not least, celebrated our friendship and collegiality at the farewell dinner for the outgoing Committee members, Ms. Al-Dosari, Ms. Bailey, Mr. Bruun, Ms. Pimentel, Ms. Pomeranzi and Ms. Zou.

I wish to thank them for having been such good colleagues and friends. Their outstanding contribution to the Committee's work, including at this session will not be forgotten: Ms. Bailey in the Bureau and on education; Mr. Bruun on communications, labour rights and Canada; Ms. Pimentel on Argentina; Ms. Pomeranzi on SDGs and Estonia; and Ms. Zou on follow-up and Bangladesh. I also take this opportunity to once again send our best recovery wishes to Ms. Al-Dosari, whose expertise and friendliness were an asset to our Committee.

With the support of all experts, the Committee was able to engage in constructive dialogues with 11 States parties and adopt concluding observations on their periodic reports. One cross-cutting issue in those dialogues and concluding observations was the question of resources, both human and financial, allocated to national machineries for the advancement of women. In each case, we made it clear to the States parties that sufficient resources need to be allocated to their national machineries to enable them to play a leading role in the implementation of the Convention and the coordination of related programmes and policies.

During this session, we were also able to approve the list of issues prior to reporting on Israel, adopt final decisions on four individual communications as well as seven follow-up assessments, and make progress with regard to several inquiry proceedings.

At the end of my term as Chairperson, I will not focus on the individual contributions of each member during this session, but would rather like to thank you for your support and cooperation over the past two years which enabled us to function so well and to make significant progress in our work as a collective group. Let me assure you that I feel greatly honoured to have been the Chair of such an efficient and hard-working treaty body. I am convinced that CEDAW makes a real difference for many women around the world, and that our work would be more needed in the current socio-political environment.

Dear Colleagues,

Before I conclude, please allow me to sincerely thank all experts for the hard work accomplished during the past four weeks, including the country rapporteurs who guided our dialogues with the representatives of the States parties and drafted the concluding observations. 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 my colleagues on the Bureau for their invaluable advice and our Rapporteur for her tireless efforts during this session and over the past two years.

Lastly, I thank our Secretariat, Irene, Anganile, Sulini, Céline, Youssef, Daniela, Janna (who just came back today) and Astrid (who is still on maternity leave), Régine (who came back with another hat this time), Orlagh, Catherine, Feruza, Harumi, Ilona, our interns Susanne and Jimena, Jakob, Orest and James (now in Ramallah) for their support over the past two years. I also wish to thank 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 Happy Holidays and look forward to seeing you and the new members in Geneva in February for our sixty-sixth session.
