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CEDAW/C/2013/II/CRP

**Report of the Committee on the
Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Fifty-fifth session
(8 – 26 July 2013)**

Chapter I

Matters brought to the attention of States parties

Decisions

Decision 55/1

Statement on women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia

On 26 July 2013, the Committee adopted a statement on women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. (Annex 1)

Decision 55/2

Statement on strengthened cooperation with UN Women

On 26 July 2013, the Committee adopted a statement on strengthened cooperation with UN Women. (Annex 2)

Decision 55/3

General recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

The Committee decided to finalize the adoption of the draft general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations during its 56th session.

Decision 55/4

General recommendation on gender equality in the context of asylum, refugee status and statelessness

The Committee decided to allocate at least one full meeting during its 56th session for the first reading of its draft general recommendation on gender equality in the context of asylum, refugee status and statelessness.

Decision 55/5

Working Group on UN Women

On 26 July 2013, the Committee decided to transform the Focal Point on UN Women into a standing Working Group, chaired by Ms. Nicole Ameline and additionally composed of one member from each region, namely Ms. Feride Acar, Ms. Naéla Gabr, Ms. Silvia Pimentel, Ms. Dubravka Simonovic and Ms. Xiaqiao Zou, and entrusted it with the elaboration of a joint CEDAW-UN Women action plan for 2014-2015.

Decision 55/6

Working Group on the Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Committee decided to establish a standing Working Group on the Inter-Parliamentary Union, chaired by Ms. Nicole Ameline and additionally composed of Ms. Nahla Haidar, Ms. Ismat Jahan, Ms. Dalia Leinarte, Ms. Pramila Patten and Ms. Patricia Schulz.

Decision 55/7

CEDAW/Human Rights Committee Working Group

The Committee confirmed Ms. Noor Al-Jehani, Ms. Patricia Schulz and Ms. Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla as members of the CEDAW/Human Rights Committee Working Group.

Decision 55/8

Focal Point for sexual and reproductive rights

The Committee decided to appoint Ms. Violeta Neubauer as Focal Point for sexual and reproductive rights and Ms. Theodora Oby Nwankwo as well as Ms. Patricia Schulz as Alternates.

Decision 55/9

Membership of country task forces

The Committee decided that each expert should sign up for a minimum of four country task forces per session, with the exception of country rapporteurs, and that the Secretariat should circulate a list on the membership of all country task forces prior to each session, with a view to ensuring that each country task force is composed of not less than 10 experts, in accordance with Decision 52/7.

Decision 55/10

Inter-sessional mechanism on urgent matters

The Committee decided to consider the establishment of an inter-sessional mechanism to consider urgent matters, and requested the Secretariat to prepare a working paper for the 56th session on the practices of other treaty bodies in this regard, including on the early warning and urgent action procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Decision 55/11

Briefing and meeting requests by non-governmental organizations and other external partners

The Committee decided that a final table of briefing and meeting requests received by the Secretariat from non-governmental organizations and other external partners shall be sent to the members of the Bureau one month prior to a session so that the Bureau can prioritize among those requests while leaving some flexibility for accommodating urgent and important requests received by the Secretariat after the closure of the list.

Decision 55/12

Working Group on Access to Justice

The working group on access to justice was expanded to include Ms. Theodora Oby Nwankwo, in addition to the existing members Ms. Feride Acar, Ms. Barbara Bailey, Ms. Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani, Ms. Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla, Ms. Hilary Gbedemah, Ms. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Ms. Pramila Patten, Ms. Silvia Pimentel (Chair), Ms. Patricia Schulz, Ms. Dubravka Simonovic and Ms. Xiaoqiao Zou.

Chapter II

Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to the Optional Protocol

On 26 July 2013, the closing date of the fifty-fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 187 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 1 March 1980. In accordance with its article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981. In addition, 68 Contracting States had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention,

concerning the Committee's meeting time. A total of 125 States parties to the Convention are currently required to accept the amendment in order to bring it into force, in accordance with its provisions.

As at the same date, there were 104 States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/4 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 10 December 1999. In accordance with its article 16, the Optional Protocol entered into force on 22 December 2000.

The updated status of the Convention, the Amendment to the Convention and its Optional Protocol, including lists of States signatories and parties as well as the texts of declarations, reservations, objections and other relevant information can be found in the United Nations Treaty Collection on the Internet at <http://treaties.un.org>, maintained by the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, which discharges the depositary functions of the Secretary-General.

B. Opening of the session

The Committee held its fifty-fifth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 8 to 26 July 2013. The Committee held 23 plenary meetings, and also held 21 meetings to discuss agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in annex [...] to the present report.

The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Nicole Ameline on 8 July 2013 at its 1128th meeting.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (CEDAW/C/55/1) at its 1128th meeting.

D. Report of the pre-session working group

The report of the pre-session working group (CEDAW/PSWG/55/1), which met from 22 to 25 October 2012, was introduced by Ms. Nicole Ameline at the 1128th meeting.

E. Organization of work

On 8 July 2013, the Committee held a closed meeting with representatives of specialized agencies and United Nations funds and programmes, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, during which country-specific information was provided, as well as information on the efforts made by those bodies to support the implementation of the Convention.

On 8 and 15 July 2013, the Committee held informal public meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions who provided information on the implementation of the Convention in the States parties considered by the Committee at its fifty-fifth session.

On 22 July 2013, the Committee held a meeting with Kareen Jabre, Manager of the Gender Partnership Programme, Inter-Parliamentary Union, to discuss future cooperation of the Committee with the Inter-Parliamentary Union in relation to the implementation of the Convention.

On 25 July 2013, the Committee held a high-level panel discussion on HIV/AIDS and women's rights, organized by OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UN-Women and the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The panel discussion, which was chaired by Ms. Petra Lantz, Director of the UNDP Representation Office in Geneva, was opened by the Chair of the Committee, Ms. Nicole Ameline. It was closed by Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Acting Head and Deputy Executive Director, UN-Women. Ms. Jacinta Nyachae, Executive Director, Aids Law Project, Kenya; Ms. Flavia Pansieri, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights; Ms. Jan Beagle, Deputy

Executive Director, UNAIDS; and Committee member Ms. Theodora Oby Nwankwo participated in the panel.

F. Membership of the Committee

All members attended the fifty-fifth session. Ms. Maria-Helena Pires did not attend the first three days of the session. Ms. Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani was not able to attend the last two weeks of the session. Mr. Niklas Bruun did not attend the last three days of the session. A list of members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is annexed to the present report.

Chapter III

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Committee

At the 1128th meeting, the Chairperson, Ms. Nicole Ameline, presented her report on the activities she had undertaken since the fifty-fourth session of the Committee.

Chapter IV

A. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee considered the reports of eight States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention: the combined initial and second periodic report of Afghanistan; the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the combined seventh and eighth periodic report of Cape Verde; the combined seventh and eighth periodic report of Cuba; the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of the Dominican Republic; the combined second and third periodic report of Serbia; and the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom.

The Committee prepared concluding observations on each of the reports considered. Those observations are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>) under the symbol numbers indicated below:

Afghanistan (CEDAW/C/AFG/CO/1-2)

Bosnia and Herzegovina (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5)

Cape Verde (CEDAW/C/CPV/CO/7-8)

Cuba (CEDAW/C/CUB/CO/7-8)

Democratic Republic of the Congo (CEDAW/C/COD/CO/6-7)

Dominican Republic (CEDAW/C/DOM/CO/6-7)

Serbia (CEDAW/C/SRB/CO/2-3)

United Kingdom (CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/7)

It is noted that the consideration of the combined second and third periodic report of Serbia had originally been scheduled for the 53rd session. However, at the request of the State party, it was postponed to the 55th session.

B. Follow-up procedures relating to concluding observations

The Committee considered the follow-up reports from the following States parties:

- 1) Argentina (CEDAW/C/ARG/CO/6/Add.1)
- 2) Australia (CEDAW/C/AUL/CO/7/Add.1)

- 3) Czech Republic (CEDAW/C/CZE/CO/5/Add.1)

The Committee considered additional follow-up information from the following States parties:

- 4) Guatemala (CEDAW/C/GTM/CO/7/Add.2)
- 5) Japan (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/6/Add.2)

The Committee also sent first reminders to the following States parties whose follow-up reports were overdue:

- 1) Albania
- 2) Bangladesh
- 3) Belarus
- 5) Kenya
- 6) Liechtenstein
- 7) Malta
- 8) South Africa
- 9) Sri Lanka
- 10) Tunisia
- 11) Uganda

The Committee sent second reminders to the following States parties whose follow-up reports were overdue:

- 1) Libya
- 2) Papua New Guinea

The Committee sent a further invitation to meet with representatives of Liberia which had not submitted its follow-up report despite two reminders sent by the Committee, nor replied to two letters sent at the 53rd and 54th sessions, respectively, to schedule a meeting with representatives of the State party. The representatives of Liberia were not available for a meeting during the 55th session. However, prior to the 55th session, the State party had contacted the Secretariat to request guidance for the preparation of its follow-up report.

Chapter V

Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 12 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provides that the Committee shall include in its annual report under article 21 of the Convention a summary of its activities under the Optional Protocol.

A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising from article 2 of the Optional Protocol

The Committee discussed activities under the Optional Protocol on 15, 22 and 26 July 2013. It endorsed the reports of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol regarding its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions (see annexes 3 and 4).

The Committee adopted final decisions with regard to three individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol. The Committee adopted inadmissibility decisions on communication No. 33/2011 (*M.N. v. Denmark*), by vote, and on communications No. 35/2011, (*E.N. v. Denmark*) and No. 40/2012 (*M.S. v. Denmark*), by

consensus. The decisions are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>) under the symbol numbers CEDAW/C/55/D/35/2011 and CEDAW/C/55/D/40/2012, respectively. It also declared admissible one communication, by consensus.

B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications

No follow-up progress report was prepared for the 55th session. The Committee did not take a decision to put the follow-up dialogue to an end in any of the cases currently under follow-up examination. Of the nine cases that are currently under follow-up examination, one relates to Belarus, one to Brazil, three to Bulgaria, one to Canada, one to Peru, one to the Philippines and one to Turkey.

C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising from article 8 of the Optional Protocol

The Committee was briefed on the status of all pending submissions and proceedings under the inquiry procedure.

On 24 July 2013, the Committee adopted its findings and recommendations in relation to Inquiry No. 2010/1 and decided to transmit them to the State party concerned.

In relation to submission No. 2011/3, the Committee decided to request the State party concerned to submit observations with regard to the information received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol.

The members designated by the Committee to conduct Inquiry No. 2011/1 held a meeting with representatives of the State party concerned in preparation of a visit to its territory.

Chapter VI

A. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

The Committee was informed about the status of the inter-governmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system (General Assembly resolution 66/254). The Chairperson, Ms. Nicole Ameline, briefed the Committee about the outcome of the 25th Annual Meeting of Chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, which was held in New York from 20 to 24 May 2013.

B. Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 7

Dates of future sessions of the Committee

In accordance with the calendar of conferences, the following dates are confirmed for the Committee's fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions:

Fifty-Sixth Session (Geneva)

Twenty-seventh session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: (24 to 27 September 2013))

Fifty-sixth session: (30 September to 18 October 2013)

Pre-session working group for the fifty-eighth session: (21 to 25 October 2013)

Fifty-Seventh Session (Geneva)

Twenty-eighth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: (February 2014)

Fifty-seventh session: (10 to 28 February 2014)

Pre-session working group for the fifty-ninth session: (3 to 7 March 2014)

Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

The Committee confirmed that it will consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions:

Fifty-sixth session:

- 1) Andorra
- 2) Benin
- 3) Cambodia
- 4) Colombia
- 5) Republic of Moldova
- 6) Seychelles
- 7) Tajikistan

It is noted that the consideration of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was also scheduled for the 56th session. St. Vincent and the Grenadines submitted its combined fourth to eighth periodic report on 13 August 2013 and the consideration was subsequently postponed to a future session of the Committee to allow for the translation of the report as well as the establishment of a new and/or updated list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Fifty-seventh session:

- 1) Bahrain
- 2) Cameroon
- 3) Finland
- 4) Iraq
- 5) Kazakhstan
- 6) Qatar
- 7) Sierra Leone

It is noted that the consideration of Senegal in the absence of a report was also scheduled for the 57th session. Senegal submitted its combined third to seventh periodic report on 31 July 2013 and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the 61st session to allow for the translation of the report as well as the establishment of the list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Chapter VII

Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

A. Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 6

Joint CEDAW/CRC Working Group on harmful practices

The Working Group revised the draft general recommendation/comment on harmful practices during three meetings it held during the session. It agreed to hold a working meeting with the CRC Working Group on 6 October 2013 to finalize the draft of the joint general recommendation/comment on harmful practices.

General recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

The Committee completed its first reading of the draft general recommendation.

Working Group on women and access to justice

The Working Group on access to justice met during the session.

Working Group on gender related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness

The Working Group did not meet during the session.

Working Group on rural women

The Working Group was informed by the Secretariat intersessionally on the status of the preparation of the half day of general discussion on rural women to be held on 7 October 2013. The Working Group did not meet during the session. The Chair of the Working Group, Ms. Naéla Gabr, was briefed by the Secretariat on the steps taken in the preparation of the day of general discussion.

Working Group on gender equality in the context of climate change and natural disasters

The Working Group did not meet during the session.

Working Group on the right to education

The Working Group met during the session.

On 24 July 2013, the Working Group held a telephone conference with Professor Mohamed Mattar from Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., to discuss a concept note on the right to education prepared by Mr. Mattar. The Working Group also discussed the next steps for elaborating a general recommendation in this regard, i.e. the completion and presentation of the draft concept note to the Committee at its 57th session in February 2013 and the organization of a half-day of general discussion on the right to education, tentatively in July 2014.

Working Group on working methods

The Working Group met during the session.

Chapter VIII

Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session

The Committee considered the draft provisional agenda for its fifty-sixth session on 26 July 2013 and approved the following provisional agenda for that session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Follow-up to concluding observations of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Activities of the Committee under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
8. Provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session of the Committee.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session.

Chapter IX

A. Adoption of the report

The Committee considered the draft report on its fifty-fifth session and addenda on 26 July 2013 and adopted it as orally revised during the discussion.

[Annexes will be added to the final version of the text]

B. Composition of the working groups of the Committee

[To be added to the final version of the report]

Annex I

CEDAW STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL TRANSITION IN EGYPT, LIBYA AND TUNISIA

**Adopted by the CEDAW Committee at its fifty-fifth session
8 – 26 July 2013, Geneva**

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has been following with deep interest the process of political transition in three States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, namely Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, particularly in relation to the situation of women.

In this context, the Committee recalls that women's rights are fundamentally linked to peace, security and sustainable development. The Committee further reaffirms that the Convention and its Optional Protocol provide a comprehensive and overarching international legally binding framework for the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, including violence against women, as a cross-cutting issue that is also addressed in other international human rights instruments.

The Committee is however distressed about attempts to discredit the Convention. It recalls that all States parties have the legal obligation to implement all the provisions of the Convention in all political, social or economic contexts, and to take all appropriate measures to prohibit and prevent violations of women's rights.

The Committee urges all States parties to strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls and to ensure that custom, tradition, and cultural or religious considerations are not invoked to justify non-compliance with their legal obligations under the Convention.

The Committee further expresses concern about the limited political participation of women and their risk of exclusion and marginalization, despite their active role during the transition processes in their respective countries.

The Committee urges concerned Governments, in cooperation with the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, non-governmental organizations and all other relevant actors, to fully comply with their obligations to implement the Convention in order to enable women to enjoy all their human rights on an equal basis with men, and to enhance awareness of the fact that the Convention constitutes a common standard of humanity to which all civilizations and cultures contributed.

The Committee is at the disposal of concerned States parties to assist them in these efforts.

Annex II

CEDAW statement on strengthened cooperation with UN Women Adopted by the CEDAW Committee at its fifty-fifth session 8 – 26 July 2013, Geneva

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women warmly welcomes the appointment of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as Executive Director of UN Women, considering her eminent position and experience.
2. The Committee recalls that equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of sustainable development, peace and democracy, and considers that UN Women has a key role to play in supporting States parties in the implementation of their legally binding obligations under the Convention and other norms and standards for the protection and advancement of women.
3. The Committee considers that the 2015 post-development agenda provides an opportunity to establish new links between human rights treaty bodies and development

entities and to guarantee a more efficient use of financial resources. The empowerment of women and the effective realization of women's rights under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be a primary consideration in any of such efforts.

4. The Committee highlights that within the on-going process of developing the 2015 post-development agenda, the Convention provides, through its holistic approach, a universal basis for the achievement of formal as well as substantive equality between women and men.

5. The Committee appreciates the existing relations with UN Women and the Commission on the Status of Women, and welcomes the implementation of the System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). It also looks forward to exploring ways and means to establish stronger cooperation between the Committee and the UN system, especially the gender entities, in order to contribute to a better synergy to achieve gender equality and to maximize the benefits for women on the ground.

6. The Committee considers that its cooperation with UN Women needs to be consolidated through a formal and institutional partnership, which includes:

a) The Committee's participation in international, regional and national meetings on the advancement of women;

b) The reinforcement of its cooperation with UN Women and the entire UN system, especially in promoting and implementing the Convention, in line with the Committee's general recommendations and concluding observations;

c) The consolidation of the support for building national human and technical capacities on gender issues; and

d) The organization of a special event in 2014 in New York on women's rights and development.
