

**Statement on activities undertaken
between the 54th and 55th sessions of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against
Women**

**by
Ms. Nicole Ameline
Chairperson**

Fifty-fifth session
8 July 2013

**Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like to join Mr. Salama in welcoming all of you to the 55th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

It has been a little more than four months since our last session ended, and during this time, I had the privilege to participate in a number of events that are relevant for the promotion and protection of women's rights. I therefore wish to update you on the activities that I have engaged in as Chairperson of the CEDAW Committee, as well as on other issues that are of interest to the Committee.

Starting with the status of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, I would like to report that the number of States parties remains at 187. Similarly, the number of States parties having accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, on the meeting time of the Committee has not changed and remains at 68. For its entry into force, the amendment requires acceptance by two thirds of the States parties to the

Convention, that is, currently, 125 acceptances. Moreover, the number of States parties to the Optional Protocol remains at 104.

Since our fifty-fourth session, three States parties have submitted their initial and/or periodic reports, namely Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam and Denmark.

Directly after our fifty-fourth session, I went to New York to participate in the opening of the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and, in my capacity as CEDAW Chair, to deliver the statement that we had discussed at the 54th session. In particular, I conveyed our position in relation to a proposed legally binding instrument on violence against women to the CSW. In light of the different views expressed at the CSW in this regard, I anticipate further discussion on the issue.

In New York, I also had the opportunity to meet with the Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, as well as with the then Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms Bachelet. My meeting with the Secretary-General, and especially his acknowledgement of the importance of a human rights based approach to development, centered on gender equality, was truly encouraging. I therefore did not hesitate to send him a concept note on women and development that I had prepared as a follow-up to the meeting, with the kind input from our experts Ms Pomeranzi and Ms Haidar.

My meeting with Ms Bachelet was very useful as a starting point for reinforcing our cooperation with UN-Women, which can be further worked on during the meeting with the Acting Head of UN Women, Ms Puri, who will be in Geneva during the last week of our session. In this context, I also wish to inform you that Ms Lee Waldorf, who used to coordinate UN-Women's support for a number of our general discussions and draft general comments, has resigned from UN-Women to return to Canada where she now works with a NGO.

On 18 April, I participated in the meeting of the co-facilitators of the inter-governmental process of the General Assembly on treaty body strengthening with the Committee on Enforced Disappearances. I informed the co-facilitators that our Committee had adopted the Addis Ababa guidelines as well as a statement on the High Commissioner's report. I also informed them that the Committee is eager to reduce its backlog of reports, expand its work on individual communications and inquiries, and to use new

technologies such as video conferencing, but that it is at the same time facing resource constraints. In addition, I stressed that the treaty bodies need to be linked more closely to the UN's development agenda, and that a stronger gender balance on the treaty bodies should be among the aims of the treaty body strengthening process.

Our dear colleagues Nahla Haidar and Patricia Schulz participated in the meeting of the co-facilitators with the Committee on Migrant Workers on 19 April, and I am sure that they will provide us with a short debriefing during the course of the morning.

As you know, the 25th Annual Meeting of Chairpersons took place in New York from 20 to 24 May. Mr. Salama has already briefed us on the Chairpersons Meeting, so I will limit myself to adding that during the consultations with Member States, the ten Chairs emphasized that any structured calendar of reporting and consideration should meet a number of criteria, including predictability, efficient utilization of resources, compliance with reporting obligations and periodicity, and elimination of backlogs and ad-hoc requests to the General Assembly for additional meeting time.

I am particularly pleased about the adoption by the Chairpersons Meeting of a joint statement on the post-2015 development agenda, which underlines the critical link between development and the full range of human rights. Importantly, the joint statement stresses that the goal of gender equality in the current MDGs did not ensure equality between women and men and the elimination of discrimination against women, and that these goals should be addressed as a global priority in the post-2015 agenda. The Chairpersons also undertook to encourage their Committees to consider the impact of development goals on the rights in their respective treaties, and to draw on development data and reports in their constructive dialogue with States parties.

Distinguished colleagues

Since our last session, some of you have been involved in CEDAW-related activities as well as panel discussions and seminars relating to women's rights both in your capacity as CEDAW members and in your personal capacity.

I would kindly ask those Committee members who participated in panel discussions, seminars and expert meetings during these past few months to please provide copies of their statements to the Secretariat so that they can be circulated to the Committee during the session.

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.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that at this session, our dialogues with States parties will be webcast publicly and live on the website www.treatybodywebcast.org. It is my hope and firm belief that this innovative measure will make the sessions of our Committee accessible to a wider audience globally, thereby increasing understanding of our work as well as of the Convention. I therefore extend a warm welcome to all those who will be our online guests during this session.

Thank you very much for your attention.
