COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

Participation by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Remote 76th session (29 June-9 July 2020) and Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session (13-17 July 2020)

**I. Consideration of reports by States parties**

 In light of the health risks linked to the **COVID-19** pandemic, the Committee decided to **postpone until further** notice its consideration of the reports of the following States parties that were scheduled for consideration during the 76th session of the Committee: **Bahrain, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia and Panama**.

**II. Documentation**

 The reports of the States parties that were scheduled for consideration at the 76th session, the provisional agenda (CEDAW/C/76/1) and other documents pertaining to the session are available online at: <https://bit.ly/3fc0XAW>

**III. Venue**

The **76th session** of the Committee **will take place remotely** from 29 June to 9 July 2020. The **consideration of the reports** of the States parties that were scheduled for consideration at the 76th session has been **postponed** until further notice so that the constructive dialogues with the States parties concerned can take place physically in Geneva at one of the future sessions of the Committee.

 The **pre-sessional working group for the 78th session** **will take place remotely** from 13 to 17 July 2020.

**IV. NGO participation**

 The Committee has emphasized the importance it attaches to its cooperation with NGOs in its statement on its relationship with non-governmental organizations, which was adopted in 2010 (goo.gl/Ye2KnB). Pending on the new dates of the dialogues with the States parties scheduled for consideration at the 76th session, it invites representatives of national and international NGOs to **provide country-specific information only on the States parties scheduled for consideration at the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session** **at this stage**. This can be done orally and/or in writing. Due to the volume of documentation received, written submissions should not exceed 3,300 words (6,600 words for submissions by NGO coalitions). They must not follow any specific structure or template and may be organized thematically and/or on an article-by-article basis.

 NGOs can avail themselves of the support of **IWRAW-Asia Pacific** to submit their written information electronically (in **Word** format) to the Secretariat. IWRAW-Asia Pacific also provides advice to local NGOs seeking to engage with the Committee. For details and deadlines, please contact IWRAW-Asia Pacific:

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 The Committee encourages international NGOs and United Nations agencies, funds, programmes, and specialized agencies to facilitate written and oral submissions by representatives of national NGOs to the Committee’s pre-sessional working group.

As both the 76th session and the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session will take place remotely and no physical meetings will take place, there is **no cause for NGO representatives to travel to Geneva**. In addition, the Committee strongly discourages any such travel in light of the health risks linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**V. Written submissions for the 76th session (29 June-9 July 2020)**

Irrespective of the postponement of the dialogues with the States parties whose reports were scheduled for consideration during the 76th session of the Committee, NGOs are encouraged to make written submissions that contain:

* Information on the implementation of some or all of the substantives articles (articles 1 to 16) of the Convention;
* Comments on the report of the State party and its written replies to the list of issues;
* Information on the implementation by the State party of previous concluding observations of the Committee; and
* Information highlighting priority concerns and suggesting country-specific recommendations to facilitate the work of the Committee;
* **Information on the impact of measures taken by the States parties concerned in response to the COVID-19 crisis on women’s rights and gender equality.**

 NGOs wishing to make written submissions to the Committee are requested to:

* Indicate the full name of the NGO;
* Indicate the State party scheduled for consideration to which the information relates;
* Indicate whether or not the submission can be posted on the CEDAW website for public information purposes;
* Ensure that all witnesses and victims are referred to in the report by their initials only and that no photographs of witnesses, victims or alleged perpetrators are included, unless written agreement has been obtained from these persons; and
* Submit the written information not exceeding 3,300 words (6,600 words in case of NGO coalitions) in Word format by e-mail.

 All submissions should be received by the Secretariat of the Committee at the latest **four weeks prior to** the beginning of the session, at which the **postponed dialogues** with the States parties concerned will take place (session tbc).

 NGOs wishing to **make their submissions now** are invited to do so and may update them closer to the session at which the postponed dialogues with the States parties concerned will take place.

 The written submissions should be sent electronically in Word format to the following e-mail address: cedaw@ohchr.org. Please indicate in the subject of the email: “submission” and the “name of the country” (e.g. “Submission Bahrain”).

In line with the UN greening policy, hard copies of submissions are no longer necessary.

**VI. Written submissions for the Pre-Sessional Working Group (**13-17 July **2020)**

The pre-sessional working group will take place remotely in closed meeting. It will prepare lists of issues for the following States parties that are scheduled to be considered at the 78th session: **Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Indonesia, Peru, Russian Federation, South Sudan and Uzbekistan**. In addition, it will prepare **lists of issues prior to reporting for Norway, Slovakia and Slovenia** under the simplified reporting procedure. The pre-sessional working group prepares lists of issues and questions for States parties scheduled to be reviewed two sessions later (does not apply to lists of issues prior to reporting).

 Receiving information from NGOs at an early stage of the reporting process is of critical importance. NGOs are therefore invited to submit written contributions for the development of the lists of issues and lists of issues prior to reporting by the pre-sessional working group. NGOs wishing to submit written information to the pre-sessional working group should follow the same procedure as for the submission of written information for the session (see above). Written NGO submissions should not exceed 3,300 words (6,600 words for submissions by NGO coalitions) and should be sent **by 15** June 2020 at the latest electronically in Word format to the following e-mail address: cedaw@ohchr.org.

**VII. Written submissions under the follow-up to concluding observations procedure**

 In its concluding observations adopted at the end of the consideration of a State party report, the Committee identifies up to four sub-paragraphs, requiring the State party concerned to submit **follow-up information** in relation to these sub-paragraphs within one or two years.

 The follow-up procedure allows for the consideration of information received from NGOs. **NGO submissions** shall be as concise as possible and must not exceed a maximum length of **3 500 words** and should be sent electronically in Word format to cedaw@ohchr.org. The deadline for the submission of written information by NGOs is four weeks before the beginning of the session at which the State party’s follow-up report is scheduled to be assessed, i.e., no later than **1 June 2020**.

 For more information on the follow-up to concluding observations procedure see: <https://bit.ly/34og440>

**VIII. No meetings with NGOs during the 76th session**

 **In light of the health risks linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 76th session of the Committee will take place remotely and no physical meetings will take place in Geneva. As all dialogues with States parties scheduled for consideration at the 76th session have been postponed, the Committee also decided to postpone its informal public meetings with NGOs wishing to brief the Committee on the implementation of the Convention in the States parties concerned. The Committee therefore discourages any travel by NGO representatives to Geneva at this stage.**

**IX. Informal remote private briefings by NGOs during the Pre-sessional Working Group**

 In light of the health risks linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, **the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session will take place remotely in closed meeting** from 13 to 17 July 2020. As no physical meetings will take place, there is no cause for NGO representatives to travel to Geneva to brief the Pre-sessional Working Group.

 However, NGO representatives may **request to brief Pre-sessional Working Group members remotely**. In that case, NGOs should contact the CEDAW secretariat at cedaw@ohchr.org **by 29 June 2020** at the latest to arrange for such remote informal private briefings.

**X. Unauthorized filming, recording, dissemination of audio-visual materials and webcasting**

 The unauthorized filming, recording and dissemination of audio-visual materials during the 76th session and Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session is prohibited.

 **Please note that only the opening and closing of the 76th session will be** **publicly webcast on 29 June (10 am) and 9 July (4 pm), respectively, on the following website: http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/**

**XI. Allegations of intimidation or reprisals**

 NGO representatives have the right of unhindered access to and to communicate with the Committee and its members for the effective implementation of the Committee’s mandate. Individuals or groups of individuals facing **intimidation or reprisals** for seking to cooperate or cooperating with the Committee, or their representatives, can inform the Rapporteur on reprisals and alternate Rapporteur on reprisals appointed by the Committee of any alleged incident of intimidation or reprisals. Such **complaints should be sent** electronically to cedaw@ohchr.org, copy to reprisals@ohchr.org

**XII. Registration**

 Due to the health risks linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 76th session and Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session of the Committee will take place remotely and in closed meeting (apart from the public webcasting of the opening and closing of the 76th session). As no physical meetings will take place, **no observers will be accredited** for the 76th session and the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session.

**XIII. Ground Pass**

 For the same reason, **no ground passes will be issued** for purposes of attending the 76th session and the Pre-sessional Working Group for the 78th session.

**XIV. Private lunch time briefings**

 All country-specific private lunch time briefings by NGOs **will be postponed** to the session, at which the postponed dialogues with the States parties that were scheduled for consideration at the 76th session will take place.

**XV. Thematic briefings and side events**

 All thematic briefings that were scheduled to take place during the 76th session **will be postponed** to a future session of the Committee.

**XVI. Additional Information**

 For further information about the treaty bodies in general, specific information on CEDAW and COVID-19 and on the participation and role of civil society in the reporting procedure, please consult the following links:

* <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>
* <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25818&LangID=E>
* http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx