

Sixtieth session of the General Assembly

Item 64: Advancement of Women

Item 65: Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

STATEMENT BY

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CHAIRPERSON

**COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

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on women's human rights, and the synergies between the Platform for Action and the Convention during the review session, including in the Declaration adopted by the Commission. It was most gratifying to see that States increasingly use both, the Convention as a legally binding human rights instrument, and the Platform for Action as a comprehensive agenda for gender equality, in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner to eliminate discrimination and achieve substantive equality for women.

The Committee responded to the Tsunami disaster that took place in South-East Asia in December 2004 by calling upon those who provide assistance and relief and contribute to the reconstruction of the devastated communities to respond fully to the gender-specific needs of women and girls. The Committee also continued to monitor the situation of women in Iraq, and urged the Government of Iraq to ensure that the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination are fully reflected in the new Constitution. (The three statements are contained in the Committee's annual report).

Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates

The Committee has continued its efforts to enhance its methods of work so as to achieve great efficiency. I wish to highlight only some of them. We now prepare lists of issues and questions for initial, as well as periodic reports. Only two meetings per State party are allocated for the constructive dialogue. We have issued guidance on the length of reports, and of written responses so as to limit the volume of documentation. The Committee has started to use country task forces for the constructive dialogue, and will continue to use this method flexibly at the next session. The Committee has taken steps to monitor implementation of the Convention in States whose reports are significantly overdue. I would like to thank both Cape Verde and Saint Lucia who, at the Committee's invitation submitted all their overdue reports as combined reports in time for consideration next year.

The Committee provided its views on the advisability of a Special Rapporteur on laws that discriminate against women, at the request of the Commission on the Status of Women. It also discussed the Secretary-General's study on violence against women. The Committee held a preliminary discussion on the Plan of Action of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and looks forward to meeting her personally in January 2006. We have also made a significant contribution to, and played a very active role, in the efforts to further harmonize the reporting procedures within the framework of the Inter-Committee meeting and the Chairperson's meeting.

Chairperson,

I will now turn to the Committee's request, addressed to this Assembly for action, concerning the extension of meeting time. Many of you will recall that already last year, we had put forward such a request. The question of its meeting time is a long-standing problem, dating back to the seventh session in 1988, when the first extension of the

meeting time was granted to enable the Committee to discharge its responsibilities in a professional and serious manner.

Member States are aware of the numbers: The Convention, with 180 States parties, is the treaty with the second highest number of ratifications. The Optional Protocol, with 72 parties, entrusts additional responsibilities to the Committee. States themselves are making steady progress in adhering to their reporting obligations under the Convention: while there were 256 overdue reports in July 2003, there were only 187 in July 2005. A record of 34 States submitted reports in 2004, and as of today, 27 States have submitted reports in 2005. The Committee has streamlined the manner in which it considers reports, but also is of the view that the significant effort States – and NGOs – invest in the reporting process as integral part of the implementation of the Convention cannot be reduced further if it is to remain meaningful.

The Committee appreciates the fact that this Assembly has enabled it to meet twice a year for a three-week session since 1997. This is nevertheless significantly less than treaty bodies with comparable responsibilities. The Committee

