

Check against delivery



**Statement by
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**Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues and friends,**

I am honoured to address the Third Committee of the General Assembly in my capacity as the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that oversees implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by its 186 State Parties. The Convention's Optional Protocol, which mandates the Committee to receive and consider petitions and inquire into allegations of grave or systematic violations of the Convention, has now been accepted by 99 States parties, most

submission. During its 45th and 46th sessions, the Committee considered the reports of 15 States parties, and a further 7 are being taken up during the forty-seventh session which began on 4 October 2010. At present, 32 reports are awaiting consideration by the Committee. Of those,

ways to further rationalize the concluding observations. The Committee has a working group closely following this topic.

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The Committee has sought to expand the range of stakeholders with whom it interacts in relation to implementation of the Convention. While States parties have the primary responsibility in this regard, other actors are also critical. The Committee has long encouraged the input and support of non-governmental organizations, the role of national human rights institutions in its work and in follow-up to its recommendations, the role of parliamentarians in implementation of the Convention and other actors, including the United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies.

In this regard, the Committee benefited from joint information submitted on countries under consideration by the United Nations country teams and is especially grateful to the Inter-Agency Group on CEDAW Reporting, which oversees the preparation of country team submissions to the Committee. The Committee also is supportive of the Organisation's initiative with respect to the establishment of the new entity dealing with the rights of women – UN Women. The Committee also meets with other experts to stay apprised of relevant issues. During the past year, the Committee met with the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, and with Ms. Farida Shaheed, Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights.

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The Committee continues to draft general recommendations with respect to the interpretation of provisions of the Convention or other related thematic issues. To

date, 26 general recommendations have been adopted by the Committee. The Committee is currently working on four draft general recommendations relating to the interpretation of article 2 of the Convention; on older women and protection of their human rights; on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution; and on harmful traditional practices in conjunction with the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is hoped that th

Committee members have as usual been very active in promoting the Convention and women's issues through speaking at numerous United Nations and non-United Nations fora. These opportunities are vital to raise awareness of the Convention and pressing issues for women. During this year, CEDAW experts were invited to numerous engagements organized by the United Nations, other international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations to speak about, for example, discrimination against women in law and practice, the role of parliaments in implementing the Convention, the effects of climate change on women, harmful traditional practices, and structural discrimination.

**Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues and friends,**

The Convention and the Committee have made impressive progress. Although universal ratification has not yet been achieved, we are well on the road to this goal. Significant progress has also been achieved in respect of removal of reservations to the Convention. The Committee has also made significant progress in its complaints and inquiry procedure under the Optional Protocol.¹ The Committee is currently conducting one inquiry involving significant women's rights issues. To date, petitions dealt with by the Committee have concerned, inter alia, forced sterilization, possible trafficking, discrimination in family names, financial provision on divorce, pension entitlements, discrimination in the workplace and gender stereotyping used by the judiciary in handling rape cases.

¹ With respect to the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which also holds three annual sessions pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/218, the Working Group, since its inception has held 18 sessions and registered 25 communications; the Committee has completed the proceedings related to 14 of those communications. The Committee also continued to implement its mandate under article 8 of the Optional Protocol. To date, the Committee has concluded one inquiry under this procedure (Mexico), while another is currently under way.

I am proud to say that the Committee Members have worked with competence, dedication, integrity and imagination. The Committee, which has become recognized as the legitimate and internationally respected voice for the human rights of women and girls, works diligently to assist States parties in complying with their treaty obligations, seeks to provide individual relief, and stimulates legal and policy reform. Views adopted in petitions and recommendations in the inquiry have also been influential in the creation of an international women's human rights jurisprudence, with the Committee's jurisprudence being used increasingly in regional human rights courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Its role in translating the groundbreaking approach of the Convention from aspiration to practice has been significant. It would be remiss, if I also did not mention that the Committee could not properly function without the dedicated assistance and support of the CEDAW Secretariat.

Despite progress there remain challenges, and these are particularly relevant in the context of national-level implementation. Prime among these are discrimination and violence against women based on the patriarchal attitudes. The Committee frequently sees this played out in the persistence of discriminatory laws, customs and practices in States parties that remain obvious from reporting round to reporting round. Although the Convention and its implementation procedures have encouraged significant changes on the ground, including in relation to laws, policies and programmes and has transformed the lives of many, the potential of the Convention's system to bring about change at the national level has not been exploited to the full, much as a result of its lack of visibility and accessibility, and resource constraints.

Thank you.