

**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-second sessions**

exceptional and temporary basis, three of these in parallel chambers. Lastly, the Assembly authorized the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to meet three times a year, for a total of ten working days. The Assembly further agreed that the Committee should hold two of its five sessions of 2008 and 2009 in New York. I believe that this decision is a clear reflection of the commitment of States parties to ensuring compliance with treaty obligations, including regular scrutiny of such compliance by the Committee. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all Member States that supported this decision.

During the past two years the Committee has made significant steps in clearing the backlog in States parties' reports awaiting review. The Committee intends to continue its efforts to ensure that incoming reports are considered in a timely manner and to encourage States parties with long overdue reports to submit them without further delay.

The Committee expects the timely submission of reports by all States parties. In an effort to facilitate the preparation of reports, at its fortieth session, the Committee adopted the new CEDAW reporting guidelines that complement the guidelines for the common core document. The Guidelines are available on the OHCHR website. States parties reporting from now on will be required to submit a common core document in tandem with a CEDAW-specific report and these two documents will constitute the report.

Mr. Chairperson,

After 25 years of work, as of January 2008, the servicing of the Committee was transferred from the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Let me pay tribute to DAW for the excellent support provided during these years. The Committee is confident that the DAW will continue to advocate for universal ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol and implementation of the Committee's concluding observations. The Committee and the DAW will maintain close ties. To this end, the Committee has decided to invite the Director of the DAW to address its next session in New York, together with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Gender Issues, the Executive Director of UNIFEM and the Chair of the CSW.

At the same time, the Committee considers the consolidation of the servicing of the treaty bodies within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as constituting an important step towards the continuing harmonization of the human rights treaty bodies' system, as well as towards greater cooperation with the human rights infrastructure.

I would like to inform you that during its fortieth session, the first to be held in Geneva, the Committee met with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the Human Rights Council. During the dialogue with the High Commissioner, the Committee discussed several issues relevant for its work and for the integration of women's rights at the heart of human rights agenda and human rights machinery in Geneva. The Committee was also very pleased to be able to discuss with the President of the Human Rights Council the establishment of a closer working relationship between the

I am also very pleased to report about several decisions taken on complaints submitted under the Optional Protocol. At its thirty-eight session, the Committee declared inadmissible communication 10/2005, N.S.F. v. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

At its thirty-ninth session, the Committee declared inadmissible communication 7/2005, Cristina Muñoz-Vargas y Sainz de Vicuña v. Spain. The Committee also adopted views on two communications concerning domestic violence. It found violations of the Convention in both communication 5/2005 (ahide Goekce (deceased) v. Austria) and communication 6/2005 (Fatma Yildirim (deceased) v. Austria) In both cases, the Committee found a violation of the rights to life and physical and mental integrity under article 2 (a) and (c) through (f), and article 3 of the Convention read in conjunction with article 1 of the Convention and general recommendation 19 on violence against women. For the first time in the context of individual communications, the Committee had to deal with the concept of due diligence concerning prevention, investigation, punishment and compensation/redress. In those two cases, the Committee held Austria accountable for failing to exercise due diligence to protect the two victims from domestic violence. The Committee has made a number of recommendations the implementation of which will be reviewed and assessed through a follow-up mechanism. At its fortieth session, the Committee discontinued communication 9/2005 which had become moot. So far, 18 communications have been registered since the Optional Protocol entered into force.

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates

I would like reiterate the Committee's readiness to continue its cooperation with the Commission in pursuing our common goals of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and violence against women, and on the follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. On behalf of the Committee, I thank the Commission for the continued support to its work.

In concluding, I would like to emphasize that the ongoing year-long commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a great opportunity to highlight the equality of women and men in the recognition and enjoyment of all human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration. We are also marking 15 years since the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. Last Monday, the Secretary-General of the United Nations launched his campaign to eliminate violence against women, encouraging all of us to redouble our efforts. Violence against women is a violation of human rights – this campaign should