

**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February to 4 March 2011**

**Statement by Ms. Silvia Pimentel
Chair
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

**Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues and Friends,**

I have the honour to present to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women the main outcomes of the forty-sixth, forty-seventh and forty-eighth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Pursuant to its mandate under article 20 of the Convention, the Committee considered the reports of 20 States parties and adopted concluding observations in this regard. Many areas of concern raised by the Committee in these observations relate to, *inter alia*, trafficking and exploitation of prostitution; lack of awareness-raising initiatives and training programmes to combat gender stereotypes; participation in political and public life; access to education and health; including sexual and reproductive health; wage disparities and employment issues; access to justice; violence against women, including sexual violence; harmful practices; and specific issues concerning disadvantaged groups of women, including refugees, stateless women and migrants; as well as older women, rural women and indigenous women.

Representatives of United Nations entities, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions attended the sessions and participated in informal meetings with the Committee. Information was also received from such entities prior to each session for the consideration by the Committee.

Chairperson,

The Committee has also been active in the elaboration of general recommendations on provisions of the Convention and important thematic issues with a view to providing guidance to States parties on

absolute need for the full participation of women as active agents in peace and security.

Moreover, the Committee decided to draft a general recommendation on access to justice. This decision underscores the fact that women in many countries continue to face difficulties in protecting their rights through competent national tribunals and other public institutions. It is the view of the Committee that access to suitable and effective legal remedies is the first line of defense with respect to discriminatory acts against women.

Chairperson,

The Committee's interaction with the human rights machinery is extremely important for its overall activity and the Committee benefits greatly from the cooperation of the relevant stakeholders in order to effectively discharge its mandate. The Committee has been working closely with various United Nations entities and specialized agencies concerning its work, including the provision of relevant country-specific information for purposes of the constructive dialogues with the States parties, and input with respect to general recommendations being elaborated by the Committee, for example.

I would like to note that the Committee is currently collaborating with UN Women on two of its draft general recommendations. The Committee is very keen on developing and maintaining close relations with UN Women, and I have taken the opportunity of being in New York to meet with Ms. Bachelet to further discuss future cooperation on operational activities, strategic issues, technical assistance and other matters of common concern.

During these past sessions, the Committee also met with various special mandate holders, including thisi3t 14.335 0 Td(further discuss future coor)5neralTc

The Committee and its members have additionally participated in the Inter-Chairpersons Meetings and its working groups with a view to strengthening the treaty body framework and enhancing implementation between international and regional human rights mechanisms and institutions. In addition, the Committee set-up a task force to further improve the quality of its working methods as part of the overall harmonization initiative regarding the other treaty bodies.

Furthermore, Committee members have been active in participating in panel discussions and seminars relating to women's issues, including seminars and conferences organized by the United Nations and related bodies, other international organizations, regional bodies, national governments, universities and other entities.

Chairperson,

Through the constructive dialogue with the States parties and its follow-up initiative whereby the Committee identifies priority issues in the concluding observations for the States parties to implement within one to two years, the Committee can attest to the progress achieved in realizing the human rights of women, such as the withdrawal of reservations to the Convention; the increased attention paid by States parties to creating a legal framework that promotes and protects women's rights, including through the introduction of temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of *de facto* equality between women and men, and the establishment of national machinery for the advancement of women; improvements in education and health; and well as greater participation in the political and economic spheres.

Although much progress has been made with respect to women's rights, much work remains to be done to achieve gender equality. Full equality for women in law and practice has not been achieved in any country in the world. Women continue to suffer profound and pervasive human rights violations, such as gender-based violence in the public and private spheres. The Committee is also increasingly concerned with the intersectionality that discrimination against women encompasses in that such discrimination based at i Tzand

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vulnerability of women at risk, such as women in armed conflict and post conflict situations, migrant and refugee women, and indigenous women.

Chairperson,

Allow me to reiterate the Committee's readiness to continue its cooperation with the Commission in pursuing our common goals of the elimination of discrimination against women, gender equality and empowerment of women. On behalf of the Committee, I thank the Commission for the continued support to our work.

I wish you well in your important deliberations.

Thank you.