

**Commission on the Status of Women
Fiftieth session
27 February to 10 March 2006**

**Statement by
Ms. Rosario Manalo, Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegations

It is my honour and privilege as the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to address the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I wish to congratulate you, Mme Chairperson and the members of the bureau on your election.

I am pleased to report that since I last addressed this Commission, two States have acceded to the Convention, bringing the total number of States parties to the Convention to 181. I congratulate Oman which acceded to the Convention on 7 February 2006, and Monaco which acceded on 18 March 2005. 76 States parties have now ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which is an increase of five additional accessions since last March. We have also 47 acceptances of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1 of the Convention concerning the Committee's meeting time. I encourage all those who have not yet become party to these key instruments for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women to intensify their efforts so that the goal of universal ratification of the Convention can be achieved soonest and the Optional Protocol can become an effective means for redress for women in all States parties.

Madam Chairperson,

During our thirty-fourth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women examined progress in implementation of the Convention in eight States parties. I extend my sincere appreciation to these States for their reports, the responses to our lists of issues and questions and for their willingness to hold a constructive dialogue with the Committee about the status of the implementation of, and compliance with the provisions of the Convention. The Committee requested the reporting States parties to give wide publicity to the Committee's concluding comments, not only among public officials, but also society at large, and to ensure that Government officials, parliamentarians and other officials in the country are made well aware of them and encouraged to take follow-up measures within their areas of responsibility.

While we noticed progress in the implementation of the Convention in a number of areas, including legislative reforms, the Committee also found persistent gaps in implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The Committee is very much concerned with this reality and impresses on States parties the need for targeted actions as the Convention must be fully implemented for the benefit of all women.

The Committee continued its work under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. I am pleased with the Committee's progress as it implements these important responsibilities. At our last session, the Committee declared inadmissible one communication, the case of *Rahime Kayhan v. Turkey*, for the author's failure to exhaust domestic remedies. 11 communications have so far been registered.

Madam Chair
Distinguished delegates

As you are all well aware, the General Assembly at its last session approved the Committee's request for extension of its meeting time, enabling the Committee to hold three annual sessions of three weeks each in 2006 and 2007, and to meet in parallel working groups for parts of those sessions. As a result, the Committee will hold constructive dialogues with a significantly larger number of States parties than in past years. Overall, we anticipate that we will consider the reports of 67 States parties in the biennium, as compared to 32 in the past biennium. We are extremely pleased that because of the decision of the General Assembly, we will be able to consider reports in a more timely manner. The Committee is very grateful to all Member States for their support in this matter, and we believe that this measure will indeed contribute significantly to better implementation of the Convention at the national level, and thus enhanced enjoyment by women of their human rights. The Committee will discuss and finalize its working methods for its parallel working groups at its 35th session in May.

The Committee is implementing a number of other measures to enhance the visibility and accessibility of its work, with the support of its Secretariat. Concluding comments are widely disseminated, in all languages, via the website, together with all documentation pertaining to a State's presentation, including its report, the list of issues and questions, responses, and introductory statements. The Committee is also very pleased that summary records are now being issued in a timely manner, and as a consequence, the Committee has decided to dispense with the inclusion of summaries of States introduction in its report. The Committee also urges States to adhere to the Committee's guidelines for the length of reports and responses. In this manner, the Committee wishes to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations to limit the volume of documentation.

I wish to extend the Committee's appreciation to the Government of Germany for inviting the Committee to hold an informal meeting in early May in Berlin, which also serves to commemorate the Committee's twenty-fifth anniversary. This will be the Committee's fifth informal meeting, and the Committee is grateful to all those States that

have hosted such meetings. These meetings provide the necessary time to tackle important matters on our agenda and for which insufficient time is available during our regular sessions. In addition to discussing working methods for the parallel working groups, we will review a draft general recommendation on migrant women, and consider further the reform proposals of the High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the treaty body system.

Distinguished delegates,

The Committee continues to pay careful attention to the existing proposals for reform of the human rights treaty bodies, including the proposals for establishment of a standing unified treaty body, and the transfer of the Committee and its servicing to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Committee welcomes the strong emphasis on enhanced protection and promotion of human rights at the national level, and full implementation of Convention provisions. The Committee was very pleased about the opportunity to discuss with the High Commissioner for Human Rights her proposals for treaty body reform. Based on the discussion, the Committee brings to the attention of States parties its view that no decision should be taken at the present time on the question of a possible transfer of the Committee and its Secretariat. Instead, the Committee recommends strongly that further reflection take place once the details of the reform proposals are available, and that its own inputs be taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

Madam Chair
Distinguished delegates

The Committee takes a consistent interest in the work of this Commission, and recognizes the very pertinent linkages and synergies in implementation of the Convention and the Platform for Action at the national level. Women's equal participation in public life is covered in the Convention, and the Committee consistently addresses the implementation of the relevant provisions in States parties. I am confident that this Commission will give due consideration to the Convention and the Committee's work at its present session so as to enhance inter-action between the Committee and the Commission, for accelerated achievement of women's de jure and de facto equality.

Madam Chairperson

I wish you well in your important deliberations.

Thank you.