

SIXTIETH SESSION
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Statement by Ms. Carolyn Hannan
Director, Division for the Advancement of Women
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Chairperson

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,
Representatives of non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the 60th session of the Commission on Human Rights.

I would like to highlight some of the activities undertaken by the Division for the Advancement of Women, as the Secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, since your last session, which may be of particular interest to this Commission. I refer in particular to the joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (document E/CN.4/2004/65 and E/CN.6/2004/7). In addition to assessing past activities, the joint work plan identifies major areas of cooperation for increasing attention to the human rights of women and gender perspectives, some of which I will raise here.

Support for human rights treaty bodies remains a central area of cooperation between our respective offices. The Division looks forward to participating in the third Inter-Committee meeting and the meeting of Chairpersons in June, which provide a critical opportunity for discussion of ways to enhance the working methods of the treaty bodies, with the aim of strengthening implementation of the treaties at the national level. Encouraged by steps taken by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a significant number of States parties have recently submitted their reports in accordance with article 18 of the Convention. The Committee thus again faces the challenge of a backlog of reports for consideration. The Division will support the Committee in its efforts to devise working methods to cope with this situation.

The Division has continued outreach efforts, including through UN entities at the national level, to increase awareness about the Convention and especially its Optional Protocol, so that women in the 60 States that are now party to the Optional Protocol may benefit fully from this new means of redress for alleged violations of the Convention.

The Division continues to implement a small technical cooperation programme to strengthen capacity of States parties to implement the Convention, including reporting and follow-up to the Committee's concluding comments. To that end, the Division organized a training workshop for government officials from African countries, as well as

a colloquium for judicial officers on the use of the Convention in crafting a jurisprudence of gender equality by domestic courts. We will hold two similar events for countries from the Caribbean region in May, hosted by the Government of The Bahamas. The Division has also initiated work to prepare a CEDAW Implementation Manual. As part of our joint work plan with OHCHR, we hope to convene later this year a meeting of national human rights institutions and national machineries for the advancement of women on collaborative strategies to eliminate discrimination against women.

This Commission has for many years paid particular attention to the question of violence against women. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, marks its tenth anniversary this year. These ten years have seen remarkable progress on many levels, and by many actors, in the fight against violence against women, but there are also issues and questions where further effort is needed to develop consensus and a global policy approach, as well as agreement on measures to prevent such violence from occurring. Further efforts are also necessary to assess the impact of the many different measures taken, and to get a clearer understanding of strategies that have worked – or not worked. The indepth study on violence against women, which the General Assembly has requested from the Secretary-General and which the Division has responsibility to prepare in cooperation with different stakeholders, will be an opportunity to synthesize and build on the work done by Governments, NGOs and the entities of the UN system, to identify gaps and challenges, and propose strategies for further progress. I look forward to updating this Commission next year on the status of the study, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly at its 60th session.

I would like to conclude by drawing attention to the review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly of 2000, which will be undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women next year. The Commission took decisions on the format of next year's session, and entrusted its Bureau to continue preparations for the session. The Division will prepare an assessment of progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action, and Member States have been invited to provide information through a questionnaire. This report will include attention to the Critical Areas of Concern on Human rights of women and Violence against women.

Thank you, Mr.Chairperson.