

3 December 2012

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-seventh session

4-15 March 2013

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Results of the fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present note reflects the results, including decisions taken, of the fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, held in Geneva from 13 February to 2 March 2012, in New York from 9 to 27 July 2012, and in Geneva from 1 to 19 October 2012.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 47/94, the General Assembly recommended that the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women be scheduled, whenever possible, to allow for the timely transmission of the results of those sessions for information to the Commission on the Status of Women.

2. The Committee held its fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions from 13 February to 2 March 2012, from 9 to 27 July 2012, and from 1 to 19 October 2012, respectively. At its fifty-first session, the Committee decided to request the following States with long-overdue reports to submit all overdue reports by a certain date and that, failing receipt of their reports, and as a last resort, to proceed with the consideration of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the absence of the reports: Antigua and Barbuda (combined fourth to seventh periodic reports due on 31 August 2014); Barbados (combined fifth to eighth periodic reports due on 2 March 2014); Saint Kitts and Nevis (combined fifth to eighth periodic reports due on 25 May 2014); Trinidad and Tobago (combined fourth to seventh periodic reports due on 11 February 2015). At its fifty-second session, the Committee adopted a statement on the need for a gender perspective in the text of the Arms Trade Treaty (annex I) and a statement on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic (annex II). It also adopted a decision on strengthening the role of the country rapporteurs and adoption of a country briefing note template (annex III). The Committee also adopted a resolution on the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of the human rights treaty bodies (the Addis Ababa Guidelines) (annex IV). At its fifty-third session, the Committee endorsed a concept note on rural women and a concept note on access to justice, and also decided to hold a general discussion on access to justice at its fifty-fourth session, in February 2013. Moreover, the Committee adopted a statement on girls' right to education (annex V) and a statement on the situation of women and girls in northern Mali (annex VI).

3. The Committee held a thirtieth anniversary commemoration event during its fifty-second session, which was supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). It was attended by over 500 people, including senior United Nations officials, members of the diplomatic community and civil society. The event opened with statements by Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations; Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women; Dilma Rouseff, President of Brazil, delivered by Eleonora Menicucci de Oliveira, Minister of Policies for Women; and Shanthi Dairiam, founder and member of the Board of Directors of the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific. A panel discussion on women's political participation and leadership followed. OHCHR also produced a commemorative publication for the event entitled "30 years Working for Women's Rights: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 1982-2012". Another thirtieth anniversary commemoration event was held during the fifty-third session, supported by OHCHR and the International Organization of la Francophonie, which was attended by over 130 people, including senior United Nations officials, members of the diplomatic community and civil society. Statements were made by Kyung-wha Kang, Deputy High Commissioner, and Ambassador Ridha Bouabid, Permanent Observer for the International Organization of la Francophonie to the United

Nations Office at Geneva. The event featured two high-level panels. The first panel focused on the human rights of women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations in French-speaking Africa, and the second was devoted to a discussion on future prospects for the promotion and protection of women's rights in reinforcing peace. Following the fifty-third session, the Government of Turkey generously sponsored a thirtieth anniversary event in Istanbul on 1 November 2012 hosted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. During the opening ceremony, statements were made by the Deputy High Commissioner and Fatma Sahin, Minister of Family and Social Policies of Turkey. Two interactive panels followed, focusing on the general recommendations of the Committee that are currently being elaborated as well as the jurisprudence of the Committee under the Optional Protocol. The event was attended by approximately 150 Government officials, members of civil society and others. Additional information on these events, including the programmes, statements and the commemorative publication, are available on the web page of the Committee, which is hosted on the website of OHCHR (www.ohchr.org).

4. The Committee held an informal meeting with representatives of 74 States parties during its fifty-third session, at which the Committee gave a briefing on cooperation with stakeholders for the purpose of achieving more comprehensive implementation of the Convention; the importance of continuing to hold one session of the Committee per year in New York; the working methods of the Committee relating to the constructive dialogue and follow-up and implementation of concluding observations in the context of treaty body strengthening, as well as individual complaints and inquiries under the Optional Protocol.

5. The Committee continued to engage with partners during its sessions held in 2012. During its fifty-first session, the Committee met with Fareeda Shaheed, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights of the Human Rights Council. It also met with representatives of UN-Women and discussed the need for long-term planning and coordination with respect to general recommendations and other activities, in order to facilitate support by UN-Women. A public briefing was organized by OHCHR and the Open Society Justice Initiative on how to strengthen the implementation of the Committee's views under the Optional Protocol and the recommendations contained in the concluding observations of the Committee. Rashida Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and Dubravka Simonovic, a member of the Committee, were panellists. The Committee additionally met with representatives of the Global Campaign for Education, which presented a report entitled Gender Discrimination in Education: The violation of rights of women and girls.

6. During its fifty-second session, the Committee met with Kamala Chandrakirana (Chair) and Eleonora Zielinska of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, who briefed the Committee on the activities of the Working Group over the past year. Discussions also took place on the need to avoid duplication and to ensure close coordination and mutually reinforcing activities, including participation in general discussion days and providing input into the general recommendations of the Committee. The Committee was also briefed by a representative of the NGO Committee on the Commission on the Status of Women, New York on the proposed fifth world conference on women and commemoration of Beijing+20, as well as on activities to strengthen the Commission on the Status of Women process in the regions. The Committee, in conjunction with The Protection Project, a human rights institute at

Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C., organized an interactive panel on trafficking in and exploitation of women for the purpose of prostitution in the context of article 6 of the Convention. Professor Mohamed Mattar, Executive Director of The Protection Project; various participants in The Protection Project; Denise Scotto, attorney and Policy Adviser at Global Legal Strategies, an international consulting firm; Julie Tanner, Assistant Director of Socially Responsible Investing at Christian Brothers Investment Services; and Naela Gabr, a member of the Committee, participated in the discussion, which attracted over 100 people, including from the permanent missions, United Nations programmes, funds and agencies, as well as civil society. Nicole Ameline (Vice-Chair of the Committee) and Pramila Patten (a member of the Committee and Chair of the Committee's working group on the human rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations) also participated in a panel discussion on women's human rights, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention, sponsored by UN-Women and various civil society organizations, as well as in a round-table discussion on the draft general recommendation on the human rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, organized by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland.

7. During its fifty-third session, the Committee met with the Human Rights Committee to discuss the individual complaints procedure and the report of the High Commissioner of Human Rights entitled "Strengthening the United Nations human rights treaty body system". The Committee met with representatives of the School of Human Rights Research at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, to discuss the "receptor approach" to human rights and, in particular, the role of local social institutions, especially in Africa and Asia, in implementing international human rights obligations; the approach will allow individual States to highlight their human rights performance at the international level. The Committee met with representatives of the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section of OHCHR and was briefed on the expert mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Committee also met with representatives of the International Commission of Jurists and the Freidrich Ebert Foundation to discuss the range of obstacles and impediments that limit women's access to justice and legal protection, and identify recommendations for change. A meeting was also held with some 10 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva, including Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and World Young Men's Christian Association, at which discussions took place on the general recommendation on harmful practices and the general recommendation on the human rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and other areas of cooperation.

8. As at 19 October 2012, the closing date of the fifty-third session of the Committee, there were 187 States parties to the Convention and 104 States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention. A total of 66 States had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the meeting time of the Committee. In order to bring the amendment into force, two thirds of the States parties to the Convention, in other words 125 States parties, are required to deposit their instruments of acceptance with the Secretary-General.

II. Results of the fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Committee

A. Reports considered by the Committee

9. At its fifty-first session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon, namely Algeria (CEDAW/C/DZA/CO/3-4), Brazil (CEDAW/C/BRA/CO/7), Congo (CEDAW/C/COG/CO/6), Grenada (CEDAW/C/GRD/CO/1-5), Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/5), Norway (CEDAW/C/NOR/CO/8) and Zimbabwe (CEDAW/C/ZWE/CO/2-5).

10. At its fifty-second session, the Committee considered the reports of eight States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon, namely Bahamas (CEDAW/C/BHS/CO/1-5), Bulgaria (CEDAW/C/BGR/CO/4-7), Guyana (CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/7-8), Indonesia (CEDAW/C/IDN/CO/6-7), Jamaica (CEDAW/C/JAM/CO/6-7), Mexico (CEDAW/C/MEX/CO/7-8), New Zealand (CEDAW/C/NZL/CO/7) and Samoa (CEDAW/C/WSM/CO/4-5).

11. At its fifty-third session, the Committee considered the reports of five States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon, namely Chile (CEDAW/C/CHL/CO/5-6), Comoros (CEDAW/C/COM/CO/1-4), Equatorial Guinea (CEDAW/C/GNQ/CO/6), Togo (CEDAW/C/TGO/CO/6-7) and Turkmenistan (CEDAW/C/TKM/CO/3-4). It is noted that the consideration of the combined second and third periodic reports of Serbia, as well as the consideration of the Central African Republic in the absence of a report, were also scheduled for the fifty-third session, but were postponed.

12. Representatives of United Nations entities, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations attended the sessions. The reports of the States parties, the Committee's lists of issues and questions, the States parties' replies thereto, and their introductory statements are posted on the web page of the Committee, under the relevant session.

13. In regard to each of the States parties considered, the Committee adopted concluding observations (see paras. 9-11 above), which are also available on the website.

B. Action taken in relation to the implementation of article 21 of the Convention

General recommendation on the economic consequences of marriage and its dissolution

14. The Committee continued with its review of the draft general recommendation in plenary during the fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions, with the expectation that the general recommendation would be adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the Committee in February 2014.

General recommendation on the human rights of women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations

15. Following the general discussion held on 18 July 2011, the working group entrusted with the preparation of the general recommendation, in conjunction with OHCHR and UN-Women, organized regional consultations to solicit additional input for the general recommendation. Consultations were held in Bangkok, Addis Ababa, Guatemala City and Istanbul. Another consultation, for the Middle East and North African region, is envisaged. The working group met during the fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions to further advance the elaboration of the general recommendation.

Joint general recommendation on harmful practices

16. The working group met during the fifty-first and fifty-second sessions and commenced drafting on several substantive paragraphs. The joint working group with the Committee on the Rights of the Child met during the fifty-third session and continued with the elaboration of the draft general recommendation. It is expected that first draft will be circulated in early 2013 to both committees.

General recommendation on access to justice

17. A draft concept note on women and access to justice was presented to the Committee at its fifty-first session. It was subsequently revised and endorsed by the Committee at its fifty-third session. The Committee also decided to hold a general discussion on women and access to justice at its fifty-fourth session, in February 2014.

Working group on gender equality in the context of asylum and statelessness

18. The working group met during the fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions to further advance the elaboration of the general recommendation. The Committee also decided that any work on the general recommendation would take place outside of plenary until decided otherwise by the Committee.

Working group on rural women

19. The working group on rural women drafted a concept note during the fifty-first and fifty-second sessions, which was subsequently endorsed by the Committee at its fifty-third session. It is envisaged that a general discussion on rural women would be held in 2013. The Committee also decided that any work on the general recommendation would take place outside of plenary until decided otherwise by the Committee.

Working group on climate change and natural disasters

20. The Committee established a working group on climate change and natural disasters at its fifty-second session to elaborate a general recommendation in this regard. The Committee also decided that any work on the general recommendation would take place outside of plenary until decided otherwise by the Committee.

Working group on the right to education

21. The Committee established a working group on the right to education at its fifty-second session to elaborate a general recommendation in this regard. The Committee also decided that any work on the general recommendation would take place outside of plenary until decided otherwise by the Committee.

C. Action taken in relation to ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee**Enhancing the Committee's working methods under article 18 of the Convention****Working methods**

22. The Committee established a standing working group on working methods to continue to refine the working methods of the Committee in order to fulfil its responsibilities in a more effective manner within the broader framework of the treaty body strengthening process. Previously, the Committee had taken steps to improve its reporting guidelines and the constructive dialogue with the States parties. It also refined its concluding observations. The Committee also took a number of decisions relating to the lists of issues adopted at the meetings of the pre-session working group, in order to better focus priority issues; the establishment of task forces to enhance the constructive dialogue with States parties; and strengthening the role of the country rapporteurs.

23. At its fifty-first session, the Committee continued its discussions on the treaty body strengthening process. It also reviewed its use of task forces and found that the task forces were, overall, a positive initiative, resulting in a more focused, constructive dialogue and better time management. At its fifty-second session, the Committee reviewed the draft template to standardize the country briefing notes prepared by the country rapporteurs. The Committee adopted the template at its fifty-third session, noting that the template would serve as a tool to facilitate and harmonize the work of the country rapporteurs and to assist in ensuring consistency of country briefing notes. It also continued its discussion of the treaty body strengthening process, including the proposals contained in the report of the High Commissioner on treaty body strengthening (see para. 7 above). The Committee adopted a resolution endorsing in principle the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies. This discussion continued at the fifty-third session, when the Committee decided to entrust its working group on working methods to undertake a review of the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies with a view to incorporating relevant elements into its rules of procedures. It also entrusted the working group to undertake a review of the proposals contained in the report of the High Commissioner, many of which had been implemented by the Committee or were already under consideration.

Follow-up procedure

24. The Committee continued with its follow-up procedure at the fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions, adopting the reports of the Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and considering the follow-up reports of Armenia, Belgium, Ecuador, Fiji, Madagascar, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Rwanda, Spain and Uruguay. The reports are posted on the web page of the Committee, under "Follow-up reports".

Overdue reports

25. The Committee decided that the secretariat should systematically remind States parties whose reports are five years or more overdue to submit their reports as soon as possible. There are currently 22 States parties whose reports are five years or more overdue: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Croatia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ireland, Kiribati, Latvia, Malaysia, Mali, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Philippines, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Thailand and Trinidad and Tobago. With respect to long-overdue reports, the Committee decided that as a last resort, and failing receipt of the long-overdue reports by a specified date, it would proceed with the consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the State party in the absence of a report. The Committee is scheduled to review the following States in the absence of a report: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal and the Solomon Islands in 2013; and Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago in 2014 and 2015. States parties have been responsive to the reminders transmitted by the secretariat, as evidenced by the number of reports submitted and scheduled for consideration. The Committee currently has a total of 40 reports scheduled for consideration from the fifty-fifth session (July 2013) through the fifty-ninth session (October 2014).

Dates of future sessions of the Committee

26. The Committee confirmed the dates of its fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions as follows:

Fifty-fourth session

- (a) Plenary: 11 February-1 March 2013, Geneva;
- (b) Twenty-fifth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 4-7 March 2013, Geneva;
- (c) Pre-session working group for the fifty-sixth session: 4-8 March 2013, Geneva.

Fifty-fifth session

- (a) Twenty-sixth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 3-5 July 2013, Geneva;
- (b) Plenary: 8-26 July 2013, Geneva;
- (c) Pre-session working group for the fifty-seventh session: 29 July-2 August 2013, Geneva.

Fifty-sixth session

- (a) Twenty-seventh session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 25-27 September 2013, Geneva;
- (b) Plenary: 30 September-18 October 2013, Geneva;
- (c) Pre-session working group for the fifty-eighth session: 21-24 October 2013, Geneva.

Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

27. The Committee confirmed that it will consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-fourth session: Angola, Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Pakistan, Solomon Islands (in the absence of a report) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Committee will also consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-fifth session: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Serbia and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Committee will further consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-sixth session: Andorra, Benin, Cambodia, Colombia, Republic of Moldova, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (in the absence of a report), Seychelles and Tajikistan.

D. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising from article 2 and article 8 of the Optional Protocol

28. At the fifty-first session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its twenty-second session. The Committee took action on communications Nos. 19/2008 (*Cecilia Kell v. Canada*), 25/2010 (*M.P.M. v. Canada*) and 28/2010 (*R.K.B. v. Turkey*), and adopted two views and one inadmissibility decision with respect to those communications. The inadmissibility decision was adopted by consensus. One member expressed her intention to submit a dissenting individual opinion with respect to communication No. 19/2008 and one member expressed her intention to submit a concurring individual opinion with respect to communication No. 28/2010.

29. No specific follow-up action was taken at the fifty-first session in relation to communication No. 18/2008 (*Karen Tayag Vertido v. the Philippines*) as the Permanent Mission of the Philippines did not respond to the Committee's request for a follow-up meeting, transmitted early in the session, nor with respect to a similar request transmitted during the previous session.

30. The Committee established a task force with respect to one request for an inquiry under article 8 of the Optional Protocol and requested the State party concerned to submit observations with regard to information received by the Committee indicating grave or systematic violations of certain rights set forth in the Convention.

31. At its fifty-second session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its twenty-third session. The Committee took action on communication No. 32/2011 (*Isatou Jallow v. Bulgaria*) and adopted views on the admissibility and merits of that communication by consensus.

32. No specific follow-up action was undertaken at the fifty-second session.

33. With respect to inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee decided to establish one inquiry and also received two requests for inquiries, which were registered. The Committee also requested the secretariat to draft a background paper on modalities and procedures in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, including country visits.

34. At the fifty-third session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its twenty-fourth session. The Committee adopted decisions in connection with two individual communications submitted under the Optional Protocol. Regarding communication No. 31/2011 (*V.P. v. Bulgaria*), the views of the Committee were adopted by consensus. With regard to communication No. 38/2012 (*J.S. v. the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*), the Committee decided by consensus that the communication was inadmissible.

35. The Committee was briefed on the progress of follow-up with respect to communications Nos. 17/2008 (*Alyne Pimentel v. Brazil*), 20/2008 (*V.K. v. Bulgaria*), 22/2009 (*L.C. v. Peru*) and 23/2009 (*Inga Abramova v. Belarus*). The Committee decided to keep the follow-up dialogue open in these cases.

36. No specific action was undertaken by the Committee under article 8 of the Optional Protocol at the fifty-third session.

Annex I

Statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the need for a gender perspective in the text of the Arms Trade Treaty, adopted on 24 July 2012 during its fifty-second session

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recalls that the preamble to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women emphasizes the specific factors relating to armed conflict which hinder the enjoyment of substantive equality for women and reiterates the necessity for general and complete disarmament.

The Committee recalls that gender-based violence against women is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. The Convention guarantees women the equal recognition, enjoyment and exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field and on a basis of equality with men.

The Committee welcomes international efforts to negotiate a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty at the United Nations and recalls that the arms trade has specific gender dimensions and direct links to discrimination and gender-based violence against women with far-reaching implications for efforts to consolidate peace, security and gender equality and to secure development. The Committee urges Member States to recognize the potential gendered impacts of international transfers of arms, especially illicit arms, as women are disproportionately affected by armed gender-based violence.

Whether in conflict or post-conflict situations, conventional arms, especially small arms, including diverted arms from the legal trade, can have a direct or indirect effect on women as victims of conflict-related sexual violence, as victims of domestic violence, and also as protesters or actors in resistance movements. In times of conflict, women are increasingly deliberately targeted for and subjected to various forms of violence and abuse, ranging from arbitrary killings, torture and mutilation to sexual and gender-based violence, and these forms of violence persist even after the cessation of hostilities. The proliferation of arms and ammunition perpetuates and facilitates these atrocities.

To tackle violations of women's human rights during conflict and promote participation in post-conflict reconstruction and policymaking, actions must focus on prevention of conflict and all forms of violence. Such conflict prevention includes robust and effective regulation of the arms trade as well as appropriate control over the circulation of existing, and often illicit, small arms.

The Committee urges that the Arms Trade Treaty not merely focus on the procedural authorization of arms transfers. A strong Arms Trade Treaty should have as its primary purpose the prevention of human suffering, especially among women and children, caused by the proliferation and illicit trade of arms and ammunition, so as to contribute to the development of more sustainable and stable security sectors.

The Committee urges that language to prevent gender-based violence against women, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, through the control of arms and restrictions on international transfers be included in all three parts of the Arms Trade Treaty, namely the preamble, the Goals and objectives and the Criteria sections.

Annex II

Statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, adopted on 27 July 2012 during its fifty-second session

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expresses its deep concern about the situation of women in the Syrian Arab Republic due to the armed conflict.

The Committee asks for an immediate end to the violence in Syria, which gravely affects the civilian population, particularly women, and expresses its full solidarity with and support for the women in Syria.

The Committee supports the humanitarian assistance provided by the international community, and calls for its reinforcement and strengthening. The Committee urges United Nations entities urgently to appoint gender specialists in all missions, with a view to identifying violence against women in all its forms.

The Committee calls upon all parties involved in the current conflict to respect internationally recognized principles, norms and standards of human rights and humanitarian law, particularly the human rights of women, which are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

In particular, the Committee also calls upon all parties involved in the current conflict to respect all women's rights, including the rights to life, safety, security and access to health and emergency medical care, and to prevent gender-based violence during the armed conflict.

Annex III

Strengthening the role of the country rapporteurs and adoption of a country briefing note template, adopted during its fifty-second session

Pursuant to its decision, adopted at its fiftieth session, to strengthen the role of the country rapporteurs and to develop a template for the country rapporteurs' briefing notes, the Committee, having reviewed the draft template, endorses it with the understanding that the template shall serve as a tool to facilitate and harmonize the work of the country rapporteurs and to assist in ensuring consistency of country briefing notes. It is further understood that the template is to be used as a model in a flexible manner and that the content of each note falls within the discretion of the country rapporteurs.

Annex IV

Resolution on the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies (the Addis Ababa Guidelines), adopted on 27 July 2012, by consensus, during its fifty-second session

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,

Considering the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies (the Addis Ababa Guidelines),

Expressing its appreciation to the meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies for its work in this regard,

Noting that the Committee strongly supports the independence and impartiality of treaty body members and the autonomy of the treaty bodies as masters of their own procedures,

Recalling the long-standing rules of procedure, decisions and practice of the Committee regarding this issue, and noting that the Addis Ababa Guidelines largely reflect the existing rules of procedure, decisions and practice of the Committee,

Supports in principle the Addis Ababa Guidelines while it continues to discuss the proposals set out therein.

Annex V

Statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the protection of girls' right to education, adopted on 19 October 2012, during its fifty-third session

Girls' and women's right to education is a central obligation of States parties under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This obligation is set out in articles 2 and 10 of the Convention, as well as in other international human rights documents such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration, containing the Millennium Development Goals, and the Dakar Framework for Action, on Education for All adopted at the World Education Forum.

In spite of the seeming global consensus on the right of girls and women to education, and although the illiterate population is shrinking globally, illiteracy continues to be a feminized phenomenon, particularly in certain regions of the world. In 2009, 35 million girls of primary-school age and 37 million lower-secondary-level girls were out of school. As a result of these trends over time, of the reported 793 million adults lacking basic literacy skills, 508 million (66 per cent) are female.

The Committee is therefore appalled by the recent incident in Pakistan in which Malala Yousufzai, a 14-year-old schoolgirl who called for the right of girls to education, was brutally attacked and shot in the north-western frontier region of Pakistan. This event brought into sharp focus the extreme danger that some girls face in claiming and enjoying this basic human right in keeping with articles 2 (a) and 10 (b) of the Convention. Malala is now fighting for her life in a British hospital, for no other reason than that she was bold enough to take an unwavering stance and boldly speak out on this critical issue. The Committee recognizes Malala's unprecedented role as a youth advocate for girls' education, and notes that the Government of Pakistan awarded her a national peace prize in 2011.

The activism of Malala and her schoolmates on the right of girls to education, and that of numerous other girls who have experienced similar discrimination and risks, reflects a deep understanding of the crux of the problem that hinders girls' free access to and choices in the field of education: the persistence of a patriarchal system that serves traditional interests and motives which combine to maintain the status quo and perpetuate male privilege, particularly in the field of education and in the workforce.

The Committee calls on the States parties to the Convention to denounce and punish such acts of violence and to continue to take all necessary action, including the dismantling of patriarchal barriers and entrenched gender stereotypes, to guarantee and to ensure that girls are able to enjoy their basic human right to education in every region of the world.

Annex VI

Statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the situation of women and girls in northern Mali, adopted on 19 October 2012 during its fifty-third session

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expresses its deep concern about the situation of women and girls in northern Mali due to the armed conflict.

The Committee asks for an immediate end to all violations of human rights, which seriously affect the civilian population, particularly women and girls, who are victims of grave and severe gender-based violence in the current crisis.

In addition to systematic cruel and inhuman punishments being inflicted in the north of the country by extremist armed rebel groups, including summary executions, mutilations and stonings, women and girls are also victims of sexual violence and exploitation, forced marriages and forced displacement. In addition, access to employment, education and basic social services have been seriously curtailed by extremist armed rebel groups, which now control the area.

The Committee calls upon the international community to urgently address the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Mali in accordance with internationally recognized principles, norms and standards of human rights and humanitarian law, particularly the human rights of women and girls, which are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.
