

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

Information note prepared by OHCHR for NGO participation

I. Functions of CEDAW

During its sessions, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) considers reports of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Following such consideration, the Committee formulates concluding observations that assist the State under review in the further implementation of the Convention. These concluding observations outline positive aspects, principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations on how to address challenges faced by the State party. The reports of States parties, the lists of issues and questions, the concluding observations, as adopted, and other documentation for the sessions can be found at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/sessions.htm>.

II. CEDAW members

The CEDAW Committee consists of 23 members, serving in their personal capacity. For details about the members of the Committee, please see <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/membership.htm>.

III. NGO engagement with CEDAW

Since its early sessions, the Committee has invited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to follow its work and this is reflected in its rules of procedure. In order to ensure that it is as well informed as possible, the Committee and the pre-session working group welcome representatives of national and international NGOs to provide country-specific information on States parties whose reports are before it. This can be done orally or in writing. The Committee encourages international NGOs and United Nations organizations, funds and programmes to facilitate attendance at Committee sessions by representatives of national NGOs.

IV. NGO reports for CEDAW sessions

The Committee welcomes country-specific information from NGOs. Once received, OHCHR posts documents containing this information on its website, under the relevant CEDAW session. Coordination of report writing amongst NGOs is highly encouraged.

Submissions should be sent by email (in pdf format) and thereafter by post (30 copies of each submission). All submissions should arrive two weeks prior to the beginning of the session to the Secretariat of the Committee. All submissions to CEDAW should (1)

identity the full name of the NGO, (2) indicate the country for which the information relates to, and (3) be sent electronically in pdf format and thereafter in 30 copies by post. All reports that are submitted in paper copy must also be sent electronically and should be identical.

OHCHR makes available reports received from NGOs to Committee members at the beginning of the session or pre-session working group. However, due to the high volume of information received from NGOs and others, OHCHR does not photocopy reports received from NGOs. NGOs not attending a session or pre-session working group are urged to ensure that the requisite number of hard copies of their reports/information reach OHCHR in time for the respective session, i.e. at least two weeks in advance.

V. NGO reports for CEDAW pre-session working group

NGOs are encouraged to submit their reports or other country specific information to the pre-session working group. During the pre-session, the working group prepares lists of issues and questions which are subsequently sent to each State scheduled to be considered two sessions later. NGO representatives attending the pre-session working group should send their submissions in pdf format and bring 15 copies for distribution at the meeting of the pre-session working group. NGOs not attending the pre-session working group should send 10 copies of their submissions two weeks prior to the beginning of the pre-session working group.

VI. NGO attendance at CEDAW's session or pre-session working group

The Committee has set aside time at its sessions for NGOs to provide oral information in respect of countries being considered during the respective session. For details of dates, please see information note for the respective session or the provisional agenda (both available on the website).

Oral interventions by NGOs must be concise. On average, not more than 10 minutes overall are allocated for all NGOs wishing to intervene on one particular country. Efforts to share the available time amongst the NGOs wishing to speak on a country is encouraged and appreciated.

NGOs making oral interventions should ensure that they bring 35 written copies of their statements for interpretation purposes. There is no need to send the oral statement in advance.

NGO representatives wishing to address the Committee or pre-session working group are requested to submit the full title of their NGO, the names of their representatives, and the proposed dates of attendance to the OHCHR at cedaw@ohchr.org no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of the session or pre-session working group so that arrangements can be made for the issuance of United Nations ground passes to enter United Nations premises.

To receive the ground pass, all applicants are required to bring a valid national passport or government issued photo ID such as a driver's license or state non-driver's ID bearing a photograph, and depending on if the session is being held in Geneva or New York, appear in person at the Pass and Identification Unit, Security and Safety Section, Pregny Gate, United Nations Office at Geneva, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix (office hours are 8.00 am to 5.00 pm, Mondays through Fridays), or the United Nations Pass and Identification Unit, located at 801 United Nations Plaza at the corner of 1st Avenue and East 45th Street (office hours are 9.00 am to 4.00 pm, Mondays through Fridays). NGOs must bring their passports (or government issued photo ID) at every time they wish to enter the UN premises. Prior to this, representatives of NGOs must contact OHCHR to be placed on the list of accredited representatives by the Secretariat. This should be done by email to cedaw@ohchr.org as far in advance of the session as possible.

VII. NGO side events

NGOs can organize side events during the session of CEDAW for members of the Committee. Please contact the Secretariat on cedaw@ohchr.org at least four weeks in advance of the session indicating the focus of the side event. The Secretariat will inform you if it is possible to accommodate the requests in light of all requests received and availability of Committee members. NGOs have access to separate rooms for briefing sessions and must contact the Secretariat to arrange separate briefing time or arrange side events: cedaw@ohchr.org.

VIII. Secretariat of CEDAW

The Secretariat of CEDAW is responsible for assisting the Committee and forms part of the Human Rights Treaties Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). For detailed information on past and upcoming sessions of the Committee, in particular, which States are scheduled to report to the Committee, as well as for session-specific information addressed to NGOs and others interested in following the Committee's work, please consult CEDAW's website.

Please note that OHCHR will not send letters of invitation to NGOs to attend CEDAW sessions and that OHCHR is unable to assist with travel or accommodation costs relating to the participation.

IX. How to contact the Secretariat

Email: cedaw@ohchr.org

Website: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/index.htm

