

31 August 2000



## Press Release WOM/1235

### COMMITTEE ON ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ELECTS OFFICERS

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In two rounds of voting this morning, States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women elected nine new members and to serve on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The States Parties also re-elected two members of the Committee. Members' four-year terms would begin on 1 January 2001 and end on 31 December 2004.

During the first round of voting the following persons were elected as members: Sjamsiah Achmad (Indonesia); Françoise Gaspard (France); Maria Yolanda Ferrer Gomez (Cuba); Aida González (Mexico); Goran Melender (Sweden); Asha Rose Mtengeti Migiro (United Republic of Tanzania); Heisoo Shin (Republic of Korea); and Regina Tavares Da Silva (Portugal). Re-elected were Feride Acar (Turkey) and Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Germany).

During a second round of voting Fatima Kwaku (Nigeria) was elected for a four-year term.

Experts whose term of office expires on 31 December 2000 are: Feride Acar (Turkey); Carlota Bustelo Garcia del Real (Spain); Silvia Rose Cartwright (New Zealand); Maria Yolanda Ferrer Gomez (Cuba); Aida Gonzalez (Mexico); Saima Khan (Bangladesh); Yung-Chung Kim (Republic of Korea); Ahoua Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso); Anne Lise Ryel (Norway); Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Germany); and Kongit Sinegiorgis (Ethiopia).

There are 23 members of the Committee. The other 12, who will continue to serve on until their terms of office expire on 31 December 2002, are: Charlotte Abaka (Ghana); Emna Aouij (Tunisia); Ivanka Corti (Italy); Feng Cui (China); Naela Gabr (Egypt); Savitri Goonesekere (Sri Lanka); Rosalyn Hazelle (Saint Kitts and Nevis); Rosario Manalo (Philippines); Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini (South Africa); Zelmira Regazzoli (Argentina); Carmel Shalev (Israel); and Chikako Taya (Japan).

The Committee is the monitoring body of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was opened for signature on 1 March 1980 and entered into force on 3 September 1981. The Convention is the most comprehensive treaty on women's human rights, establishing legally binding obligations to end discrimination. Often described as an international bill of rights for women, the Convention provides for equality between women and men in the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

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The Committee is mandated to consider reports from States parties and to make suggestions and general recommendations based on those reports. The Committee directs its suggestions to the United Nations system and its general recommendations to States Parties. As of May, the Committee had adopted 24 general recommendations, including one on female circumcision, one



on violence against women and another on women and health.

The members of the Committee are elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States parties. The experts serve in their personal capacity and must be of high moral standing.

Mohamed Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was elected Chairperson for the eleventh meeting of the States Parties. The following were also elected as Vice-Chairpersons: Fesseha A. Tessema (Ethiopia) for the African region; Atsuko Nishimura (Japan) for the Asian region; Claudia Fritsche (Liechtenstein) for the Western European and Other States; and Luis Raúl Estévez-López (Guatemala) for the Latin American and Caribbean States.

#### Comments by Temporary Chairperson

ANGELA E.V. KING, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, serving as Temporary Chairperson of the meeting, said that during the recent Special Session, Member States had expressed their universal desire for ratification of the Convention, and had agreed to create and maintain a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive legal environment by 2005, and to bridge legislative gaps relating to women and girls. In addition, while expressing disappointment that ratification had not been achieved by 2000, the Session noted that 165 States had either signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention so far. That was one of the greatest achievements of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Addressing the issue of the elections, she mentioned that Member States might wish to take account of the importance to be given to the need for balanced geographic location and gender distribution, as well as of the ability of Committee members to attend meetings. They should also note that it was preferable to elect those persons who had no political affiliation.

In other matters this morning, the Committee also took note of a document entitled "Declarations, reservations, objections and notifications of withdrawal of reservations relating to the Convention" (document CEDAW/SP/2000/2).

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