

WELCOMING REMARKS

by

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Half-day General Discussion on Girls' and Women's Right to Education

7 July 2014

Madam High Commissioner,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Colleagues and Friends,

In my capacity as Vice-Chairperson of CEDAW, I would like to thank you all for attending this half-day general discussion on Girls' and Women's Right to Education.

The idea of elaborating a General Recommendation on Girls' and Women's Right to Education was endorsed in July 2012. Due to the large number of general recommendations in the pipeline, it was not until February 2014 during its fifty-seventh session, that the Committee adopted a Concept Note offering an overview of the legal context and the thematic areas to inform the elaboration of the General Recommendation.

The responses received from many stakeholders show that the enthusiasm for this General Recommendation is also shared outside the Committee. The expertise of the key-note speakers who are with us today, the quality of the oral statements that will be presented during this session, and the considerable number of rich written submissions and other inputs provided by State parties, UN agencies and NGOs further attest to that enthusiasm.

Having said that, I would like to acknowledge first of all presence of the High Commissioner, who has served through her leadership and outspokenness as beacon of hope for many victims of discrimination, in particular gender discrimination. Let me wish you, Madam High Commissioner, all the success for your future endeavors.

I would also like to thank Mr. Kishore Singh, Mr. Vernor Muñoz, Ms. Hannah Godefa, Ms. Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa, Ms. Mariam Khalique, Mr. Mohamed Y. Mattar, and Ms. Angela Melchiorre for their readiness to share their knowledge and personal experiences with us today.

I wish to particularly appreciate the support that has been provided by the UNICEF and UNESCO, both strategic partners in the elaboration of the General Recommendation. They are represented by Ms. Marie-Pierre Poirier (UNICEF) and Mr. Abdulaziz Almuzaini (UNESCO), respectively, as well as by their Geneva colleagues. Special thanks also to Mr. Lukas Machon from the CEDAW Secretariat.

Furthermore, I would like to recognize the engagement by many civil society organisations which have been very active with their contributions since the beginning of this process,

During the more than 30 years of CEDAW's history, the different components of girls' and women's right to education – as enshrined in article 10 of the Convention – have been recurrent issues of concern in our constructive dialogues with States parties, in our Concluding Observations as well as in other General Recommendations.

The lack of comprehensive coverage of the right to education for girls and women underscores the need for this General Recommendation, which will be instrumental in providing guidance to States parties as to the implementation of their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education of women and girls under article 10 of the CEDAW Convention.

In conclusion, I would like to invite all speakers and interveners to observe the time limitations for their interventions. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to accommodate all requests for interventions, as their number exceeds the time available. We will therefore need to cut off the oral statements at 12:30 a.m. to allow for questions and answers.

I wish you all a very productive discussion.

Thank you.