

The Convention has had a profound and positive impact on the legal and socio-political development in those countries where its provisions have been utilized as a powerful instrument for furthering women's rights. This impact is visible in the strengthening of Constitutional provisions, particularly by providing a constitutional basis for the protection of women's human rights. In such countries existing legislation has been brought into conformity with the principles and obligations set out in the Convention and in others new laws have been adopted as a result of its ratification. The

domestic remedies, were met; and providing the Committee with the power to initiate inquiries into grave or systematic violations of rights enshrined in the Convention. Already, the Committee has highlighted, through the use of the Optional Protocol, the need for more effective national remedies for women and the repeal of discriminatory laws, policies and practices.

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Committee Members

The entities of the United Nations system have for long played an important role in supporting the work of the Committee at the country level, as well as in conjunction with the Committee's monitoring function. UN entities have provided support to States parties in the preparation of reports, and in the follow-up to concluding comments. Entities regularly submit information to the Committee on the status of Convention implementation in areas within their mandate, thus broadening and deepening the Committee's knowledge base for the constructive dialogue. They also implement many different initiatives to strengthen and accelerate implementation of the Convention and the Committee's concluding comments, from support for legislative reform and capacity-building to advocacy and awareness raising efforts. UN entities also recognize the value and benefit of the Convention and the Committee's work by reflecting them in their own programming frameworks. UN entities advocate for implementation through national development strategies and action plans.

The Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs which has served as the Committee's Secretariat since its inception, has actively undertaken measures to facilitate States parties' implementation of the Convention, and to enhance the impact of the Committee's work at the national level. It has undertaken technical assistance activities at regional, sub-regional and national levels to enhance the capacity of States parties to fulfill their obligations under the Convention, and to support comprehensive follow-up to the Committee's concluding comments. One recent area of particular emphasis is its support for countries emerging from conflict, including through training workshops. By supporting such countries in the preparation of their initial reports – some of which are long overdue – the Division assists in creating the basis for the Committee's constructive dialogue with the State party and the establishment of a baseline for the Committee's future monitoring of progress in implementation.

Madam Chairperson,

185 States are now party to this Convention – falling short by seven of the goal of universal ratification which had been envisaged for the year 2000. The Committee also remains concerned about many other challenges, including the significant number of reservations to the Convention, the lack of adherence to the reporting obligation by a number of States parties and the significant delays in submitting those reports. The constraints imposed by the Committee's limited meeting time are also of continuous concern. These will remain on the Committee's agenda in the years to come.

Today, let me thank and congratulate all current and former members of this Committee and its eleven Chairpersons, on your staunch commitment to women's equality. Your leadership, expertise, and tireless and persistent advocacy on behalf of all women have been key to the progress we have made in the last 25 years.

I wish the Committee and its friends and partners continued success for the next quarter century.

Thank you.
