

Durban Review Conference
20-24 April 2009, Geneva

**Statement by Ms. Naéla Gabr, Chairperson of the Committee on the
Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

I would like to begin by highlighting that CEDAW systematically addresses discrimination against women in general –whose patterns might be sometimes very similar to other forms of discrimination mentioned in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination- and it addresses also specific forms of multiple discrimination such as in the case of women belonging to ethnic minorities, migrant women, and victims of trafficking.

Migrant women and women belonging to minorities

Over the past five years, CEDAW has noted with concern that some groups of women and girls, including migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and women belonging to minorities, were subject to multiple discrimination with respect to access to education, social services, healthcare, employment, as well as social and political participation. Women belonging to those groups are also particularly vulnerable to poverty and violence, including domestic violence.

In its concluding observations, CEDAW has urged States parties to carefully monitor the impact of their laws and policies on migrant women, refugees and asylum-seekers with a view to taking remedial measures that effectively respond to their needs, and adopt measures aiming at the integration of women belonging to minority groups in all sectors of society. CEDAW has also adopted a General Recommendation on Women Migrant Workers which aims at enhancing the fulfillment by States parties of their obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of women migrant workers who often suffer multiple discrimination.

Trafficking in women and violence against women

Trafficking and violence against women, including domestic violence, continue to affect a large number of women, including female domestic workers. These scourges have a particular negative effect on the victims in the context of double or multiple discrimination, especially with regard to colour and national origin.

CEDAW has called on States parties to elaborate comprehensive strategies to combat trafficking in women and girls, address the needs of victims, and ensure that trafficked women

and girls have the support that they need in order to testify against their traffickers. States parties are also requested to systematically collect and analyze data to identify the root causes of this phenomenon.

With respect to violence against women in accordance with its general recommendation 19, the Committee has called on States parties to adopt comprehensive strategies at the national level to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women, and establish an effective institutional mechanism to coordinate, monitor and assess the effectiveness of measures taken.

Recommendations

CEDAW stresses the importance for Governments to intensify efforts and cooperation to combat poverty as one of the main root causes of discrimination, segregation, and as an impediment to the advancement of women and invites the Durban Follow-up mechanisms to address this issues as a matter of priority.

CEDAW calls upon countries to keep under review and carefully monitor the impact of its laws and policies on migrant women with a view to taking remedial measures that effectively respond to the needs of those women, including the clear adoption of a gender perspective in the action plan for immigrants.

We further call upon Governments to ratify and implement the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families among other relevant instruments in the light of CEDAW General Recommendation on migrant woman and invite governments, and other relevant stakeholders to take it into account.

CEDAW encourages the Conference to consider supporting the U.N. Global Initiative on Fighting Trafficking in persons and urging States to ratify and implement the Protocol To Prevent, Suppress And Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children, Supplementing The United Nations Convention Against Transnational organized Crime, as well as the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

CEDAW further calls upon States to consider the particular severe forms of violence and discrimination faced by women and the girl child in all types of armed conflicts in the context of the follow-up to the Durban Review Conference.

Finally, CEDAW urges Durban follow-up mechanisms to fully take into account CERD General Comment N. 25 of 2000 on the gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination in their work.

Thank you