

Closing remarks
Ms. Carolyn Hannan,
Director Division for the Advancement of Women

Thirty-eighth session of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
New York, 1 June 2007

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and gentlemen.

I join Ms Mayanja in congratulating the Committee on the successful completion of the work of its thirty-eighth session during which eight States parties presented their initial – or combined initial and periodic reports. You have made your first expert assessment of the progress that has been made within the countries and the challenges that need to be addressed in efforts aiming to eliminate discrimination against women and achieve gender equality. This provided an opportunity to make an impact on important aspects of the lives of the women of these countries. Your concluding comments provide a clear indication of the work that remains to be done for the full implementation of the Convention, and women's and girls' enjoyment of their human rights.

I thank you, Mme Chairperson, and the members of the Bureau for the smooth and efficient manner in which you guided this session, and all members of the Committee for the team spirit, skill and enthusiasm with which they have carried out the work during this session.

Madame Chairperson, Distinguished Experts,

As I did not have the opportunity to address you at the opening of the session, let me now, as you conclude the session, give you a very brief preview of the work ahead in the Division for the Advancement of Women over the coming months, and especially in regard to the preparation of the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

In 2008, the Commission will consider the priority theme "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women". An informal expert panel last March gave a preview of the issues that would need to be considered, including different sources of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, such as national budgets, official development assistance, and private sector funding. The panel also addressed the need for further attention to gender-responsive budgets and the integration of gender equality and women's rights into development cooperation, as well as increased allocation of resources for national machineries and the work of civil society and the

women's movement. This provides an important opportunity in the context of the reform of the United Nation's work on gender equality.

In addition, the Commission will evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from the forty-eighth session of the Commission on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding".

The Commission at its last session, benefited greatly from this Committee's inputs in the forms of contributions by your Chairperson and other Committee experts. Both the topics under consideration at the next session have been regularly discussed by this Committee in the framework of consideration of States parties' reports. We therefore look forward to your contributions to the work of the Commission also in 2008.

The Division plans to hold an Expert Group Meeting on financing for gender equality from 4 to 7 September 2007 in Oslo, Norway. We will also host an online discussion in June/July. The discussion will centre on a different theme each week. The themes will be (1) Public finance: Using budgets for promoting gender equality; (2) Bilateral and multilateral assistance: The way forward for promoting gender equality; and (3) Funds and Foundations: Mobilizing private and public resources for gender equality.

Mme Chairperson,

This session of the Committee held a particular satisfaction for the Division. We were extremely pleased that Sierra Leone presented its combined initial through fifth periodic report. As the Deputy Minister indicated in her opening statement, the Division had provided sustained capacity-building support to the Government since 2004, and we are grateful to several past and current experts of this Committee who worked with us in the framework of our technical cooperation programme to see the State party's efforts result in a successful compliance with its obligations under article 18. We hope that our similar support to Liberia and Haiti will also result in the completion of those States parties' long overdue reports. I extend the sincere appreciation of the Division to those Committee experts who work with us in these programmes.

In late April 2007, at the invitation of the Government of Mexico, a staff member of the Division participated in the first two workshops of a series of international workshops on international instruments on women's human rights, persons with disabilities, and gender-based violence in Mexico. These workshops provided an opportunity to highlight the work of this Committee under the Convention as well as the Optional Protocol, and contribute to enhanced knowledge and awareness about these instruments and procedures, and enhanced compliance with the Convention.

Madame Chairperson, Distinguished experts,

I extend the appreciation of myself and of the Division for the Advancement of Women for the hard work and dedication to the mandate entrusted to the members of this

Committee during this session. We look forward to supporting those members who will stay on next week for the informal two-day meeting of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the dedicated staff of the Women's Rights Section, in particular the Chief of Section, Ms Christine Brautigam, and the Secretary of the Committee, Ms Philomena Kintu, and all other staff members of the Division and the Secretariat that have supported your work in the last three weeks.

It was also a pleasure to have several staff members of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights attend this session of the Committee.

I wish members of the Committee a safe journey home and we look forward to welcoming you back for the 39th session next month.

Thank you.