

**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fourth session
1 – 12 March 2010**

Interactive Expert Panel III

**Commemorating 30 years of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination against Women**

Friday, 5 March 2010, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Panellists

1. Ms. Dubravka Šimonović was Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from 2007 to 2008. She has been a member of the Committee since January 2002, and served as its Rapporteur in 2005 and 2006. A career foreign service officer, Ms. Šimonović currently heads the Human Rights Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She represented her country at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995. She was elected Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women for 2001 and 2002, and served as a member of the UNIFEM Consultative Committee from 2001 to 2003. She was appointed by the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe to its Task Force to combat violence against women, including domestic violence (2006 – 2008), and was its Chairperson in 2006 and 2007. Ms. Šimonović has published and lectured widely on women's rights.

2. Mr. Andrew Byrnes joined the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, Law Faculty as Professor of International Law in May 2005. Previously, he was Professor of Law at the Australian National University (2001 – 2005) and prior to that was Associate Professor of Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong, where he was Director of the Centre for Comparative and Public Law and Director of the Master of Laws in Human Rights until his departure in 2001. He has published extensively on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. A forthcoming (in 2010) Commentary on the Convention will cover the impact of the Convention at the national level with a focus on experiences in challenging discriminatory laws. Professor Byrnes is on the advisory board of a number of women's rights organizations including Equality Now, and IWRAW-Asia Pacific.

3. Ms. Sapana Pradhan-Malla was elected to Nepal's Constituent Assembly in April 2008. She is a practicing lawyer and the president of the Forum on Women, Law and Development, an organization focusing on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Nepal. She is a women's human rights activist and has extensive experience in women's human rights, legal advocacy, law reform as well as public interest litigation. She has worked with many international agencies and NGOs on women's rights implementation strategies. Court cases she has brought challenging unequal rape laws and inheritance laws are widely cited as instances in which the Convention has been successfully used to dismantle discriminatory laws affecting women in her country. She serves on the Board of Directors Equality Now and IWRAW-Asia Pacific. She received the Gruber Prize for Women's Rights in 2008.