



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Summary record of the first part (public)* of the 3736th meeting

Held via videoconference on Monday, 12 October 2020, at 4 p.m. Central European Summer Time

Chair: Mr. Fathalla

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* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document [CCPR/C/SR.3736/Add.1](#).

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The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Opening of the session by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

1. **Mr. Walker** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that he was pleased to declare open the Committee's 130th session, which was being held online. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Committee had continued to show how the human rights treaty bodies could advance their crucial work through creative working methods. He welcomed its efforts to keep the treaty body system functioning in the face of exceptional challenges.
2. The Committee's adoption, at its 129th session, of general comment No. 37 (2020) on the right of peaceful assembly was an important achievement that continued to attract much attention. The Office was planning to hold an in-house webinar in order to raise awareness about the general comment among Office staff, including in field operations. It had prepared a set of frequently asked questions about the general comment for translation into local languages, in order to disseminate the general comment to a wider audience.
3. Despite the challenges associated with online meetings, the Committee had continued to discuss and adopt Views on individual communications, in order to avoid a protection gap and address the steadily increasing backlog. Since the beginning of 2020, it had taken action on 103 communications, an incredible number that was a testament to its dedication. In an effort to improve its working methods in that regard, the Committee had agreed to spend more time reviewing documents ahead of the session and to submit comments and proposed changes in writing in order to hold more focused discussions. In addition, in response to financial constraints that limited access to the online platform designed for multilingual discussions, and in order to avoid holding meetings in English only, the Working Group on Communications had split into three subgroups, one for each of its working languages, for its pre-session meetings. The Committee could now assess that experience in order to decide whether to repeat or even institutionalize it. Such a practice would undoubtedly reduce interpretation costs while ensuring a more even distribution of work among Committee members.
4. The Committee had recently received the report of the co-facilitators of the 2020 review of the treaty body system, in which the co-facilitators recognized the need for sustained and regular budget resources to support the work of the treaty bodies and acknowledged the importance of developments that had already been embraced by the Committee, such as the introduction of a predictable review cycle. They also highlighted the ongoing need to harmonize treaty body working methods and to promote the digital shift.
5. The five members who would be leaving the Committee at the end of 2020 – Mr. Fathalla, Mr. Heyns, Mr. Koita, Mr. Shany and Mr. Zimmermann – had made outstanding contributions to its work. Particular achievements of the Committee during their tenure included the adoption of two general comments, the study on the simplified reporting procedure and the groundbreaking Views adopted in a case against New Zealand in which the Committee had found that climate asylum seekers could use the individual communications procedure to avoid deportation and request asylum, a finding that was strongly supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
6. Lastly, he wished to extend a warm welcome to the new member of the Committee, Mr. Moore, and his best wishes to the Committee for a productive online session.
7. **Ms. Kran**, welcoming the words of encouragement offered by the representative of the Secretary-General, said that it was important not to underestimate the sacrifices that had been made by members in order to allow the Committee to continue its work despite the pandemic. She was concerned that the Committee could not fulfil all aspects of its mandate effectively through online meetings; for example, it was unable to hold constructive dialogues with States parties online. The Committee therefore needed to be able to resume its in-person meetings as soon as possible.

Solemn declaration by the newly elected member of the Committee in accordance with article 38 of the Covenant

8. *At the invitation of the Chair, the new member of the Committee, Mr. Moore, solemnly undertook to discharge his duties as a member of the Human Rights Committee independently, impartially and conscientiously.*

Adoption of the agenda (CCPR/C/130/1/Rev.1)

9. *The agenda was adopted.*

Organizational and other matters, including the adoption of the report of the Working Group on Communications

10. **Mr. Shany** said that the Working Group on Communications, which consisted of 10 members, had met via videoconference from 28 September to 9 October 2020. The process had been exceptional not only because it had lasted for two weeks instead of one but also because the Working Group had split into three subgroups, one for each of the Committee's working languages. The Working Group had considered 29 draft proposals; of those, 28 had been adopted and 1 was in the process of being adopted. In 9 of the proposals, the Working Group recommended findings of inadmissibility. In 1 of them, it recommended that the Committee should decide to discontinue its consideration of the case. In 17 of them, it recommended that the Committee should find a violation of the Covenant; in 2 of them, it recommended a finding of non-violation.

11. *The report of the Working Group on Communications was adopted.*

The public part of the meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.