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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women****Pre-session working group for the thirty-fourth session**

16 January-3 February 2006

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination against Women****Report of the pre-session working group**

1. At its ninth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session of the Committee to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to the periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at its next session.
2. At its thirty-first session, the Committee decided that the pre-session working group would also prepare lists of issues and questions for initial reports. The Committee also decided that each list would contain not more than a total of 30 clear and direct questions. In preparing the lists of issues and questions for periodic reports, particular attention would be paid to States parties' follow-up to previous concluding comments, and its previous report would be taken into consideration. The practice of clustering questions under priority topics rather than addressing specific articles would continue.
3. At its thirty-second session, the Committee decided that the pre-session working group for the Committee's thirty-fourth session would meet from 25 to 29 July 2005 and that the following five members of the Committee, representing different regions, would participate:

Mary Shanthi Dairiam	(Malaysia)
Magalys Arocha Domínguez	(Cuba)
Françoise Gaspard	(France)
Pramila Patten	(Mauritius)
Victoria Popescu	(Romania)

4. The pre-session working group elected Victoria Popescu (Romania) as its Chairperson.

5. In accordance with the list of States parties selected by the Committee to present reports at its thirty-fourth session, the pre-session working group prepared lists of issues and questions with respect to the reports of Australia, Cambodia, Eritrea, Mali, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

6. To assist in the preparation of the lists, the pre-session working group had before it the reports of the eight States parties listed above, the core document, if available, submitted by the State party, the general guidelines for the preparation of reports by States parties (CEDAW/C/7/Rev.3), the general recommendations adopted by the Committee, draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the Secretariat (Division for the Advancement of Women) in accordance with Committee decision 19/III, based on an analytical comparison of current States parties' reports with previous reports and the Committee's discussion thereon, and other relevant information, including concluding comments and observations of the Committee and of other treaty bodies.

7. In accordance with Committee decision 18/I, the pre-session working group held a closed meeting with a representative of one entity of the United Nations system. It also received written contributions from three entities of the United Nations system. The pre-session working group received information from six non-governmental organizations, of which two made oral presentations in relation to two States parties whose reports were before the working group.

8. The pre-session working group notes that, as initial reports will be considered on an article-by-article basis, with the exception of articles 1 and 2, 7 and 8, and 15 and 16, the lists of issues and questions follow the same approach.

9. In preparing the lists of issues and questions for periodic reports, the pre-session working group paid particular attention to the States parties' follow-up to previous concluding comments and also took into consideration their previous reports. Rather than address specific articles, the pre-session working group clustered questions under thematic issues.

10. The pre-session working group will advise the Committee of the rationale for the choices regarding prioritization of issues raised in regard to periodic reports in the country rapporteurs' briefings to the Committee.

11. Lists of issues and questions drawn up by the pre-session working group were transmitted to the eight States parties concerned and are contained in the following documents:

(a) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of Australia (CEDAW/C/AUL/Q/4-5);

(b) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined initial, second and third periodic report of Cambodia (CEDAW/C/KHM/Q/1-3);

(c) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined initial, second and third periodic report of Eritrea (CEDAW/C/ERI/Q/1-3);

(d) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined second, third, fourth and fifth periodic report of Mali (CEDAW/C/MLI/Q/2-5);

(e) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of Thailand (CEDAW/C/THA/Q/4-5);

(f) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined initial, second and third periodic report of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (CEDAW/C/MCD/Q/1-3);

(g) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined initial, second, third, fourth and fifth periodic report of Togo (CEDAW/C/TGO/Q/1-5);

(h) List of issues and questions with regard to the combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic report of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (CEDAW/C/VEN/Q/4-6).

12. In accordance with Committee decisions 22/IV, 25/II and 31/III, the lists of issues and questions focused on themes addressed by the Convention. The themes included the constitutional and legislative framework and national machinery for the advancement of women; participation in decision-making; education and training; stereotypes; poverty and employment; violence against women; trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution; health; equality before the law, marriage and family relations; and the situation of vulnerable groups of women, such as older women, rural women, women belonging to ethnic minorities, refugee and migrant women.
