

Second session of the Committee on Enforced Disappearance
(26 - 30 March 2012)

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am speaking on behalf of the organization FIACAT.

FIACAT is an international, non-governmental human rights organization working for the abolition of torture and the death penalty. We are comprised of thirty national offices across four continents.

FIACAT has long worked to promote the ratification and implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. We train our network members on the Convention and the various avenues for redress that it offers.

We support each of our member associations to engage with their government, not only to secure ratification but also to push States to recognize the competence of the Committee Against Enforced Disappearances under Articles 31 and 32 and to effectively and efficiently implement the Convention in their State's domestic law.

FIACAT welcomes this new opportunity to meet with the distinguished members of the Committee against Enforced Disappearances. The existence of this new treaty body is a source of hope for the millions affected by disappearances around the world. Today's opportunity for dialogue with the Committee is essential for the work of civil society.

We support the Committee's decision to dedicate a portion of this conference to thematic discussions. We support their choice to devote the first of these thematic discussions to the effects of enforced disappearances on women and children. As victims of disappearances, women and children become especially vulnerable to sexual and other forms of violence. Furthermore, women are especially vulnerable as they are often in the forefront in the fight against disappearances.

Mr. President, could you provide more information on the procedure of these thematic discussions? Will the afternoon discussion be open to the public? Will a consultation with civil society be included in the proceedings? What are the expected outcomes of this discussion?

FIACAT is convinced that the inclusion of civil society in the choice of discussion themes and their involvement in the thematic dialogue itself can only strengthen the work of the Committee. We urge the Committee to initiate a participatory process in the coming months in which representatives of civil society would be invited to express their views and submit proposals.

FIACAT additionally stresses the critical role of state visits made by the Committee. Whenever possible, the visits should be announced well in advance to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society.

FIACAT urges the Committee to promote the effective implementation of the Convention by States through domestic law and to develop guidelines and tools to assist States in this regard.

I thank you.

FIACAT