**28th Annual Meeting of Human Rights Treaty Body Chairs**

**DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Chairs expressed their gratitude to the Human Rights Institute of Columbia Law School for hosting the first day of meetings and for facilitating an informal dialogue with the President of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.

**Role of the Chairs in the area of working methods and the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 68/268**

The Chairs reiterated the commitment of the treaty bodies to continue to review good practices in the area of working methods and rules of procedure. They also reiterated their support for strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty body system as reflected in General Assembly resolution 68/268. The Chairs recalled that effective follow-up to that resolution depended on a constructive partnership among all stakeholders.

In that context, the Chairs recalled the encouragement by the General Assembly to the treaty bodies to continue to enhance the role of the Chairs in relation to procedural matters, including with respect to formulating conclusions on issues related to working methods, generalizing good practices and methodologies all treaty bodies, ensuring coherence across the treaty bodies and standardizing working methods.

Welcoming all initiatives that seek to collect innovative ideas in light of the 2020 review of the treaty body system by the General Assembly per paragraph 41 of resolution 68/268, the Chairs recommended that the views of the treaty bodies and their Chairs be sought at all stages of these processes.

While welcoming the improvements resulting from resolution 68/268, the Chairs reiterated the need for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to have the material and human resources necessary for the treaty bodies to perform their work, as required by the treaties. The Chairs further noted that the rigorous application of word limits on documentation occasionally made their work more difficult and that the lack of translation of some documents in all working languages caused serious difficulties.

**Ratification and reporting compliance by States**

The Chairs called for the universal ratification by States of international and regional human rights treaties. Welcoming the note by the Secretariat on timely, late and non-reporting by States parties to the human rights treaty bodies, the Chairs expressed concern over the large number of States whose reports were still overdue and the protection gap this created for right-holders.

The Chairs encouraged all States facing capacity constraints to solicit the technical assistance and advisory services of OHCHR’s Treaty Body Capacity Building Programme which was created by General Assembly resolution 68/268 to develop capacities by States to implement the treaties and which specifically provides technical assistance to States for reporting to the treaty bodies.

The Chairs expressed concern over the increasing use of consultants to draft State party reports to the treaty bodies without ensuring that the State party report is the fruit of a participatory national dialogue and assessment of the implementation of human rights treaty provisions.

The Chairs recommended to all treaty bodies, as appropriate, to promote the simplified reporting procedure as a means to improve reporting compliance by States parties. In this regard, the Chairs recommended that the treaty bodies adopt similar modalities for the simplified reporting procedure, and, when required, harmonize their procedures.

The Chairs further recommended that treaty bodies consider recommending to States to establish National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-Up, considering that States having established such national mechanisms have increased their ability to report and engage with the international and regional human rights systems.

In addition, the Chairs suggested that treaty bodies consider reviewing States parties whose reports are very long overdue in the absence of a State party report – a practice already existing in some treaty bodies. In the case of a review in the absence of a State party report, the State party should still be encouraged to appoint a delegation to participate in the constructive dialogue.

The Chairs requested the Chair of the 28th meeting to inform the General Assembly of overdue reports to the treaty bodies, with the request to incorporate an item on this subject in the agenda of the Assembly.

The Chairs reaffirmed the decision taken at previous meetings to include reporting compliance by States parties as a standing item on the agenda of the annual meeting of the Chairs. They further requested OHCHR to continue to update the statistics on reporting compliance by States on its website.

**Implementation of the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies (Addis Ababa guidelines)**

The Chairs appreciated the broad support for the Addis Ababa Guidelines on the independence and impartiality of treaty body members and recommended that the implementation and use by all treaty bodies of the Guidelines be ensured.

The Chairs also reiterated that States should refrain from nominating or electing persons to the treaty bodies whose independence and impartiality is compromised by the political nature of their affiliation with the executive branch of the State.

Members of treaty bodies should consequently avoid functions or activities which are, or are seen by a reasonable observer to be, incompatible with the obligations and responsibilities of independent experts under the relevant treaties. Encouraging further harmonization, the Chairs highlighted the measures put in place by different treaty bodies to ensure that all members continue to carry out their functions independently and impartially, and are also seen to do so.

**Implementation of the guidelines against intimidation or reprisals (San José guidelines)**

The Chairs appreciated the broad support for the San José Guidelines on the independence and impartiality of treaty body members and recommended that the implementation and use by all treaty bodies of the Guidelines be ensured.

The Chairs also welcomed the appointment of rapporteur(s) or focal point(s) on reprisals in the respective treaty bodies and encouraged them to work together to align the approaches taken to prevent and protect individuals and groups against intimidation or reprisals, in order to enhance consistency across the treaty body system, including through meetings as appropriate.

The Chairs further reaffirmed their decision, first made at their 26th meeting, to include reprisals as a standing item on the agenda of the annual meeting of the Chairs.

**Common core document**

The Chairs underscored the importance of streamlined, focussed and up-to-date common core documents and encouraged States parties to make use of the possibility to present an addendum to their existing common core document.

**Engagement of national human rights institutions with the treaty bodies**

The Chairs acknowledged the vital role of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in accordance with the Paris Principles in the protection and promotion of human rights and the long-standing cooperation between treaty bodies and national human rights institutions. Following their constructive engagement with the Chair of the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) during their 28th meeting, the Chairs decided to consider a common treaty body approach to engagement with NHRIs at their 29th meeting.

**Remedies**

The Chairs had an exchange of views with respect to the practices in the area of remedies in the different treaty bodies and encouraged the meeting of Chairs to continue that dialogue.

**Inquiries**

The Chairs had an exchange of views with respect to the practices in the area of inquiries in the different treaty bodies and encouraged the meeting of Chairs to continue that dialogue.

**Follow-up to the proposals by the Chairs at their 27th to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**

The Chairs welcomed their continued engagement with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and adopted a press statement together with the Coordinating Committee of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council on the financial crisis facing the Commission.

**Treaty anniversaries**

The Chairs adopted a statement on the occasion of the anniversaries of human rights treaties in 2016. They agreed to issue future statements on the 10th, 25th and 50th anniversaries of the adoption of human rights treaties.

**2030 Sustainable Development Agenda**

The Chairs welcomed their inter-sessional work on the Sustainable Development Goals and the joint contribution in this regard to the High Level Political Forum. They decided to continue to closely follow the accountability framework for the implementation by States of the commitments made in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

**Agenda, location, and Chair of the 29th meeting of treaty body Chairs**

The Chairs decided to include the following items on the agenda of their 29th annual meeting:

(a) Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 68/268;

(b) Reporting compliance by States parties;

(c) Follow-up to concluding observations, decisions and views;

(d) Implementation of the Addis Ababa guidelines;

(e) Implementation of the San José guidelines;

(f) Development of a common treaty body approach to engaging national human rights institutions;

(g) Treaty bodies and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(h) Strategies for the visibility of the treaty body system;

(i) Remedies;

(j) Inquiries;

(k) Any other business.

The Chairs decided, in light of General Assembly resolution 68/268 – in particular the call by States parties to strengthen interaction with them in New York and the 2020 review of the resolution by the General Assembly, to hold the annual Chairs’ meetings leading up to 2020 in New York. In this context, they also expressed the wish to strengthen their relationship with the UN Secretary-General.

The Chairs decided that, in accordance with the principle of rotation, the Chair of the 29th

meeting of Chairs in 2017 will be the Chair of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Vice-Chair will be the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.