

The role of the Coordination Committee

Comments by the International Service for Human Rights

21 June 2007

1. Introduction

The International Service for Human Rights would like to offer the following ideas and suggestions for a strengthened role for the Coordination Committee.

The first year of the institution building phase of the Human Rights Council (the Council) has just been completed. The final institution building package adopted by the Council contains several important challenges for the UN human rights machinery in general and the system of special procedures in particular. First, individual mandates will be reviewed over the course of the next year of the Council, which represents both challenges and opportunities for the coherence of the system of special procedures. Secondly, the package on the institution building includes a code of conduct for special procedures mandate holders. The role of the Coordination Committee in proactively addressing the Code and its implementation will be very important.

2. A strengthened role for the Coordination Committee

The 13th annual meeting supported a stronger and more proactive role for the Coordination Committee, in particular in the context of the reform of the United Nations human rights system.¹

The mandate given to the Coordination Committee by the 12th annual meeting is sufficiently broad to allow for a stronger and more proactive role. Currently, the Coordination Committee is mandated to play a role in a number of areas, including:

- Enhancing the effectiveness and independence of mandate holders and in facilitating their work
- Being available to mandate holders to share experience concerning methods of work
- Ensuring that the concerns of the special procedures system are taken into account in the reform process and reporting on the developments and progress in this regard
- Proactively identifying issues of concern to groups of mandates and facilitating joint action on cross-cutting issues or issues of shared concern
- Structuring the exchange of information and in particular keeping mandate holders informed of the activities carried out by other mandate holders
- Proposing a draft agenda for the Annual Meeting of the special procedures and presenting a report to the Meeting.

¹ A/HRC/4/43, 26 October 2006 (report of the 13th annual meeting), para. 14.

A regular dialogue with the Council on the system of special procedures and how it can be strengthened would also provide a platform for bringing to the attention of the Council particular issues or themes of concern and recommend means for how they can be addressed or followed up.

We welcome the various proposals made in the note on the activities of the Coordination Committee in relation to enhanced coordination of country visits and public statements, input to special sessions of the Council and regularly reviewing working methods through a broad consultative process.