**EGYPT**

*Comments on Implementation of General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/268 of 21 April 2014 on Strengthening and enhancing the human rights treaty committees, in response to questionnaire by the OHCHR on the matter.*

1. We continue to uphold the principle set forth on the preamble of this resolution recognizing the important, valuable and unique role and contribution of each of the human rights treaty bodies in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. Egypt believes that the simplified reporting procedure, referred to in operational paragraphs 1 and 2 of the said resolution should remain optional for states to present such reports to each of the human rights treaty committees, should not result in an unequal situation among the reporting States parties and should be in conformity with both the nature and specificity of each of the respective human rights treaty.

3. The common core document, referred to in paragraph 3 of the said resolution, could be useful to the extent that it should neither represent an extra reporting burden on the State parties nor duplicate information provided in the treaty-specific documents indispensable for the work of each of the committees.

4. Concerning the annual report of each of the committees to be submitted either to the General Assembly or ECOSOC, referred to in paragraph 4 of resolution 68/268, Egypt believes that each of the treaty committees may be invited to consider supplying such thematic conclusions and observations from the sessions reported; this should be useful for UN human rights organs in general.

5. With regard to the provision on an aligned methodology for the dialogue between a human rights treaty committee and a state party, we believe- as paragraph 5 of the resolution provides- that this is a matter to be viewed strictly under the specific mandate of each of the committees. It is to be noted, however, that- even before the adoption of resolution 68/268- human rights treaty committees have been already working for a harmonized methodology in this regard. Meeting time for the dialogue with a state party has to be allocated in such a manner as to ensure a more interacting and more productive dialogue.

6. Egypt continue to agree that the concluding observations made by each of the human rights treaty committees and the recommendations therein, should be, as the said resolution mentions in paragraph 6, short, focused and concrete, bearing in mind the specificity of each of the committees- and also taking into account the requirements of each of the initial or periodic reports considered.

7. Concerning the recommendation on more efficient and effective use of the meetings of state parties to human rights treaties, mentioned in paragraph 7 of the resolution, we believe that such meetings as well as matters related to the implementation of each treaty, are strictly the prerogatives of the states parties. Meetings between each of the treaty committees and the states parties to the respective treaty should be encouraged.

8. Concerning the provisions of paragraph 9 of the said resolution concerning the harmonization of the work methods of the human rights treaty committees, we note that the committees have already progressed in this direction, bearing in mind their respective mandates, specificity and that aspects of procedure and functioning are mostly determined by the respective provisions and requirements of each of the human rights treaties.

9. Egypt continue to firmly believe in the importance of nomitating experts of high moral standing and recognized competence and experience in human rights and in particular the field of the committee to which a candidate is nominated, as mentioned in paragraph 10 of resolution 68/268, and -above all- as stipulated in the respective human rights treaties.

10. We continue to uphold the preservation of the current structure, organization and administrative arrangement of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as set forth in ECOSOC resolution 1985/17. Nevertheless, replacement of the existing mechanism for the election of Committee members has to be further examined taking into account that the Committee is a subsidiary body of the ECOSOC, and members of subsidiary bodies are to be elected by the main body to which they belong.

11. Regarding paragraph 12 requesting the OHCHR to prepare such information concerning election of members of the human rights treaty committees on composition of the respective committee, geographical and gender balance, etc., it is to be noted that the OHCHR has been acting in this direction- neutrality of the OHCHR is important in this regard.
12. We continue to support the main thrust of paragraph 13 on criteria to be applied  by State parties on the election of members of the human rights committees and note that  the competence and expertise of candidates are fundamental factors in this respect.

13. We agree with paragraph 14 on General Comments by the human rights treaty committees; such general comments have to be exactly in line with the concepts in the text of the respective treaties and based on the practice of the committee which is writing the general comment.

14. The limit on the number of words in  "other UN documentation", as set in paragraph 15- which should not jeopardize the quality of work by the human rights treaty committees-  may be useful in so far as saving on expenses could be made. Such saving should be spent on more meeting time to overcome backlogs and/or the work of the committees resulting from increasing number of ratifications.

15. The word limit on " ... all State party documentation submitted to human rights treaty ...", as set in paragraph 16, has to be applied with more mobility. Annexes and other documents could be added in electronic form, etc. As with the word limit on UN documentation, the savings from any limits have to be allocated for more meeting time to overcome backlogs and/or the work of the committees resulting from increasing number of ratifications.

16. Egypt entirely support the main thrust of paragraphs 17 to 21 relating to efforts on capacity- building for State parties who opt for it. Such efforts should focus on enhancing the "reporting" capacity of State parties who decide they are in need of it. The capacity to "fulfil" human rights treaty obligations is a broader issue which is beyond the scope of the current resolution. Separate funding has to be sought in this regard.

17. Concerning paragraph 22 on the webcasting of the public meetings of human rights treaty bodies, it is to be understood that the costs of any webcasts are to be dealt with in the context of the UN public information budget.

18. On paragraph 26 concerning the allocation of meeting time- including extra meeting time- for the human rights treaty committees, Egypt believe that the Secretary General has to be commended for having provided the corresponding financial and human resources as provided for in the resolution, thus enabling several treaty bodies to eliminate and/or significantly reduce the backlogs involved and, in some cases, to cope with the increase in the number of ratifications to human rights treaties.

19. We also support the reviewing of the requirements of meeting time for the human rights treaty bodies and the decision, mentioned in paragraph 27 of the said General Assembly resolution, bearing in mind the provision that the number of weeks allocated to a committee on a permanent basis prior to the adoption of the resolution will not be reduced.

20. We also agree, as mentioned in paragraph 28, that more ratifications, individual communications and field visits shall be taken into consideration for determining the budget of each of the human rights treaty committee.

21. Egypt emphasizes the importance of preserving the multi-lingual character of the UN and notes, in this regard, that the allocation of a maximum of three official working languages for the work of the human rights treaty committees, as mentioned in paragraph 30 of the resolution, was done on exceptional basis and should not constitute a precedent; therefore, it should not be pursued beyond 2020 and the six official languages of the UN have to be used on equal footing by all the human rights treaty committees.

22. Concerning the idea, in paragraph 32, of submitting a combined report by a state party for two periods instead of two periodic reports, we note that this measure, adopted on exceptional basis, has somehow limited the accumulation of reporting obligations and, in some cases, reduced aspects of backlogs.

23. On the possibility for a state party to submit, in accordance with paragraph 33, a short addendum covering developments that took place between the date of the submission of its report (or, reports) and the date of its consideration by a committee, it is to be noted that this has been allowed on exceptional basis and that it represents an extra cost to the UN, and hence on member states as well as an extra burden on the state party who is only bound with the periodicity defined in the respective treaties to which they are parties.

24. We continue to agree with the aim, mentioned in paragraph 34, to achieve a clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States parties; action by OHCHR on this matter has to be exactly in line with the reporting requirements of each of the respective treaties and upon approval by the Committee concerned.

25. We fully agree with and emphasize the provision, in paragraph 35, underlining that the Secretariat (OHCHR) as well as other stakeholders should fully respect the independence of the members of the human rights treaty committees and refrain from any act that would interfere with the exercise of their functions.

26. On paragraphs 36 and 37 on a statement by chairpersons of human rights treaty committees on the independence and impartiality of members of those committees, it is understood that the adoption of such a statement is the exclusive competence of each of the human rights committees. Egypt have never questioned the impartiality of treaty body members and have always been respectful of their independence.

27. Concerning paragraphs 38 and 39, we believe that the role of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty committees should continue to help coordination and harmonization of the organizational work strictly within the scope and the mandate of each of the committees . Suggestions by the chairs have to be approved by each of the respective committees in accordance with its rules of procedure. Meeting time and venues for the meeting of the chairs have to be determined with a view to avoid unnecessary expenses as much as possible.

28. Regarding paragraph 40, we are expecting the third biennial report by the OHCHR which, combined with its two previous report in accordance with paragraph 40 of the resolution, will reflect OHCHR’s factual submissions in conformity with the said paragraph. We hope that the views and observations expressed here will be useful for that purpose.

29. Concerning paragraph 41, Egypt is ready to actively engage with other states on ideas for the strengthening and enhancing the role of the human rights treaty committees as long as such ideas are in line with the provisions of the respective human rights treaties while taking into consideration other mandatory human rights instruments and relevant UN resolutions. We believe that only the implementation of those measures strictly related to the exact mandated activities of the committees as defined by the respective treaties will guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of the functioning of the human rights treaty bodies.

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