Ljubljana, 25 February 2019

**Reply of the Republic of Slovenia to the Questionnaire concerning the General Assembly Resolution 68/269**

With regard to the above mentioned questionnaire Slovenia would like to provide comments on the following topics: (i) strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty body system; (ii) intimidation and reprisals against civil society actors; and (iii) competency of candidates for international human rights expert bodies.

I. Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty body system

Slovenia would like to use this occasion once again to endorse the resolution of the General Assembly No. 68/268 aimed at strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights body system. We welcome the increasing practice by the treaty bodies to facilitate the preparation of national reports, in particular through the simplified reporting procedure (SRP). Slovenia has been offered and accepted the SRP with regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We trust that the SRP will contribute importantly to easing the reporting burden for States Parties and the treaty bodies alike.

Currently, we are at the preparatory stage of respective reports in line with SRP guidelines. However, a feedback from preliminary consultations with relevant governmental departments signals that targeted reports could simplify the reporting process as they are more concrete and specific, allow for a more transparent follow-up from the preceding reporting cycle and simplify the interdepartmental coordination. In parallel with treaty body reports we are also preparing a new common core document. This document will take into account requirements of the SRP, containing more substantive sections of cross-cutting issues of interest to all treaty bodies.

II. Intimidation and reprisals against civil society actors

In line with paragraph 8 of the GA resolution 68/268 Slovenia strongly condemns all acts of intimidation and reprisals against civil society actors, including human rights defenders, for their contribution to the work of the human rights treaty bodies. We believe that contributions of individuals and groups in the non-governmental sphere are crucial for the credibility and objectivity of the whole reporting process. Threats to individuals and groups with an aim to put pressure on their enjoyment of human rights, such as the freedom of thought and the freedom of expression, with the purpose of obstructing their cooperation with treaty bodies, should not be tolerated. We consider such acts of intimidation and reprisals as an attack on the UN human rights system as such. Slovenia supports the recommendation of the Chairs of the treaty bodies that all treaty bodies should establish a focal point on reprisals. We are also looking forward to the further operationalization of the "Guidelines against Intimidation or Reprisals", adopted by the Chairs of the treaty bodies in San José in 2015.

III. Competency of candidates for international human rights expert bodies

Slovenia supports the nomination of highly qualified candidates to international human rights bodies, taking into account their personal integrity and other relevant criteria stipulated by human rights treaties or instruments. In our view professional excellence and personal integrity of candidates are the best assurance for the proficient functioning of human rights treaty bodies. Recently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia (MFA) introduced a new instrument in the selection process of potential candidates to international expert bodies. In July 2018, the MFA published a public call on its website open to interested experts to inscribe themselves in the roster (database) for candidacies in the priority areas of the Slovenian foreign policy.[[1]](#footnote-1) For Slovenia, the protection of human rights is one of its most important foreign policy priorities. The roster is open to experts from academia, civil society, business, public sector and others. The purpose of the roster is to simplify and speed up the identification of qualified Slovenian experts that would be ready to present a candidature to international bodies.

The inclusion in the MFA expert roster is effective for the time period of five years and premised upon the consent of a candidate who is also required to fill in a form describing his or her qualifications in the field. In cases of candidatures that fall within the competence of the MFA, the MFA may encourage qualified candidates to participate in a formal selection procedure that is subsequently announced through a public call for applications. If candidatures fall in the competence of other ministries in Slovenia, the MFA may inform the relevant ministry of the existence of qualified experts; however, it is not allowed to inform the ministry about their personal data. The competent ministry is welcome to publish a public call for applications in which such candidates may participate. We believe that the instrument of the expert roster shall bring more transparency into the nomination process, increase the level of competency of candidates and raise awareness concerning international candidatures in the Slovenian expert community.

However, it has to be emphasized that the use of the expert roster is preliminary and informal. The formal procedure of candidate's nomination includes a formal public call for applications open to all candidates, the selection of candidates on the basis of their qualifications and experience and finally, the Government decision to officially nominate the selected candidate.

When participating in elections of candidates for treaty body members from other countries, Slovenia takes into due account the expertise of the candidates, their personal integrity, the equitable geographical distribution, representation of different forms of civilization and principal legal systems, gender parity and participation of experts with disabilities.

1. The public call is available in Slovenian at: http://www.mzz.gov.si/si/o\_ministrstvu/javne\_objave/razpisi\_mednarodnih\_organizacij\_za\_delovna\_mesta/javni\_poziv\_za\_uvrstitev\_v\_evidenco\_za\_izvedenska\_mesta\_v\_mo/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)