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H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations;
H. E Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations,
Co-facilitators for the review of the UN human rights treaty body system.

**Excellencies,**

Greetings from Human Rights Space from Viet Nam!

In responding to your open call on 17 June 2020 for inputs from relevant stakeholders for the consideration of the state of UN human rights treaty body system, we would like to present our submission as the following.

1. Human Rights Space (HRS) is a civic network of Vietnamese academics, lawyers and professionals working on the promotion of human rights, based in Viet Nam. Established in 2016, HRS advocates for an effective engagement of Viet Nam with UN Human rights system, among other domestic works. This submission is drawn from reflection of HRS members who participated in different review processes of Viet Nam with treaty bodies and advocated for the implementation of their recommendations for Viet Nam in the past ten years.
2. Currently, Viet Nam is a member of seven among nine core UN Human Rights Treaties: ICCPR, ICESCR, CERD, CEDAW (ratified in 1982), CRC (ratified in 1990), CAT and CRPD (ratified in 2015). It usually took 10-15 years for the Vietnamese Government to present its periodic reports to treaty bodies, with the only exception of an on-time submission of the CEDAW 7-8th report in 2011. In the last ten years, Viet Nam has improved its engagement with treaty bodies through catching up with the periodicity of its reporting exercise, and issuing selective actions plans for the implementation of recommendations from treaty bodies.
3. Treaty Bodies and their work do not have a high visibility in Viet Nam. Known in a limited circle of academic and people who have direct encountering with these bodies (which rarely happened due to delayed reporting), very few state agencies would aware of the existence of such bodies and their work, less among the public. Knowledge about treaty bodies and their recommendations for Viet Nam has been improved since the Government started to issue Plan of Actions to implement these bodies’ recommendations, first with CRC (2013) and CEDAW (2017) and later with the Human Rights Committee (2019), and thanks to more active civil society. .
4. The UN Country Team in Viet Nam plays a crucial role in facilitating an effective engagement between Vietnamese government, its civil society and treaty bodies’ process. The UN Country team provided technical and financial support to the reporting processes by both the government and civil society, through which it facilitated dialogues, increased knowledge and capacity for meaningful participation, and stimulated engagement for the follow-up and implementation of recommendations from treaty bodies.
5. However, the quality of reports from the state and civil society still has significant gaps for improvement. This was partly due to a lack of human rights expertise in the country and proper connection with international experts. On the other hand, the guidelines for reporting from different treaty bodies often provide general requirements. A system of human rights indicators including some minimum indicators for reporting would be useful to guide national submissions and facilitate quality dialogues not only between treaty bodies and national delegations but also for follow-up activities and monitoring the implementation of recommendations.
6. There is no existing system to assess the implementation of recommendations from treaty bodies. Therefore several recommendations would be repeated throughout cycles of reporting as there was no progress seen in the implementation.
7. The use of Webcast and the open UN documentation system helped to increase timely accessibility and transparency of the dialogues and communications between the Government and Treaty Bodies. It also offered resources for research, education and advocacy by civil society.

We would like to recommend the process of considering the state of UN treaty body system to consider:

1. To improve the **coordination and predictability in the review cycles and reporting** (item 4 listed in your call), please **consider a fixed term review schedule**, coordinated by all treaty bodies and taking consideration of the periodicity of the Universal Periodic Review. The fixed term review schedule would help to ensure timely and frequent engagement from countries like Viet Nam.
2. To improve the **quality of reports and dialogue with treaty bodies, and continue good practices in working methods** (item 3 and 5 listed in your call), please consider encouraging treaty bodies to improve **reporting guideline with specific indicators**. Related to good practices, the publishing **of the summary of records of dialogues** has provided a useful source of official text for research, monitoring and advocacy, which the webcast is a good complement but should not be an alternative. Even though a summary of records could be produced by national civil society or a third party for those purposes, in a restricted context where human rights languages are not welcome, taking reference from a UN official document give an entry point to raise the issue. Therefore please encourage treaty bodies **to maintain the processing and publishing of summary of records of dialogues with states as official UN documents**.
3. To facilitate dialogues between the state and treaty bodies after the review (item 6), to strengthen the engagement with civil society and other relevant stakeholders (item 8), to build capacity for the national implementation of recommendations (item 9), to reviews in countries or in regions (item 11), to improve visibility of the work of treaty bodies, please consider the adoption of **in-country reviews or country follow-up visits or country mid-term visit** by treaty bodies or joint-treaty bodies.
4. To improve participation of civil society and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the engagement with treaty bodies, please consider ways to **recognize and enhance the role of UN Country Team and resources it could provide to national stakeholders as a facilitator,** possibly through capacity building programs.
5. To improve the engagement with civil society and other relevant stakeholders (item 8) and to improve accessibility of people with disabilities (item 17) as well as to use new information and communications technologies and its potential to further increase efficiency and accessibility (item 10), please **consider allowing civil society to participate in pre-session meetings through online meetings.**
6. To improve accessibility of people with disabilities (item 17), please consider providing, either through treaty bodies secretariat, or encouraging states to **provide other means of communications which are accessible for people with disabilities, such as interpretation of sign languages in dialogues between states and treaty bodies**.
7. Regarding the use of the meetings of States parties and providing resources for the work of the treaty bodies, please consider using members’ platforms such as meetings of states as a mechanism allowing reminders of general obligations such as reporting, as well as **mobilizing financial contribution from members.**

Thank you very much for your consideration and I wish you a successful process in your important roles as co-facilitators.

With best regards,

Nghiem Hoa (Ms.)

On behalf of the Coordination Group

Human Rights Space

Vietnam

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