



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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# Position Paper

## Human Rights Treaty Bodies Review by the UN General Assembly

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the global organization of national parliaments, supports the measures aimed at streamlining and strengthening the UN treaty bodies that were agreed upon during the Meeting of the Treaty Bodies' Chairpersons on 4 July 2019. In particular, the IPU welcomes the practice of predictable review cycles and agrees that treaty bodies should be made more accessible to all relevant stakeholders, including parliaments, NHRIs and civil society.

The success of the UN treaty body system ultimately rests on its effectiveness in bringing about positive change in people's daily lives. As recent as 2018, the UN General Assembly recognized in its biennial resolution on the *Interaction between the UN, national parliaments and the IPU*, "the enhanced contribution of parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the work of the Human Rights Council and the human rights treaty bodies" and acknowledged "the crucial role that parliaments play in translating international commitments into national policies and laws".

Indeed, much progress has been made in recent years to promote synergies between the work of parliaments and UN human rights reporting procedures to ensure better national follow-up. For instance, the Human Rights Council has regularly adopted resolutions recognizing "the crucial role that parliaments play" in the implementation of recommendations adopted by UN human rights mechanisms and welcoming the involvement of parliaments at all stages of the reporting process. More striking still is the long-standing practice of the CEDAW Committee to systematically include a standard paragraph on "parliament" in its concluding observations.

In a statement, the CEDAW Committee elaborated on this practice by stressing that the "functions of Parliaments, notably legislative and budgetary functions and oversight of the executive branch of the Government, are at the heart of the implementation [process]. Parliament, as an organ representing the population as a whole, reflects the diversity of opinion and interests in the country by reason of its privileged access to the whole population. As such, parliamentarians can be key players in raising awareness" about human rights treaties. The CEDAW Committee's statement goes as far as to call on State parties to inform and involve Parliament and its members at all stages of the reporting process and, most importantly, in the Convention's implementation. Over the years, CEDAW experts have been engaging with parliamentarians and the IPU in order to make this happen.

The IPU wishes to see this good practice extend to all treaty bodies. In the shared pursuit of enhanced national follow-up, the IPU hopes therefore that the treaty body reform process will also be seen as an opportunity to take parliaments and their work into account more systematically.