**Observations of Vanuatu on the state of the UN human rights treaty body system**

**7 July 2020**

1. Vanuatu acknowledges the work of the Treaty Bodies as committees of Independent experts that monitor the implementation by States parties obligations under the international human rights treaties. Vanuatu acknowledges the efficiency and effective work of these treaty bodies in the consideration of its reports as well as providing an avenue to individuals to lodge complaints or communications if they feel that their rights have been violated by a state party and acknowledge the work of Special Rapporteur in torture in 2010, in the John Bule case of Police brutality.

Vanuatu would like to propose to the Treaty Body in improving its reporting through tele-conferencing given the geographical locations of state parties as an option to inviting delegations to Geneva to present these reports as well as providing dates of reporting for countries as soon Initial reports to Conventions are submitted.

1. Vanuatu considers the Implementation of UNGA Resolution 68/268 by the UN General Assembly, Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system that came out in April of 2014 introducing the simplified reporting procedure instead of periodic report giving options to state parties to receive questions form the treaty bodies based on the concluding observations of previews reviews as well as new developments. This will help Vanuatu greatly in ensuring a timely and more effective response to list of issues to assist in the reporting process.
2. Vanuatu’s view on the Good Practices and Methodology which was part of resolution 68/268 adopted by the UN General Assembly on the establishment of the Treaty Body Capacity Building Programme in OHCHR to support States parties in building their capacity to implement their treaty obligations at transforming reporting from a perceived burden to a concrete benefit for States and ultimate right holders through “train the trainers’ events for state officials with experience in treaty body reporting as a stepping stone for Vanuatu and it was glad to be part of this train the trainers workshop in 2017 which was conducted by the Office of the High Commission of Human Rights (OHCHR) in Samoa.
3. Vanuatu’s view on the coordination and predictability in review cycles and reporting must be improved between the treaty bodies and the state parties so that’s states are properly informed of dates of presenting their constructive reviews on specific reports, this is something which the treaty body need to improve on.
4. Vanuatu commends the UN Treaty Body current reporting system whereby States submit their reports and treaty bodies produce general comments that provide guidance for states regarding the scope of a treaty and interpretation of specific human rights issues and methods of work as well as pointing out actions which would be considered as potential violations of rights and offer advice to states on how best to comply with their obligations under the treaties.
5. Vanuatu acknowledges the dialogue between States and Treaty Bodies both in preparation for and during States reviews as well as in follow-up to the review of state parties report and notes gaps between a State Human Rights treaty obligations and actual situation experiences by people under their jurisdiction can be a challenge especially when collating information for state parties official reports and independent or shadow reports can be daunting and time consuming. Vanuatu has been able to overcome this challenge by working together with the NGO’s in drafting the Official National Report for specific treaties as well as the UPR Review.
6. Vanuatu commends the work of the treaty bodies is the assessment of concluding observations where treaty body makes recommendations to the state for future actions. As each cycle builds upon the previous one, the next State party report should focus on the progress made towards the implementation of the previous recommendations. The use of new information and communications technologies by the Treaty Bodies through adequate mechanisms to facilitate reporting and follow-up on the implementation of treaty body recommendations of which Vanuatu designed following it’s second UPR Cycle to assist in the implementation of the recommendations is the “***UPR Recommendations National Implementation and Action Plan – towards development of a national human rights strategy”***. This has been adopted and shared as a NMFR tool for many small Pacific island countries
7. Vanuatu encourages strengthening the engagement with civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the very first instance where a national report is requested so that the report submitted will be balanced with both the views of the government and the civil society.
8. In the view of Vanuatu, the capacity-building programme, experiences and impact, in terms of reporting and in terms of national implementation of recommendations has made a big impact to improving our reporting in the 3rd UPR cycle through a “***UPR Recommendations National Implementation and Action Plan – towards development of a national human rights strategy”*** which Vanuatu developed in 2014 after it reported on the 2nd UPR Review.
9. Vanuatu accepts the Treaty Bodies use of new information and communications technologies and its potential to further increase efficiency and accessibility including tele-conferencing, web sites, audio and video transmissions to improve reporting access for state parties in the event that their physical presence is not possible through financial constraints given our geographical locations.
10. Vanuatu welcomes the opportunity of reviews in countries or in regions as discussed in para 10 given our small economies and with the current epidemic of COVID 19, reporting will only be possible through this means.
11. In the view of Vanuatu, the treaty body must continue to preserve and strengthen the independence and impartiality of treaty body member and ensure diversity in terms of gender, geography, background, expertise, representation of different forms of civilization and principal legal systems, as well as the participation of persons with disabilities in the Treaty bodies and include balanced gender representation as stipulated in the UN General Assembly resolution 68/268.