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**Review of the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Body System**

**H.E. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande,**

**President of the General Assembly**

(June o2, 2020)

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High-Commissioner Bachelet,

Distinguished Co-Facilitators,

Excellencies,

I thank His Excellency, Mr Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland and His Excellency, Mr Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco for accepting to serve as co-facilitators for this process. I ask that you lend your full support to their efforts.

I also thank the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and her Office for supporting the work of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, particularly in providing substantial and technical support to the committees.

The work of the co-facilitators begins at a critical time when nations across the globe are facing the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. My sincere condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and I wish those suffering from the disease a quick recovery. I thank healthcare workers and those on the frontlines combatting this disease, thereby keeping our communities safe and healthy.

As we contend with the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States must ensure that international human rights law and standards are at the centre of all responses to the pandemic in order to protect the most vulnerable and marginalised.

Excellencies,

There is nothing more urgent than ensuring that all human beings, no matter their beliefs, gender, economic condition, or other status, are able to live in dignity, with justice and peace. It is in ensuring this that the work of the United Nations is crucial. This involves not only Member States, but also the civil society and the private sector.

Human Rights Treaty Bodies have ensured that we are constantly engaged in human rights issues, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights treaties. Such engagement is important in assessing the implementation of human rights treaties and providing recommendations on strengthening the international human rights system, as well as in ensuring accountability.

Since the establishment of the first treaty body in 1969, Human Rights Treaty bodies have grown in scope and impact into one of the marked achievements of the international community

in the promotion and protection of the human rights of everyone, everywhere. The 10 Human Rights Treaty Bodies continue to work to actualise this shared vision for a better world.

However, we are all too aware that the treaty body system is facing a number of challenges, including a backlog of State reports, lack of adequate resources and the non-harmonisations of working methods.

Discourse on strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the Human Rights Treaty Body System has increasingly gained momentum, as evidenced by the General Assembly’s adoption of resolution 68/268 and most recently resolution 73/162. Also, the position paper of the Chairpersons of the human rights treaty body which was submitted to this session of the General Assembly, and various other reports and papers have greatly contributed to the discussions on this important process.

In the coming weeks Excellencies, this process will consider issues related to the state of the Human Rights Treaty Body System and examine the effectiveness of the measures taken to ensure its sustainability.

As we embark on this exercise, our work should take stock of previous reform initiatives and proffer ways to strengthen the work and impact of treaty bodies. We should reflect on the various means of promoting and protecting human rights through the principle of cooperation and genuine dialogue among all stakeholders.

We must ensure that the resources allocated to the treaty bodies are proportional to the tasks they have been mandated to perform. In doing so, we should aim for cost-effective, coherent and streamlined procedures and approaches, which maximise available resources and catalyse greater protection for rights-holders worldwide.

All actors should, as appropriate, take steps to mainstream treaty body recommendations across the work of the United Nations and encourage simplified national reporting and coordination mechanisms.

Excellencies,

Human rights are the foundation for peace and prosperity. Indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development builds upon respect for human rights and dignity. As we commemorate the Seventy-fifth year of our Organisation and embark on the Decade of Action and Delivery to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that everyone everywhere lives a dignified and prosperous life with justice and peace.

It is crucial that we uphold the inalienable rights which safeguard the peoples we serve. As such, our work during this process must be centred around the advancement of societies and must meet the needs of our communities. Therefore, I trust that you will engage constructively and support the work of the co-facilitators.

Be assured that my office stands ready to support you in this very important work. I am confident that by striving together, we will succeed in delivering for all.

I thank you.

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