

Non-exhaustive list of emerging proposals identified so far in the context of the treaty body strengthening informal consultations (including Dublin, Marrakesh, Poznan, Sion, Seoul, Pretoria, Bristol and Lucerne) and those of the Inter-Committee Meeting (ICM) and Meeting of Chairpersons (MC), as well as other proposals stemming from the process

Strengthening the preparation of States parties' reports

- **List of Issues prior to reporting (LOIPR) and its added value:** This optional reporting procedure was adopted by the Committee against Torture (2007), the Human Rights Committee (2010) and the Committee of Migrant Workers (2011). The LOIPR was discussed during the eleventh Inter-Committee Meeting and twenty-second Meeting of Chairpersons (28 June – 2 July 2010) for possible adoption by all treaty bodies. The background document prepared for the meeting proposed a simplified model list of issues prior to reporting. The ICM/MC recommended waiting for the assessment of the Committees that have embarked on this procedure before discussing the matter further. The participants in the academic consultation in Lucerne recommended that the LOIPR procedure be made more specific and the process strengthened.
- **Aligned interaction of treaty bodies with States parties, national human rights (NHRIs) institutions and civil society organizations:** The Marrakech consultation (2010) recommended that the reporting process and individual communication procedures be as much as possible aligned, through common rules of procedure and working methods, among treaty bodies in order to establish similar procedures for cooperation with NHRIs and other key national actors, including with respect to the format and timing of submission of written information, and the oral presentations. A harmonized model of interaction between treaty bodies and NGOs was also called for in the civil society consultation in Pretoria which recommended that OHCHR be more proactive in reaching out to and engaging NGOs in the treaty body process. This latter was further discussed at the Sion consultation for States parties (May 2011) and also at the twelfth inter-committee meeting and twenty-third Meeting of Chairpersons in June 2011, and the Meeting of Chairpersons noted that statements on the interaction of treaty bodies with NHRIs and with NGOs should be considered for adoption at a later stage, in accordance with the points of agreement of the twelfth inter-committee meeting.
- **Page limitation of States parties' reports:** In 2006, the “harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents” (HRI/MC/2006/3) established that “if possible, common core documents should not exceed 60-80 pages, initial treaty-specific documents should not exceed 60 pages, and subsequent periodic documents should be limited to 40 pages” (para. 19). CRC allows for periodic reports up to 60 pages maximum, as “a majority of States parties must include information on the Convention as well as the two Optional Protocols” (CRC/C/58/Rev.2, para. 11). The eleventh Inter-Committee Meeting and twenty-second Meeting of

Chairpersons requested the Secretariat to ensure that existing page limits were applied in practice, including by conveying the concerns expressed by the United Nations Conference Services to all States parties through a note verbale and by requesting States parties whose reports would not meet such requirements to review and eventually resubmit their reports in accordance with the above-mentioned guidelines. Such a note verbale was sent to all States parties by the Secretariat in September 2010.

- **A predictable treaty body reporting cycle synchronized with the UPR:** One of the written submissions to the civil society consultation in Seoul suggested that it would be useful to consider a better sequencing of consideration of State reports by the treaty bodies, both in relation to other treaty bodies and in relation to the UPR, while taking into account the due date for submission of a State party report as established under each treaty. This would imply a situation where the date for the consideration of a given State party by a treaty body is set in advance and the consideration will take place irrespective of the submission of a report by the State. One of the main benefits would be the availability of updated information both in the context of the treaty body system and the UPR.
- **Addressing backlogs and coordinated requests for additional meeting time:** The Secretariat would present on a biennial basis an adjusted comprehensive request for meeting time based on submitted State parties' reports. This option would allow sufficient time to be allocated in each biennium to prevent backlogs getting out of control. It would allow the long-term management of the workload in accordance with fluctuations in receipt of reports as well as individual communications. For example, to review the currently 263 reports, a total of 106 weeks are required collectively by the TBs to review these within 1 year whereas the allocation for 2012 is 59 weeks for all treaty bodies.
- **A fixed calendar based on 100% compliance rate:** A proposal adjusted on a biennial basis, would be to establish a fixed calendar based on an assumed 100 % compliance with State party reporting obligations and would entail a review even in case the State does not report. This would reinforce the universal and non-discriminatory nature of the work of TBs by allocating the full amount of meeting time required to accommodate compliance by SPs with their reporting obligations. This option would provide certainty and predictability for TBs and SPs and would eliminate ad-hoc requests for additional meeting time as they would become permanent features of the budget-setting process. This would enhance efficiency of the TBs and effectiveness of the reporting process. TBs would need a minimum of 117 weeks per year to only to review reports under this option.
- **"A tool box" for reporting:** The Poznan statement recommends a flexible approach that allows Treaty Bodies to use the list of issues prior to reporting within a larger "tool box" of reporting options if circumstances so

require. Where permitted under a treaty, in situ visits by Treaty Bodies' experts may also be considered as another reporting method. During the Sion consultation, the idea of an optional template for reporting based on previous recommendations was discussed.

- **Possible strategy for treaty body engagement with non-reporting States:** The Poznan Statement called for a coordinated approach by Treaty Bodies concerned to address the situation of non-reporting States with a view to supporting such States Parties in complying with their reporting obligations. This point was reiterated during the civil society consultation in Seoul as well as during the Sion consultation.
- **Common Core Documents:** Both the Marrakesh Statement and the Poznan Statement recalled that the common core documents constitute the backbone of the reporting process and should, therefore, be submitted and updated by State Parties regularly. During informal treaty body consultations, participants indicated that in cases of major legislative, political, institutional changes there was a need for States to submit an update to the common core document which would allow for shorter and more targeted treaty specific documents and consequently more focused concluding observations.
- **Inclusive process of national consultations as part of the preparation of State reports:** The civil society consultation in Seoul recommended that States should ensure that the process of preparation of reports for treaty bodies include consultation with all relevant government ministries and other authorities at central, regional and/or local level, as well as the legislature, judiciary, national human rights institutions, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. During the Sion consultation, most States agreed that there was a need for a coordinated reporting mechanism (institutional structure) for the preparation of reports as well as the conduct of a national consultation process, involving relevant ministries, NHRIs and civil society.
- **Widespread dissemination of information about the work of treaty bodies and development of media strategies:** The civil society consultation in Pretoria recommended that OHCHR should enhance dedicated media and communications capacity and expertise to ensure the widespread dissemination of information about the work of treaty bodies, including through national, regional and international media, and through social networks. The consultation also recommended that treaty bodies develop media strategies, with the support of OHCHR, to raise awareness and enhance dissemination and implementation of recommendations at the domestic level.

Enhancing the constructive dialogue between Treaty Bodies and States parties

- **Preparation for the dialogue:** During the Sion consultation, some States suggested that treaty bodies send their questions to SPs a few days in advance of the dialogue to allow for a better preparation and enhance the quality of the dialogue.
- **A more structured constructive dialogue:** During informal treaty body consultations, participants agreed that treaty body members' interventions during the dialogue could be shorter and better coordinated in light of the time constraints. **Among the emerging ideas** was the possibility of establishing task forces for the examination of States parties reports (on the model of the Human Rights Committee and CEDAW when it met in parallel chambers) whereby the members of the task force would pose questions. Follow-up questions could be posed by other members not pertaining to the task force. The academic consultation in Lucerne also discussed the possibility of treaty bodies working in smaller sub-committees or chambers as well as the role of country task forces. This issue was further discussed at the twelfth inter-committee meeting in June 2011 which recommended that each committee elaborate written guidelines for its dialogue with States parties in the context of the reporting process, based on the practice of the Human Rights Committee.
- **Webcasting of public meetings of human rights treaty bodies:** This recommendation has been made consistently in formal and informal meetings by various stakeholders, including by treaty bodies. At this stage it appears that funding is the key issue to implement this recommendation. At the Sion consultation, some suggested video conferencing facilitated by the OHCHR regional offices to expand size of delegations and reduce related travel costs.

Implementation of treaty bodies outputs and impact on the protection of rights holders

- **Treaty body sessions at regional level:** Treaty Bodies' sessions are traditionally organized at the Headquarters level. In view of the development of transport and communication means since the establishment of the first Treaty Body over four decades ago and with the objective of bringing Treaty Bodies' work closer to the implementation level, the Poznan Statement recommended that due consideration be given to organize when appropriate Committees' sessions in different regions with the support of the United Nations Regional Commissions. The civil society consultation in Pretoria also called for treaty body sessions in the regions, outside Geneva and New York, and that the consideration of States parties' reports is scheduled on a regional basis. The idea of holding occasional treaty body sessions in regions and States parties was also explored at the academic consultation in Lucerne as a way of combining constructive dialogues with capacity-building activities and meetings with State party officials, national and regional stakeholders.
- **Inter-committee meeting and Meeting of Chairpersons meeting at regional level:** For the first time the Annual Meeting of Chairpersons was held outside of Geneva in June 2010. Acknowledging the success of

holding the Meeting of Chairs for the first time at the regional level, in Brussels, the meeting recommended that in future it should be held every other year at the regional level, with the objective of bringing the human rights treaty bodies closer to the implementation level and raising awareness in all regions of the work of the treaty bodies in order to strengthen linkages, synergies and implementation between international and regional human rights mechanisms and institutions. To this end, the twenty-third meeting of chairpersons decided that the twenty-fourth meeting of chairpersons would convene in the African region in 2012. This decision was welcomed and endorsed by the participants in the academic consultation in Lucerne.

- **More focused and shorter Concluding Observations (Recommendations):** The eleventh Inter-Committee Meeting and twenty-second Meeting of Chairpersons (28 June – 2 July 2010) recommended that each treaty body should explore ways of reducing the length of its concluding observations in order to achieve greater efficiency and impact without jeopardizing the quality of those concluding observations or the exercise of the monitoring mandate of the respective treaty body. They further recommended that all treaty bodies should take due account of their previous concluding observations, as well as any follow-up information provided or remaining outstanding and views, decisions and opinions adopted under the individual complaints procedures, if applicable, when drafting lists of issues, lists of issues prior to reporting and concluding observations. This topic was further discussed at the twelfth Inter-Committee Meeting in June 2011 which encouraged treaty bodies to produce focused recommendations, limiting the length of paragraphs and number of subparagraphs by focusing on the main areas of concern, and, if appropriate, to use subject headings. To this end, the meeting encouraged treaty bodies to draft concluding observations using a clear format. An example of such format is included in a background document prepared by the Secretariat (HRI/ICM/2011/2, para. 34). In addition, the academic consultation in Lucerne recommended that when a LOIPR has been used, the concluding observations should normally focus on such issues.
- **Action by States parties to implement treaty bodies' recommendations:** During the Sion consultation many States suggested that concluding observations should be followed by the adoption of a national action plan; greater involvement of all stakeholders; wide dissemination of treaty body outputs; and solid national coordination mechanisms tasked with the coordination of the implementation of treaty body recommendations. Dissemination of treaty body outputs in local languages was also highlighted as an important vehicle for implementation.
- **Regional follow-up workshops:** The Inter-Committee Meeting Working Group on Follow-up to concluding observations, decisions on individual communications and inquiries underlined the importance of organizing and assessing results of regional workshops on reporting and follow-up to treaty body recommendations. The Working Group on Follow-up recommended that OHCHR assess the feasibility of organizing and funding such workshops and recommended that treaty body experts should play a leading role in these workshops in

providing guidance to States parties on concrete steps to be taken to implement the treaty body recommendations.

- **Enhanced interaction with UN entities:** The Dublin Statement recommended that such UN entities as UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM and other funds and programmes seek to further prioritise support for the treaty body system and the implementation of its recommendations at the national level, including through delivery of capacity building for States and NGOs, training for law enforcement officers etc. The Statement also recalled that one important area of reform for treaty bodies is the sustained strengthening of systems for the follow up of all forms of treaty body recommendations and for further harmonisation of working methods relevant to follow up as well as for facilitation of a more systematic involvement of UN and other actors at the country level. During the Sion meeting, some participants stressed that follow-up on treaty body recommendations should be systematically included in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which would help the UN to be perceived as one.
- **Complementarity with the UPR:** The NGO response to the Dublin statement stresses that the regular sharing of information is key to ensuring that the UPR process is informed by the work of the treaty bodies, and that the treaty bodies are also aware of all recommendations made in the context of the UPR and follow up accordingly. The submission recommends that both systems should work in concert to improve human rights on the ground, and that if concluding observations were crafted with specificity, this would increase their effectiveness as contributions to the UPR, as would prioritization of treaty body recommendations overall.
- **Strengthened cooperation with the Special Procedures:** While acknowledging that when drafting lists of issues, preparing questions for dialogue and crafting concluding observations and general comments, treaty bodies regularly take account of the reports and recommendations made by special procedures whose mandates are of direct relevance to the treaty, the NGO response to the Dublin statement stresses that there is more scope for both treaty bodies and special procedures to be following up on their respective recommendations. The submission suggests that the treaty bodies and special procedures could consider how to make best use of their joint annual meeting, which could be focused on practical questions of cooperation.
- **Cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations:** During the Sion consultation, some States suggested stronger linkages between treaty bodies and regional as well as sub-regional organizations in the implementation phase of treaty body recommendations. At the Bristol seminar, participants called on treaty bodies at both the UN and regional levels to collaborate with each other in order to be aware of what each treaty body had said, and ensure consistency in their recommendations. This could be facilitated, for example, through the development of joint general comments and cross-referencing when drafting their concluding observations.

- **Added value of treaty body follow-up procedures:** All treaty bodies request States parties to provide information on implementation of the recommendations contained in previous concluding observations in their subsequent reports or during the constructive dialogue. The Human Rights Committee, the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women are, however, the only treaty bodies that have adopted formal procedures to monitor more closely the implementation of specific concluding observations in between two reporting cycles — requesting States to provide a written report on these recommendations within one or two years from the adoption of the concluding observations. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural is in the process of discussing the modalities of a new follow-up procedure.
- **Effective follow-up of treaty body concluding observations and decisions/Views:** In the context of the civil society consultation in Pretoria, it was recommended that all relevant stakeholders should provide strong support to ensure the further development of follow-up activities by treaty bodies. A number of recommendations were addressed to particular stakeholders, including treaty bodies, OHCHR, UN special procedures, agencies and country teams, the Inter-Committee Meeting on Follow-up, and States parties. These recommendations included, inter alia, the establishment of a Treaty Body Follow-up Coordination Unit within OHCHR as proposed in the NGO response to the Dublin statement and the appointment of dedicated focal points for treaty bodies, special procedures and UPR at the OHCHR regional offices. The academic consultation in Lucerne also recommended the development of an integrated treaty body follow-up mechanism. The civil society consultation in Seoul considered that additional efforts should be made to improve the information provided on the follow-up to decisions/views taken on individual communications, including the establishment of a separate webpage for this purpose.
- The civil society consultation in Seoul suggested that treaty bodies should undertake a **qualitative assessment of the implementation** by a given State party of all concluding observations in the subsequent reporting process, and not only recommendations that have been selected in the context of the written follow-up procedures mentioned above. The assessment should be based on objective criteria and the treaty bodies, with the support of OHCHR, should provide a country sheet containing this information. The civil society consultation in Pretoria recommended that a **questionnaire** be developed and sent to States and NGOs to identify challenges in the implementation of treaty body recommendations.
- In order to facilitate the follow-up of concluding observations at the national level, participants at the seminar in Bristol suggested that treaty bodies should open up to other actors, such as **parliamentarians**. The members of treaty bodies could be more active and seek meetings with national parliaments when conducting in-country visits and could invite parliamentarians, for example, to submit supplementary reports. Participants at

the Bristol seminar also made various **suggestions about where concluding observations could be best employed and exploited**. These included: trying to ensure that concluding observations were integrated into the discussion of Bills before the legislature, requesting reports from government authorities on the extent to which they have implemented the recommendations, and the treaty bodies themselves systematically asking States if the implementation of concluding observations has been placed on the agenda of their parliaments, or asking that they initiate Parliamentary debates on the concluding observations. The point was also made that a **dedicated legal service at the national level** which identified the range of concluding observations emanating from the various treaty bodies and advised governments and parliamentary committees about their content might be useful.

- **Treaty body follow-up visits:** The Inter-Committee Meeting Working Group on Follow-up recommended that treaty bodies, together with OHCHR, United Nations country teams and other relevant United Nations partners, explore the possibility of conducting in situ follow-up visits, within available human and financial resources, which would enable the treaty bodies to assess more thoroughly the implementation of their recommendations at the national level. In the context of the civil society consultation in Seoul, participants agreed that treaty bodies should consider conducting follow-up visits to a country, especially in cases where a State persists in failing to implement decisions taken on an individual communication.

Independence and expertise of treaty bodies' members

- **Open and transparent national nomination and election procedures:** The academic consultation in Lucerne recommended that steps be taken to improve the nomination procedure at both the national and international level. The participants also recommended that States parties consider creating open and transparent national election processes and sharing information with national actors on the process overall. It was further recommended an advisory process be set up at the international level, to guide nominations, elections and appointments to the treaty bodies. This might include the establishment of **one or more advisory committees to review proposed or actual nominees** and to provide advice to States parties before elections.
- **Independence and eligibility of members of human rights treaty bodies in terms of independence and expertise, existing good practices:** Participants of the Poznan meeting recommended that the Chairpersons entrust a working group to prepare guidelines on eligibility and independence of experts to be adopted in the near future by the Annual Meeting of Chairpersons. According to the Poznan Statement, the working group may wish to take due account of the observations made in this context by the Eighth Meeting of Chairpersons of Treaty Bodies on 21 October 1997, (A/52/507, paras. 67-68), reaffirmed at the Seventh and Ninth Inter-Committee Meetings in 2008 and 2009 respectively, as well as General Recommendation No. 09 of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and Decision 44/I of the Committee on the Elimination

of Discrimination against Women. The recommendation by the Poznan meeting was endorsed by the participants in the civil society consultation in Seoul and in the academic consultation in Lucerne. During the Sion consultation the proposal included in the Poznan Statement to have guidelines on eligibility and independence of treaty body members was seen by most States as a key tool. The point was also made that it was a matter of drawing up recommendations rather than guidelines as the document would not be binding. These guidelines could also include the issue of tenure of treaty body members. This issue was further discussed at the twenty-third Meeting of Chairpersons in June 2011 which supported the suggestion to prepare and adopt a document providing guidance on eligibility and independence of treaty body members. The meeting requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft working paper, including initial draft proposals, to be presented to the twenty-fourth meeting of chairpersons.

- At the Sion consultation, several States agreed on the need for States parties a) to publicize the positions with a description of key requirements; b) to consult widely, in a transparent manner, when nominating a candidate c) to carefully review the qualifications of each candidate, and select best candidates, giving consideration to gender, geography, professional fields, and legal systems in determining the final composition; d) to recognize attendance as a basic requirement and to inform the candidates of the nature of the work involved as a member of the respective treaty body. OHCHR was encouraged to prepare an information note with practical issues, including expectations from members. Several States expressed support for the idea of organizing public hearings for candidates standing for elections and the new model of the Advisory Panel for the election of judges on the European Court on Human Rights could also bring some suitable elements to the treaty body election process.
- The participants of the Lucerne academic consultation recommended that in order to ensure the highest levels of **independence and expertise** amongst treaty body members, they should serve a maximum of two terms, as was stipulated in the most recent human rights treaties. The participants also considered that persons currently serving as diplomats or government officials should not be eligible for nomination as this would inevitably lead to a perception of conflict of interest and that members who took up such positions while serving as a member of a treaty body should step down from the committee upon assuming such a position. The participants further considered that measures to improve the competence and expertise of the members included strengthening of language skills and suggested that it might be appropriate to state it was highly desirable that a nominee be able to work in two of the official languages of the United Nations.

Individual communications

- **Improvement and visibility of individual complaints mechanisms:** The civil society consultation in Pretoria recommended that OHCHR develop a public database of individual communications, anonymised where

requested and appropriate, with details as to the nature and status of pending cases. Regular updates should be provided to complainants as to the status and progress of their complaint. This database should be searchable by State, by treaty body, and by rights concerned. This recommendation was reiterated at the expert meeting on petitions and the academic consultation in Lucerne.

- The civil society consultation in Pretoria also recommended that treaty bodies consider relevant national, regional and international jurisprudence in the development of Views and General Comments in order to promote the development of consistent and progressive human rights standards. In this respect, the expert meeting on petitions recommended that the jurisprudence of regional human rights systems be referred to in a more systematic manner. In addition, the civil society consultation in Seoul emphasised the need to ensure greater **transparency of and accessibility to** the individual communications procedure, while remaining sensitive of the safety and security of the author and/or victim of such communication. The academic consultation in Lucerne suggested that OHCHR reinstate the earlier practice of sending out **press releases** which summarise the views of committees in decided cases. The expert meeting on petitions reiterated this recommendation and also agreed to use the opportunity, whenever possible to **refer to findings on relevant cases** during press conferences or, as CEDAW has done, in the opening or closing statements by the Chairs.
- The expert meeting on petitions identified specific activities aimed at strengthening the current mechanisms on follow-up to individual communications, including the possibility of holding **meetings on implementation of recommendations** between the Rapporteur(s) on Follow-Up and members of delegations coming to Geneva or New York for the consideration of the State party reports and **concerted actions among the treaty bodies**, such as joint appeals for implementation of recommendations, common press releases etc. The expert meeting also recommended that the Secretariat send a **questionnaire** to States requesting them to provide information about their national mechanisms and regulatory framework to implement treaty body decisions. The meeting further recommended that **“best practices” on follow-up** be compiled.
- In order to increase coherence and harmonization of jurisprudence, the participants at the expert meeting on petitions recommended that the practice of **mutual cross-referencing of findings and concluding observations** by treaty bodies be expanded. They also mentioned that the **Treaty Body Jurisprudence Database** is an essential tool in assisting the Committee members and the Secretariat in their work and recommended that it should contain information on follow-up to recommendations and be completed urgently. In addition, the meeting recommended that the possibility of holding **ad hoc inter-committee meetings** on issues related to substantive rights or procedural aspects be explored
- **Recommendations calling for structural change:** The civil society consultation in Seoul emphasised that where relevant, recommendations made in the context of the individual communications procedure that call for

structural change, including in national legislation in order to bring it into line with the provisions of the relevant treaty, should be made systematically so as to ensure as much as possible the non-repetition of similar violations in that same country.

Resourcing the treaty body system

- **Strengthened Secretariat:** The Dublin Statement recommended that the OHCHR enhance and further consolidate the secretariat support provided to the treaty bodies, including by facilitating cooperation and exchange of best practices among them and increasing and diversifying its technical assistance to States parties. It recommended that the Office enhance mainstreamed attention to the treaty body activities across all the Office's work areas, including its field operations.
- **Adequate resources:** The Dublin Statement recommended that the UN Member States as a matter of high priority provide necessary resources to adequately service the functioning of the treaty body system including in particular through OHCHR and UN conference services and that OHCHR consider reallocation of resources to take due account of the importance of the treaty body system.
- At the Sion consultation, a number of suggestions were made by States to address the issue of resources, including:
 - Reviewing the use of meeting time: It was suggested that only every fourth report should have a full day discussion. The rest could be a focused half day discussion;
 - OHCHR could get the authority over the total of the funds and apply them as needed, i.e. one treaty body would get another additional week of meeting time while others might have a week less;

Other issues

- **Enhanced role of treaty body chairpersons on working methods and procedural matters:** During the twenty-second meeting of Chairpersons, the Chair/Rapporteur further raised the issue of in future providing the Meeting of the Chairpersons with decision-making powers, as already suggested in 2008. Such powers could be extended mainly to procedural issues; all substantive decisions would go back to the respective treaty bodies for approval. That issue was briefly debated among the chairs, and it was decided that the issue should remain open for further discussion at the next meeting, in June 2011. The Poznan Statement, while respecting the autonomy and specificity of Treaty Bodies, recognized the spearheading role of Chairpersons during the inter-sessional period, facilitating coordination of common activities and representation, such as consideration and adoption of joint statements. According to the Statement, Chairpersons should be empowered to adopt measures on those working methods and procedural matters, which are common across the treaty body

system and have previously been discussed within each of the Committees; such a measure would be implemented by all treaty bodies, unless a Committee subsequently dissociates itself from it. The twenty-third meeting of chairpersons decided to extend such enhanced role to the treaty body chairpersons. This decision was endorsed by the participants at the academic consultation in Lucerne.

- The academic consultation in Lucerne recommended that the practice of adopting **general comments** be maintained and strengthened as they are a highly valuable part of the work of the treaty bodies. The participants also recommended that the treaty bodies continue to explore the possibility of issuing joint general comments, developed by several treaty bodies on thematic issues of common concern.
- **Academic research focus groups:** The participants in the academic consultation in Lucerne encouraged further and continuing research and debate into the operation of treaty bodies and recommended that a network of academic research focus groups be established to facilitate critical research and debate on the functioning, work and implementation of the outputs of the treaty bodies.
