

**Informal consultations by the co-facilitators of the process of the consideration of the state of the  
UN human rights treaty body system**

**28 August 2020**

ISHR would like to thank the organizers of this consultation.

We have endorsed two joint submissions to the co-facilitators questionnaire:

- A [joint submission](#) endorsed by 28 organisations which addresses the 18 points raised by the co-facilitators
- A [joint submission](#) with TB-net focused primarily on a proposal for fixed and predictable review cycles.

ISHR warmly welcomes the [4 August submission by the Treaty Body Chairs](#) to the co-facilitators that endorses fixed and predictable review cycles. The convergence of views between Treaty Body members, States and NGOs around the desirability to move towards fixed and predictable review cycles constitutes a significant step forward.

Nevertheless, we are concerned about suggestions, including in the Chairs proposal, related to different approaches applied to the Covenant Committees and the other Committees, which is not compatible with the indivisibility of all human rights, and the principles of equality, reciprocity and complementarity between all Treaty Bodies.

I would now like to comment about four specific points:

- **Elections & membership**

ISHR welcomes the reference to an independent vetting process for membership by the High Commissioner in [her opening statement](#) to the 2020 review process. [We reiterate](#) that other proposals which could usefully be explored include voluntary pledges by states to hold open and competitive selection processes for candidates, or public hearings of candidates prior to the elections.

- **Capacity strengthening programme**

We echo the call that an independent evaluation of the programme should be carried out and the results made publicly available. A potential continuation or renewal of the programme should include a strong and dedicated component on civil society engagement with the Treaty Bodies.

- **In country reviews**

We welcome [the joint submission made by Treaty Body members](#) in relation to the desirability and relevance of in-country or in-region reviews, especially as part of proposed focused or mid-term reviews. Contributors to a joint series of editorials launched by ISHR with Open Global Rights have underlined how crucial it is for the system to better take into account the lived realities of rights holders at the local and national levels.

- **Digital tools**

We wholly concur with [the High Commissioner's suggestion](#) to advance the work of treaty bodies online. It is the responsibility of the UN Secretariat to provide the tools and resources required to facilitate the online work of the Committees, including a suitable platform for online sessions and a much-awaited online case management system for individual communications.

Finally, I would like to echo comments made by other speakers that we reject the proposal for a code of conduct for the Treaty Bodies given that it would curtail their independence and effectiveness. We also reiterate that strengthening measures must consolidate and not curtail civil society access and cooperation with the Committees.

Thank you Chair.

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