



UN Treaty body strengthening: what strategy ahead of the 2020 review?

23-24 May 2017 – Geneva

Objectives

Against the backdrop of the 2020 review, the consultation aims at developing a strategy to support efforts towards a more accessible, inclusive, efficient, effective and rights-oriented treaty bodies system.

In particular, the consultation will seek to:

- Analyse and discuss the outcomes of previous processes of TB strengthening, including implementation of outcomes and lessons learned
- Identify good practices, constructive tactics
- Identify key milestones ahead of the 2020 review
- Discuss the role of different actors and relations between treaty bodies and other UN human rights bodies

Context and rationale

Challenges faced by UN treaty bodies (TBs) such as the lack of harmonization of working methods or lack of State compliance with reporting and implementation obligations have been thoroughly identified and discussed over the last 25 years. They have been documented in various studies and reports such as more recently [the 2012 report](#)¹ of the UN High Commissioner (HC) for HR, which stemmed from the so-called [Dublin Process](#)². The current framework for treaty body strengthening was established by General Assembly resolution 68/268 of June 2014, which envisages a review of the effectiveness of the measures taken in 2020. More ambitious ideas such as the [2006 proposal for a unified TB](#)³ have not been included into the last strengthening measures.

In order to prepare for the 2020 review, in line with a recommendation made during the 2015 [Wilton Park meeting on TBs](#)⁴, and following a proposal on the occasion of the 2015 meeting of treaty body Chairs (UN Doc A/70/302), the Geneva Academy has started regional consultations with an academic network all over the world and proposed a range of [relevant questions](#)⁵ for academic review.

A major take away from previous reform efforts is that the process leading up to a review is a key moment to propose ideas and gather the necessary support. Challenges and corresponding solutions to the operations of TBs have been identified, and **what is now required is a strategy to prompt strong support for progressive solutions by a critical mass of relevant actors including States, NHRIs, civil society, and TBs themselves.**

¹ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/HRTD/docs/HCRReportTBStrengthening.pdf>

² <http://www.ishr.ch/news/treaty-body-reform-dublin-process>

³ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/icm-mc/docs/HRI.MC.2006.2.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP1375-Report.pdf>

⁵ <https://goo.gl/aHK06U>

Participants

The 2-day consultation will gather representatives from:

- UN treaty bodies
- OHCHR staff
- CSOs/NHRIs
- States
- Academics

Discussion protocol

The consultation is designed to be as interactive as possible. There will be no interpretation and participants will be encouraged to speak in their individual capacity. Chatham house rules will apply which means that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of other participants, may be revealed. Participants may use social media during the event, and ISHR will be live tweeting, in keeping with Chatham house rules.

Background documents

Participants are encouraged to share materials and publications relevant to the agenda with the consultation organisers so that copies can be made available for all participants during the event. Participants are also encouraged to spontaneously propose materials and publications related to the topics to be discussed in the agenda below, which will also be made available to participants and may serve as background reading on specific sessions.

Agenda

Note the version of the agenda below is subject to change:

Tuesday 23 May	
9.00 - 9.15	<i>Registration of participants</i>
09.15 - 09.45	<i>Welcome - Opening remarks - Tour de table</i>
09.45 - 10.45	<i>2020 review of treaty bodies: what do we want to achieve and how?</i>
10.45 - 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 - 12.30	<i>Treaty body strengthening: where are we at? An overview of the status of implementation of GA Res 68/268 and the Academic Platform on treaty body review</i>

12.30 - 14.00	Lunch			
14.00 - 15.30	Overview of previous treaty body strengthening processes: what strategy and what results?			
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee break			
16.00 - 17.30	Discussions in groups			
	The role of States in the 2020 review	The role of TB members in the 2020 review	The role of civil society in the 2020 review	The role of OHCHR in the 2020 review
Wednesday 24 May				
09.00 - 10.30	Reporting back from groups from previous day in plenary & discussion			
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee break			
11.00 - 12.30	Preparing for the 2020 review: what future relations between treaty bodies and other UN human rights bodies?			
	Relations between TBs and the Universal Periodic Review	Relations between TBs and Special Procedures	Relations between TBs and the General Assembly	Relations between TBs and the Human Rights Council
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch			
14.00 - 15.30	Reporting back from groups in plenary & discussion			
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee break			
16.00 - 17.30	Next steps in the TBS process: overview and discussion on key timelines			

Plenary
Break away groups

Outcome

An outcome report summarising the main points raised during the consultation and key steps ahead of the 2020 review will subsequently be published. The report will not attribute content to specific individuals.

Venue and contact

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Lunches and dietary requirements

Lunches will be provided for all participants in a nearby restaurant to the venue on both 23 and 24 May. Please inform the organisers of any specific dietary requirement you may have.