



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
TO THE UN



PERMANENT MISSION
OF ICELAND TO THE UN

New York, 9 August 2012

Dear representatives of civil society,

With reference to our letter of 25 July 2012, we would like to formally invite you to a **civil society forum** which has now been rescheduled to take place **Tuesday, 4 September 2012**. To facilitate our interaction a link will be established between New York and Geneva to allow as many civil society actors as possible to participate.

The forum will take place **simultaneously** in **room 4** from **10 am to 1 pm** at the North Lawn Building at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and in **room XXIV** from **4 to 7 pm** Geneva time at Palais des Nations in Geneva the same day. Please note that the meeting will be conducted in English. Attached, is for your information, the draft agenda for the upcoming civil society forum and a non-paper prepared by the co-facilitators on possible issues under different themes.

As we informed you in our letter of 25 July 2012, civil society actors which are currently accredited to ECOSOC will be able to directly participate but will have to notify the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights **by 20 August 2012** by submitting the attached form.

Those civil society actors which are not accredited to ECOSOC are kindly requested to notify Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights **by 20 August 2012 at the latest** by submitting the attached form, to facilitate their participation.

We have asked our respective experts, Mr. Vardi, Mission of Iceland (email: th@mfa.is) and Mr. Arief, Mission of Indonesia (email: arief.adnan@indonesiamission-ny.org) to act as focal points on your participation and future communication.

We look forward to engaging with you at the upcoming civil society forum as well as in our future joint endeavor towards the strengthening of the human rights treaty body system.

Yours sincerely,

Desra Percaya
Co-facilitator
Permanent Representative of Indonesia
to the United Nations

Greta Gunnarsdottir
Co-facilitator
Permanent Representative of Iceland
to the United Nation

**Informal hearing for civil society
Intergovernmental process on the strengthening
of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies**

Tuesday, 4 September 2012
Geneva-
Room XXIV at Palais des Nations
New York-
Room 4 at North Lawn Building

**10:00-10:10
(NY)**

Introductory remarks by the co-facilitators, Ms. Greta Gunnarsdottir, Permanent Representative of Iceland/Mr. Desra Percaya, Permanent Representative of Indonesia

**16:00-16:10
(Geneva)**

**10:10-13:00
(NY)**

Civil society plenary discussion

**16:10-19:00
(Geneva)**

Objective of the hearing:

MASTER CALENDAR - Seek civil society's views on the proposal on a master calendar.

METHODS OF WORK - Seek civil society's views on issues related to strengthening the independence and expertise of treaty body members, individual communications procedures, inquiries, country visits and the enhanced visibility and accessibility of the treaty bodies, etc.

REPORTING PROCESS - Seek civil society's views on issues related to the reporting process, such as simplified reporting process (list of issues), page limitations, reduction or elimination of summary records, focused concluding observations, common core documents, etc.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT - Seek civil society's views on issues related to capacity building activities related to reporting, the role of the UN system and civil society in supporting Member States and their capacity to implement, national reporting and coordination mechanisms, treaty body follow up measures, aligned consultation process for general comments and general recommendations, etc.

Member States will be invited to pose questions after civil society representatives

**Informal hearing for civil society
Intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on the strengthening
of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies
4 September 2012**

**Non-paper on
Themes for discussion**

MASTER CALENDAR

Overview

To achieve greater clarity on timing, greater efficiency, and generally greater access to the reporting process the High Commissioner has proposed a Comprehensive Reporting Calendar. As proposed, the Calendar would combine all current reporting deadlines into a single system, based on a periodic five-year cycle. Within this five-year period, there would be a maximum of two reports per annum for states that have ratified all treaties. After the submission of a report a period of six months would follow for other stakeholders to provide supplementary information and then another six months for the concerned treaty body to prepare for the interactive dialogue. This would mean that over five years any state would have submitted all reports due under all treaties, and that every report would be examined within one year following its submission.

Non-exhaustive issues to discuss

- 1. Opportunities for optimizing treaty bodies work** – What opportunities for optimizing treaty body work does the Master Calendar pose?
- 2. Modalities and order of consideration of reports** – What issues arise from how the reports are divided between the years, are there for example reports that are more appropriately considered during the same year or even at the same time?
- 3. Length of cycle** – What is the most appropriate length of a cycle of consideration in the context of the Master Calendar?
- 4. The required resources, both immediate and incremental, and possible long term savings** –The Master Calendar requires resources both in the short and the long term. At the same time it will have cost savings in the long term due to increased efficiencies.

METHODS OF WORK

Overview

The co-facilitators have come up with an initial non-exhaustive list of issues that may be useful to provide some structure to the task at hand.¹ The theme is intentionally broad to enable different issues to be raised and the list below should be viewed as indicative. Resourcing of the Treaty body system should be addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

Non-exhaustive issues to discuss

1. **Guidelines on independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies in the exercise of their functions** – Guidelines adopted by the chair-persons of the treaty bodies to guarantee the independence and impartiality of treaty body members.
2. **Webcasting to enhance the accessibility and visibility of treaty bodies at country level** – Webcasting of all public meetings of the treaty bodies to gain transparency and participation of relevant stakeholders in the reporting process.
3. **Videoconferencing** – Using videoconferencing technologies to facilitate the participation of different actors in all steps of the reporting process.
4. **A handbook on expectations, availability and required workload and a centralized treaty body elections website** – A handbook containing the established facts and information on the election process, conditions and other relevant requirements pertaining to membership of a treaty body, particularly to highlight the practical expectations and workload for treaty body experts.
5. **Proposals for national policies and processes with respect to the nomination of experts to the treaty bodies** – National initiatives to ensure transparency and the nomination of highly qualified experts.
6. **Open public space for all State parties to present their potential candidates or nominees for treaty bodies** – An open space, moderated by five former treaty body members, using modern technologies, including social media, to ensure an open and transparent selection process.
7. **Other measures to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the treaty body system** – The idea of an OHCHR communications strategy to better disseminate the treaty body outputs as well as other measures such as using social media, enhancing the OHCHR website, using the Universal Human Rights Index to cluster recommendations, establishing a public database for individual communications etc.
8. **Establishment of a treaty body jurisprudence database on individual cases including information on their follow-up** – The idea of a database, searchable in all six UN languages, containing all individual cases from all the complaints mechanisms
9. **Joint treaty body working on communications** – A joint body, composed of experts from the different treaty bodies to deal with individual communications in order to achieve a more coherent jurisprudence.
10. **Enhancing the capacity of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)** – To increase the capacity of the SPT to undertake more regular and advisory follow-up visits.
11. **Review of good practices regarding the application of rules of procedure and methods of work and adoption of common guidelines** – The idea of presenting common written guidelines on procedural matters related to the handling of the individual communications and the conduct of inquiries.
12. **Friendly settlements** – The idea of providing space for friendly settlements if parties are engaged in a dialogue to reach a common conclusion.

¹ These themes emerged from state submissions and comments, as well as from other stakeholders, the High Commissioner's recent report and the previous Secretary General reports.

REPORTING PROCESS

Overview

The co-facilitators have come up with an initial non-exhaustive list of issues that may be useful to provide some structure to the task at hand.² The theme is intentionally broad to enable different issues to be raised and the list below should be viewed as indicative. Resourcing of the Treaty body system should be addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

Non-exhaustive issues to discuss

1. **“Simplified Reporting Procedure” (SRP)** - Optional “Simplified Reporting Procedure” (SRP) or what is commonly referred to as Lists of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR).
2. **The reduction of translation of summary records or their replacement by webcasting** – The idea of moving conference services resources away from summary records or replacing them with webcasting.
3. **Submission of Common Core Documents and regular updates** – The optional submission of a common base report that is common to all the treaties and replaces the submission of individual reports to each treaty body.
4. **Aligned methodology for the constructive dialogue between States parties and treaty bodies** – The idea that all treaty bodies adopt an aligned methodology in the form of written guidelines for the constructive dialogue between States parties and treaty bodies to maximize the use of the time available and allow for a more interactive and productive dialogue with State parties in the context of the reporting process.
5. **Addressing backlogs and coordinated requests for additional meeting time** – How to address the current backlog of reports and the idea that requests for adjustments of committee meeting time be addressed in a single comprehensive annual or bi-annual request.
6. **Focused treaty body concluding observations** - The adoption of measures to adopt shorter, focused, concrete and achievable concluding observations.
7. **Strict adherence to page limitations** – The enforcement of the “Harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents” which sets out guideline of page limitation for state reports.
8. **Further institutionalization of engagement with other United Nations partners** - Further institutionalized cooperation of treaty bodies with other United Nations entities to provide the most efficient support to the State party and other stakeholders in the preparation, review and follow-up to a State party review by a treaty body.
9. **Aligned models of interaction among treaty bodies, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations** - Harmonize the way the treaty bodies engage with civil society organizations and national human rights institutions.
10. **Reprisals** - Harmonized approach and necessary measures to prevent reprisals against human rights defenders, victims and witnesses and take appropriate action to provide remedies.

² These themes emerged from state submissions and comments, as well as from other stakeholders, the High Commissioner’s recent report and the previous Secretary General reports.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT

Overview

The co-facilitators have come up with an initial non-exhaustive list of issues that may be useful to provide some structure to the task at hand.³ The theme is intentionally broad to enable different issues to be raised and the list below should be viewed as indicative. Resourcing of the Treaty body system should be addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

Non-exhaustive issues to discuss

1. **The treaty bodies' follow-up procedures** – simplified and improved procedures for follow-up of the recommendations issued by the treaty bodies, requesting the reporting states to provide written reports on the developments regarding specific recommendations.
2. **Aligned consultation process for the elaboration of General Comments/General recommendations** – A standardized process involving State parties, UN entities, NHRIs, and civil society organizations when drafting General Comments and General Recommendations.
3. **Capacity-building activities relating to reporting** – Capacity building activities by UN agencies at the national level to improve reporting, available on the request from State parties.
4. **A standing national reporting and coordination mechanism** – The idea of a permanent national mechanism to facilitate both timely reporting and improved coordination in follow-up to the recommendations of all UN Human Rights mechanisms.

³ These themes emerged from state submissions and comments, as well as from other stakeholders, the High Commissioner's recent report and the previous Secretary General reports.

**CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON TREATY BODY STRENGTHENING
4 SEPTEMBER 2012,**

REGISTRATION FORM

Name of Participant(s)	Organisation	Email	ECOSOC accredited? (Yes/No)	UN pass needed? (Yes/No)

Please return registration form to civilsociety@ohchr.org by 20 August 2012.