

Joint Statement on the UN treaty bodies strengthening process

Mr. President,

Belgium and Costa Rica have the honour to make this statement on behalf of a group of 56 countries who are strong proponents of the UN human rights treaty body system.

The treaty body system is a key component of the wider UN human rights framework. Treaty bodies contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide as they monitor state compliance with their international obligations and develop general recommendations on their application.

As we approach the 2020 review of the human rights treaty body system, we wish to reiterate our strong support for GA resolution 68/268 and the improvements introduced by this resolution to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

Our ultimate goal has always been to reinforce the implementation of States' obligations, to preserve the integrity and the independence of the treaty bodies for the benefit of the rights-holders and the victims of human rights violations on the ground, and to safeguard the continued involvement of civil society in the treaty body work.

We wish to underline that we remain committed to this goal. We will continue to work constructively in favor of an effective, independent, human-centered, accessible, strong and sustainable system. Its unique value needs to be preserved. Where needed the system should be further strengthened, inter alia by introducing more streamlined and coherent working methods. In this regard we welcome some of the achievements made by the treaty bodies, especially the recent decision of the Human Rights Committee to move in 2020 to a predictable review cycle, to shift from an opt-in model of simplified reporting procedure to an opt-out model and to align its working methods and the lists of issues it produces with other treaty bodies.

We further acknowledge the crucial role of the Treaty body Chairpersons to mainstream the implementation of GA resolution 68/268 across the system, including on the alignment of their working methods. The most recent Treaty body Chairpersons Position Paper on the future of the treaty body system provides interesting suggestions.

Special attention needs to be given to the reporting calendar, which should foresee that the reporting obligations for each state under each of the treaties are spread evenly. This would facilitate the reporting obligation by states as well as their implementation of the various recommendations.

Finally, we should also explore ways to enhance the consistency in the application of individual communications procedures.

Mr. President,

We remain deeply concerned about the reprisals against individuals cooperating with the treaty bodies and we encourage the Treaty Bodies and [the office of] the Assistant Secretary-General Andrew Gilmour in their efforts to respond to such reprisals. A harmonized implementation of the San Jose Guidelines is essential in this regard.

We look forward to further engaging with all relevant stakeholders, both here and in Geneva, including from civil society, the academic sector and the treaty bodies themselves.

I thank you.

Belgium and Costa Rica on behalf of: 1. Albania 2. Argentina 3. Australia 4. Austria 5. Bahamas 6. Belgium 7. Bulgaria 8. Canada 9. Chile 10. Costa Rica 11. Croatia 12. Cyprus 13. Czech Republic 14. Denmark 15. Ecuador 16. Estonia 17. Finland 18. France 19. Georgia 20. Germany 21. Greece 22. Honduras 23. Hungary 24. Iceland 25. Iraq 26. Ireland 27. Israel 28. Italy 29. Latvia 30. Liechtenstein 31. Lithuania 32. Luxemburg 33. Malta 34. The Marshall Islands 35. Mexico 36. Monaco	37. Montenegro 38. The Netherlands 39. New Zealand 40. Norway 41. Panama 42. Paraguay 43. Peru 44. Poland 45. Portugal 46. Romania 47. Samoa 48. Slovakia 49. Slovenia 50. Sweden 51. Switzerland 52. Tunisia 53. Turkey 54. Ukraine 55. United Kingdom 56. Uruguay
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