

# POSITION PAPER ON STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES IN 2020 AND BEYOND

As NGOs committed to ensuring the effectiveness of the United Nations (UN) human rights treaty bodies as critical institutions charged with strengthening the protection of human rights around the world, Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims and the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights present this position paper ahead of the review of the human rights treaty body system.

General Assembly [resolution 68/268](#) on ‘Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system’ (the ‘treaty body system’ or ‘treaty bodies’) mandates a review of the “effectiveness of the measures taken in order to ensure their sustainability, and, if appropriate, to decide on further action to strengthen and enhance the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system” no later than April 2020.

Our organizations engage directly with the treaty bodies. We greatly value their work aimed at the implementation of treaty obligations at the national level. Our goal is for the outcome of the 2020 review to support a treaty body system that strengthens the realization of human rights at the domestic level, including by assisting States to give effect to their treaty obligations, and by making the system more accessible to rights-holders to exercise and enjoy their human rights.

## ■ THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 2020 REVIEW

Together with civil society partners, our organizations have endorsed a Civil Society Position Paper<sup>1</sup> on the 2020 Review of resolution 68/268. As set out in that paper, we consider that the forthcoming review by the UN General Assembly should be conducted through an open, transparent and participatory process that enables participation of all stakeholders, and that upholds the following principles:

- Protection of rights-holders and promotion of human rights on the ground.
- Preservation and respect, at all times, of the independence of the UN treaty bodies.
- Respect for the specificity of the treaties.
- Allocation of sufficient resources from the UN regular budget for all of the work of the treaty bodies.

As set out in more detail in the abovementioned Civil Society Position Paper, resolution 68/268 is the consensus outcome of a years-long intergovernmental process by UN Member States. As such, we consider that the resolution still provides an appropriate framework for discussions on how to enhance the strengthening and effectiveness of the treaty body system, both in light of key concerns raised by States during the inter-governmental process and of their treaty obligations. In addition, the resolution also set up a unique capacity-building program to improve States reporting to the treaty bodies.

Most importantly, resolution 68/268 reaffirms the unique legal competence of the treaty bodies to establish their own working methods, while encouraging them to work towards greater efficiency and effectiveness. The treaty bodies’ legal prerogative to establish their own rules of procedure and working methods is essential to their effective functioning and their independence. We consider that the treaty bodies have taken significant steps to align their working methods

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<sup>1</sup> Civil Society Position Paper on the 2020 Review of UN General Assembly Resolution 68/268 on ‘Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system’, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/1217/2019/en/>

considerably, by developing a common methodology in a number of areas<sup>2</sup>, ranging from the simplified reporting procedures<sup>3</sup>, concluding observations<sup>4</sup>, constructive dialogue<sup>5</sup>, general comments<sup>6</sup>, to the follow-up procedures.<sup>7</sup>

The June 2019 ‘Treaty body Chairpersons Position Paper on the future of the treaty body system’<sup>8</sup> further commits all of the treaty bodies to taking additional measures to implement the recommendations in resolution 68/268, including: offering the simplified reporting procedure to all States parties for initial and periodic reports; developing an aligned methodology for constructive dialogues; and, very significantly, developing predictable calendars to ensure regular reviews of all States parties to the human rights treaties.

As users of the system, we welcome the Chairpersons’ commitment to the implementation of those additional steps, and we continue to urge the treaty bodies to standardize their working methods where differences are not required to fulfil their specific mandates and where doing so would not be detrimental to rights-holders.

Resolution 68/268 also outlines several important obligations of States, including improving the expertise and competence of the membership of the treaty bodies. Very few States have acted on the call to improve the expertise and competence of membership by establishing national selection procedures.<sup>9</sup> These continue to be the exception and, in the few instances where they have been put in place, they are rarely open and transparent. Elections to the treaty bodies continue to be subjected to political horse-trading, where the election of human rights experts is subservient to States’ political ambitions.

Resolution 68/268 also governs the most critical responsibility of the General Assembly with respect to the treaty bodies: providing adequate and predictable funding for their operation. Subsequent to the adoption of resolution 68/268, States decided to provide regular funding for webcasting the meetings of the treaty bodies, a warmly welcomed development. However, it is of great concern to our organizations that, in the years since the adoption of resolution 68/268, States have failed to fulfil their commitment to make the necessary resources available for the treaty bodies to carry out all their functions effectively. We consider States’ agreement to adopt the ‘formula’ set out in resolution 68/268, which provides a basis for objectively calculating the meeting time and staff resources required by the treaty bodies, to be a significant achievement.<sup>10</sup> We regret that the General Assembly did not fully support a request from the Secretary-General for additional staff support for the treaty bodies, in line with the 68/268 formula, in the 2018-2019 budget, and that the Secretary-General has not repeated the prior request for additional staff in the proposed 2020 UN budget. The General Assembly should act urgently, as well as in the context of the 68/268 review, to correct the existing resource deficit and provide adequate funding for the treaty bodies to carry out all of their functions, in line with the 68/268 formula.

Moreover, an across-the-board reduction of the funds provided by States to the UN for “travel of representatives” in 2019 has given rise to disproportionately significant challenges for the work of the treaty bodies, whose membership comprises experts who must travel in order to carry out their work. We are concerned that, if the practice of these across-the-board cuts to the travel budget continues, the Secretariat will not be able to facilitate the treaty bodies’ scheduled meetings for 2020.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Identifying progress achieved in aligning the working methods and practices of the treaty bodies*, Note by the Secretariat, HRI/MC/2018/3, 23 March 2018, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=HRI/MC/2018/3&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=HRI/MC/2018/3&Lang=en)

<sup>3</sup> UN Doc. A/74/256, 30 July 2019, <https://undocs.org/A/74/256>

<sup>4</sup> UN Doc. A/69/285, 11 August 2014, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A%2f69%2f285&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A%2f69%2f285&Lang=en)

<sup>5</sup> UN Doc. A/69/285, 11 August 2014, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A%2f69%2f285&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A%2f69%2f285&Lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> UN Doc. A/70/302, 7 August 2015, <https://undocs.org/A/70/302>

<sup>7</sup> UN Doc. A/73/140, 11 July 2018, [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=a/73/140](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/73/140)

<sup>8</sup> *Treaty body Chairpersons Position Paper on the future of the treaty body system*, July 2019, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/TB/AnnualMeeting/31Meeting/ChairpersonsPositionPaper\\_July2019.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/TB/AnnualMeeting/31Meeting/ChairpersonsPositionPaper_July2019.docx)

<sup>9</sup> *TB-NET & Amnesty International Event on Treaty Body Elections (Summary Report)*, 18 December 2018, Index number: IOR 40/9608/2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/9608/2018/en/>

<sup>10</sup> Resolution 68/268, paras. 26 and 27, contains a mathematical formula to calculate allocation of meeting time and corresponding financial and human resources.

<sup>11</sup> UN budget shortfalls seriously undermine the work of the Human Rights Treaty bodies 17 May 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24621&LangID=E> *Open NGO letter regarding the critical funding gap affecting UN human rights mechanisms and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 7 June 2019, Index number: IOR 40/0486/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/0486/2019/en/>

It is crucial that the review of the treaty bodies in 2020 avoids repeating the mistakes that dogged the previous intergovernmental treaty bodies process that culminated in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/268. Several major stakeholders – particularly rights-holders and their representatives, including NGOs, and the treaty body experts themselves – were unable to observe or participate in the majority of this previous treaty body system review's discussions.<sup>12</sup> All States should seek to make the forthcoming review as open as possible to all interested stakeholders.

**Based on the above, we recommend that UN Member States:**

- Ensure that the 68/268 review be carried out in an open, transparent and participatory process that enables participation of all stakeholders, including States, treaty bodies, the Secretariat, and civil society representatives.
- Adhere to, at all times, the key principles of increased protection and promotion of human rights on the ground, preservation and respect for the independence of the UN treaty bodies and respect for the specificity of the treaties.
- Take steps to speed up the effective implementation of measures addressed at States, including increasing reporting compliance, and establishing national selection processes of candidates for treaty body membership.
- Ensure the sufficient allocation of resources for all aspects of the treaty bodies' work from the UN regular budget, including the additional staff support for the treaty bodies previously requested by the Secretary-General in the 2018-2019 budget, pursuant to the 68/268 formula.

**■ MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES**

We consider that the treaty bodies themselves are best placed to tackle many of the challenges facing them, and that the review process must never lose sight of its ultimate goal, namely, to ensure full realization of human rights at the domestic level.

In this regard, we note steps already taken by the treaty bodies to align their working methods based on good practices. We also note and take into consideration the 'Treaty Body Chairpersons Position Paper on the future of the treaty body system',<sup>13</sup> which provides a good working basis for approaching the upcoming review. We reflect on these proposals further below. We also note and take into consideration the position paper published by the Human Rights Committee.<sup>14</sup>

In order to further strengthen their work, and ultimately the implementation of the treaties at the national level, we consider that the treaty bodies should adopt further initiatives with a view to:

- Increasing accessibility to the treaty bodies and visibility of their work at the national level.
- Developing predictable calendars for regular reporting by States.
- Increasing cross-committee coordination.

**PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE CROSS-COORDINATION**

We consider that distinct working methods – where their standardisation would in fact be beneficial to rights-holders, and where different working methods are not required due to the specificity of the treaty – make civil society engagement unnecessarily difficult. Distinct deadlines, review methodologies, consultation practices with respect to general comments/recommendations, NGO and NHRI consultations and follow-up procedures make the system difficult to navigate, especially for national civil society representatives.

We recognize that the treaty bodies themselves have made several efforts to align their working methods. We encourage them to continue to do so by discussing good practices and ways of further enhancing civil society participation, and by piloting streamlined procedures. We consider that the effectiveness of the Chairpersons meeting could be significantly enhanced if prior discussions were held in the respective Committees, with a view to giving the Chairs a clear decision-making mandate. All treaty bodies should appoint focal points on working methods and publicize the same among interested stakeholders. For the treaty bodies to advance further on alignment of working methods, and to be able to share good practices, adequate meeting time needs to be set aside.

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<sup>12</sup> NGOs call for an inclusive review process on treaty body strengthening, 18 February 2019, Index number: IOR 40/9859/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/9859/2019/en/>

<sup>13</sup> Treaty body Chairpersons Position Paper on the future of the treaty body system, *supra*. n. 8.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/PredictableReviewCycle.aspx>

Similarly, we encourage the treaty bodies to engage in greater cross-committee coordination to ensure that they mutually reinforce States' human rights obligations, building on the interdependence and indivisibility of rights, in cases where they address the many issues that implicate States' obligations under more than one of the human rights treaties. We particularly encourage the treaty bodies to undertake greater coordination instead of seeking to reduce duplication or "overlap," in the issues they address, as suggested in the Chairpersons' statement.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, an extreme interpretation of a directive to "eliminate overlap" would have the absurd result of effectively prohibiting the treaty bodies with universal mandates from considering issues particularly affecting women; children; racial, ethnic and national minorities; persons with disabilities; and migrants as these issues would presumably be considered by the group-specific treaty bodies. The treaty bodies should instead continue to bring their distinct perspectives to bear on situations that simultaneously affect many different groups of rights-holders but in different ways.

Cross-committee discussions cannot however only happen at the Annual Chairpersons meeting. In order for the treaty bodies to be able to coordinate their work and ensure jurisprudential coherence, a forum for such discussions needs to be created and funded.

**We recommend that the treaty bodies:**

- Continue to take steps to learn from one another's good practices, and to align working methods where differences are not required due to the specificity of the treaties, and where standardisation of working methods would not be detrimental to rights-holders.
- Appoint focal points on working methods to ensure necessary committee level discussions on working methods prior to Chairpersons' meetings.
- Engage in cross-committee coordination on substantive issues, based on mutual reinforcement of States' human rights obligations, building on the interdependence and indivisibility of rights, rather than seeking to reduce 'overlap' as an end in itself.

## **IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY, VISIBILITY AND PREDICTABILITY**

### **STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY ACCESS TO THE TREATY BODIES**

In addition to submitting written information, national NGOs have much to contribute to the work of the treaty bodies, for example, regarding States party reviews, consultations on draft general comments/recommendations, and as key stakeholders in advocacy around and monitoring of implementation at the national level. All treaty bodies have formalized working methods for engagement with NGOs, yet these still vary greatly. The treaty bodies should continue to consider ways in which NGO engagement can be facilitated and strengthened at all stages of the review process (list of issues prior to reporting, list of issues, review and follow-up), while taking into account the very real risks of intimidation and reprisals.

We welcome the decision of the General Assembly to provide webcasting in all official languages as of 2020,<sup>16</sup> and we also encourage the inclusion of international sign language and, when a State party has made the necessary arrangements for interpretation, national languages. We consider the webcast to be a key tool in ensuring greater visibility, better outreach and improved accessibility of the treaty body system as a whole.

We are aware that some treaty bodies have held civil society consultations through remote participation, however these practises are still *ad hoc*, and we consider that the treaty bodies could and should make more frequent use of technologies to ensure remote participation for civil society representatives.

Accessibility for persons with disabilities continues to be limited to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. An accessibility audit should be carried out across the treaty bodies, including for their websites, civil society participation, dialogue with States parties, and physical premises with a view to proposing arrangements that would make possible and enhance the participation of persons with disabilities, including, for example, through the provision of international sign language interpretation and braille.

The treaty bodies and OHCHR should request that States fund the creation of suitable user-friendly databases to guarantee access to concluding observations and decisions of the treaty bodies.

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<sup>15</sup> Treaty body Chairpersons Position Paper on the future of the treaty body system, *supra*. n. 8.

<sup>16</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/73/162, 8 January 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/162>.

## INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATIONS

Individual communications are often described as the next ‘looming crisis’ of the treaty body system, and most of those among them that are struggling with backlogs do so in respect of individual communications. We have called on States to ensure that the communications procedures are sufficiently funded, both through meeting time and staffing, and that the funding also addresses any technological needs that will increase the efficiency of the treaty bodies with regard to the communications procedures.

We consider that the introduction of a case management system for the Petitions Unit, accompanied with an online submissions platform where both States and petitioners can access information about the progress of the communications, would provide immediate improvements for the benefit of all parties involved in the litigation of individual cases before the treaty bodies. We further consider that the treaty bodies can learn from the experience of regional human rights systems when doing so, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The UN treaty body system is one of few that still does not have such a case management system or an online submission platform.

It is our understanding that the procedural differences among treaty bodies are fewer in relation to individual communications; this being said, the treaty bodies should still review and seek to streamline their procedures relating to individual communications as much as possible with a view to standardising them and doing away with differences unless they are explicitly warranted as a result of treaty provisions or where standardisation would be detrimental to the rights-holders.<sup>17</sup> Those treaty bodies that are not doing so already should also consider holding oral hearings, in private if so requested, in relation to precedent setting individual communications.

The treaty bodies should consider developing clear and transparent objective criteria for adjudication of individual communications, including whether they could be considered in chambers, taking into account their established jurisprudence.

## LOCATION OF THE REVIEWS

At present all reviews take place in Geneva. Building on the experiences of regional IGOs, we consider that holding sessions outside of Geneva will bring the Treaty Bodies closer to the domestic audiences for whom implementation of human rights obligations is most relevant. The location should take into account the situation in the country under review, and the availability of logistical support and services from the UN, such as UN regional offices, field offices or UNDP presences. Locations of reviews should be selected with the aim of ensuring unhindered and safe access for civil society actors to attend the reviews and engage with the treaty bodies.

### **We recommend that the treaty bodies:**

- Consider facilitating and strengthening NGO engagement at all stages of the review process, while taking into account the real risks of intimidation and reprisals.
- Make better use of technology to ensure remote participation of civil society representatives during NGO consultations.
- Review and seek to streamline rules of procedures relating to the individual communications procedure as much as possible unless such differences are explicitly merited by the relevant treaties or where standardisation would be detrimental to rights-holders.
- Develop clear and transparent objective criteria for the holding of oral hearings in relation to individual communications.
- Where possible, consider adjudicating on individual communications relating to established jurisprudence in chambers, and develop clear and transparent objective criteria for adjudication of individual communications.
- Build on experiences of regional IGOs, and pilot holding sessions outside of Geneva to bring the treaty bodies closer to the domestic audiences for whom implementation of human rights obligations is most relevant.
- When selecting the location for a review, take into account the situation in the country under review, UN logistical support, such as regional or field offices or UNDP presences, and the need to ensure unhindered and safe access for civil society.

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<sup>17</sup> See also, Geneva Academy, *Treaty Bodies' Individual Communication Procedures: Providing Redress and Reparation to Victims of Human Rights Violations*, May 2019, <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/UN%20Treaty%20Bodies%20Individual%20Communications.pdf>



### We recommend UN member states:

- Grant the treaty bodies meeting time for inter-committee coordination discussions to enable them to continue taking steps to align their working methods.
- Provide funds for an accessibility audit and for sustainable solutions to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities across the treaty body system.
- Fund technological needs of the treaty bodies, including web conferencing facilities, and necessary information management systems, including a user-friendly, searchable database to access concluding observations, views and decisions of the treaty bodies and, even more urgently, a case management system for the petitions unit, including an online submissions platform where both States and petitioners can access information about the progress of the communications.

### We also recommend that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

- Request funding for an accessibility audit for persons with disabilities to all areas of work of the treaty bodies, not just the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Request funding for the development of user-friendly databases to access the concluding observations and decisions of the treaty bodies.
- Request funds for the development of an online submission platform for individual communications and an accompanying case management system.

## REGULAR REPORTING AND PREDICTABLE CALENDARS

A large number of States,<sup>18</sup> the treaty bodies themselves,<sup>19</sup> academia and NGOs<sup>20</sup> have all expressed support for greater predictability and the introduction of fixed and predictable calendars in order to meet the goal of full reporting compliance, to enable States to better engage with the treaty bodies, and to enhance coordination among treaty bodies themselves. The establishment of calendars will also, in turn, enable civil society actors to better follow and engage in treaty body processes.<sup>21</sup> We therefore welcome the decision by the Treaty Body Chairpersons to develop predictable calendars. We consider that such fixed calendars will increase transparency, predictability and fair treatment of all States parties in undergoing regular reviews.

We take note of the position paper on the 2020 review adopted by the Human Rights Committee at its 125<sup>th</sup> session in March 2019, and welcome the decision to move to a predictable review cycle in 2020 at its 126<sup>th</sup> session. We are concerned, however, that the Human Rights Committee has decided to move to a predictable eight-year calendar which comprises the five-year review cycle currently used by the Committee followed by a three-year break in all activity with respect to the State party.<sup>22</sup> We encourage all treaty bodies to engage on a regular basis with all States parties and to avoid adopting methods of work that would result in long periods of inattention to States' implementation of their human rights obligations. We note that in the Chairpersons Paper the Convention treaty bodies have proposed to review all States parties according to calendars based on their existing periodicities of 4 or 5 years. We therefore encourage the Human Rights Committee to consider enhancing its proposed eight-year model to ensure regular and consistent monitoring of each State party's implementation of its obligations at the domestic level throughout the duration of the review cycle. Further, we reiterate that no treaty body should be compelled to lengthen its review cycle beyond the periodicity set out in its governing treaty.

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<sup>18</sup> Towards the 2020 treaty bodies review..., Non-paper by PM of Costa Rica and 43 other states, REF. MPCR-ONUG/2019-231, 8.5, 20 June 2019, Non-paper, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CHAIRPERSONS/Shared%20Documents/CRI/INT\\_CHAIRPERSONS\\_CHR\\_31\\_28571\\_E.docx](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CHAIRPERSONS/Shared%20Documents/CRI/INT_CHAIRPERSONS_CHR_31_28571_E.docx).

<sup>19</sup> The Chairpersons' position paper sets out that the Covenant Committees (CESCR and CCPR) will review countries on an eight-year cycle synchronizing the timing of their reviews. The Convention Committees will review countries on a 4 or 5-year cycle, unless the relevant treaty says otherwise. All reviews will take place according to the cycles, including in the absence of a report, ensuring regularity.

<sup>20</sup> Statement by 11 NGOs, *Strengthening the United Nations Treaty Bodies: A preliminary response from non-governmental organizations*, 13 July 2012, Index number: IOR 40/015/2012, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/IO40/015/2012/en/>, Amnesty International and the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, *Joint Statement to the 31st Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies*, 25 June 2019, Index number: IOR 40/0596/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/EN/DOCUMENTS/IO40/0596/2019/EN/>.

<sup>21</sup> Towards the 2020 treaty bodies review..., Non-paper by PM of Costa Rica and 43 other states, *supra*. n. 18, Geneva Academy, *Optimizing the UN Treaty Body System*, available at <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/Optimizing%20UN%20Treaty%20Bodies.pdf>, *Joint statement to the 31st meeting of the Chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies*, *supra*. n. 20.

<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Committee, Summary of Position Paper on 2020 as Updated in the 126<sup>th</sup> Session, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/AnnexII-Position\\_paper.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/AnnexII-Position_paper.docx) and Human Rights Committee, 126<sup>th</sup> session, 1-26 July 2019, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/Decision\\_on\\_2020.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/Decision_on_2020.docx)

Additionally, we further encourage any treaty body that decides to adopt a reporting calendar to coordinate their calendar with any others that already exist across the treaty body system, to ensure that States face a maximum of three reviews by treaty bodies in any given year. As mentioned above, we consider that the treaty bodies can learn from the experiences of regional counterparts, and should take into consideration the synergies between the work of UN expert bodies and those at the regional level. We therefore encourage the treaty bodies to consider States' parties' reporting obligations under the African and the European regional human rights mechanisms when establishing reporting calendars.

**We recommend that the treaty bodies:**

- Introduce, with due cross-committee coordination, fixed predictable calendars across all treaty bodies, for regular State party reporting and reviews, including in the absence of reports.
- Ensure that no more than three reviews per year are scheduled for each State and ensure that States' regional system reporting obligations are also taken into account, where relevant.
- Ensure adequate dissemination of such calendars.
- Consider holding reviews outside of Geneva.
- With respect to those treaty bodies that have decided to move to an eight-year review cycle, they should seek ways in which implementation at the domestic level can be both monitored and enhanced during this intervening period.

**We also recommend that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:**

- Assist the treaty bodies in developing predictable calendars based on due cross coordination among all committees.
- Ensure easy accessibility and dissemination of the predictable calendars and reach out to civil society and national human rights institutions to encourage them to engage in a timely and effective fashion with the treaty bodies.

## ANNEX:

- *Civil Society Position Paper on the 2020 Review of UN General Assembly Resolution 68/268 on 'Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system'*, 23 October 2019, Index number: IOR 40/1217/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/1217/2019/en/>
- *NGO call for an inclusive review process on treaty body strengthening*, 18 February 2019, Index number: IOR 40/9859/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/9859/2019/en/>
- *Open NGO letter regarding the critical funding gap affecting UN human rights mechanisms and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 7 June 2019, Index number: IOR 40/0486/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/0486/2019/en/>
- *TB-Net & Amnesty International event on treaty body elections- summary report*, 10 December 2018, Index number: IOR 40/9608/2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/9608/2018/en/>
- Amnesty International and the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, *Joint Statement to the 31st Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies*, 25 June 2019, Index number: IOR 40/0596/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/EN/DOCUMENTS/IOR40/0596/2019/EN/>
- *Joint submission to the 30th meeting of Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies*, 25 May 2018, Index number: IOR 40/8473/2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/8473/2018/en/>
- *Amnesty International Statement to the 29th meeting of the human rights treaty body Chairpersons*, 30 June 2017, Index number: IOR 40/6648/2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/6648/2017/en/>
- *Letter to the Secretary-general on the treaty body funding crisis*, 29 May 2019, <https://www.ibi-humanrights.org/Civil%20Society%20Letter%20on%20Treaty%20Body%20Funding%20to%20SG%20and%20HCHR.pdf>
- *Treaty body strengthening- Joint NGO submission by 10 NGOs to the third biennial report of the Secretary General*, 9 May 2019, Index number: IOR 40/0329/2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/0329/2019/en/>
- *Joint open letter regarding the 2018 biennial report by the UN Secretary-General on the state of the treaty body system*, 26 February 2018, Index number: IOR 40/7959/2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/7959/2018/en/>