The International Human Rights Mechanisms – an introduction

Workshop on Strengthening engagement with the UN CRPD Committee, 14 October 2015

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The United Nations Human Rights System

- The United Nations Charter
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Main Human Rights Treaties
- Other Standards
1. Civil and Political Rights 1966
2. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966
3. Racism 1966
4. Women 1979
5. Torture 1984
6. Children 1989
7. Migrants 1990
8. Persons with Disabilities 2008
International Human Rights Mechanisms

Bodies created under the United Nations Charter

- Human Rights Council

Bodies created under human rights treaties

- Treaty Bodies

Special Procedures

Universal Periodic Review

Commissions of Inquiry
Treaty Bodies
Treaty Bodies

- Created under the respective treaties
- Most consist of 18 experts
- Independent experts serving in their personal capacity
- 4 years
- Fair distribution by region
- Meet in sessions 2 or 3 times per year in Geneva
- OHCHR helps support them
Main functions

- Monitor if obligations are respected
  - Look at reports
  - Examine individual complaints
  - Inquire into specific human rights situations

- Explain the meaning of rights in the treaties (General Comments)
### Treaty bodies Search

**Filter by State/Entity or Geographic Region**
- Africa
- Americas
- Asia Pacific
- Europe and Central Asia
- Middle East and North Africa
- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Andorra
- Angola
- Antigua and Barbuda

**Filter by Committee**
- CAT
- CAT-O/P
- CCPR
- CED
- CEDAW
- CERD

**Filter by Document Type**
- Report
- Reporting cycle related
- Session related
- Other
- CERD- Early Warning and Urgent Action
- Jurisprudence
- [Common] Core Document
- Addendum
- Additional Info from State party
- Advisory visits report (SVI)
- Annex to Reply to List of Issues
- Annual/Sessional report

**Filter by Symbol/Dates**
- Symbol
- From Date
- To Date
Special Procedures
International Human Rights Mechanisms

- Bodies created under the United Nations Charter
  - Human Rights Council
  - Special Procedures
  - Universal Periodic Review
- Bodies created under human rights treaties
  - Treaty Bodies
  - Commissions of Inquiry
Special Procedures

- Independent experts. Act in personal capacity
- Individual or Working Group usually composed of five members (one from each region)
- 41 special procedures on different human rights.
Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Catalina Devandas Aguilar

- Letters
- Press
- Country visits
- Technical help
- Annual reports
- Workshops and meetings
Role of Civil Society

- Give information and analyse human rights issues
- Submit individual cases to special procedures (communications)
- Support for country visits
- Advocate, share, follow-up on the work in the country
- Invite experts to participate in conferences, workshops
Universal Periodic Review
International Human Rights Mechanisms

Bodies created under the United Nations Charter
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- Commissions of Inquiry

Bodies created under human rights treaties
- Treaty Bodies
Universal Periodic Review

- States review each other
- All UN Member States
- Recommendations to States
Universal Periodic Review, Role of Civil Society

**Step 1:** Before the review – Prepare

- Meet with the State
- Prepare written document
Universal Periodic Review, Role of Civil Society

Step 2: During the Review

- Can attend session
- Hold side events or discussions to share information
- Meet with other countries in Geneva
- Press conference or press release.
- Organize events in the country
Universal Periodic Review, Role of Civil Society

Step 3: After the Review – Follow up.

- Translate and share recommendations
- Organize meetings with the Government
- Closely follow the State’s implementation of the UPR outcome
- Advocate for the submission of mid-term update report by authorities
- Report on follow-up for next cycle