**Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue**

Human Rights Sector

Belgrade, 31/01/2022

**Answers to the Questionnaire related to UN General Assembly Resolution 68/268 -**

**comments and suggestions**

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue of the Republic of Serbia, as a key department in coordinating all the phases of monitoring of ratified international human rights treaties, led by experience, provides this input intending to contribute to improving the work of Treaty Bodies.

The Republic of Serbia is a contracting party to eight key international treaties which protect and promote human rights, and has regular and very dynamic cooperation with the Treaty Bodies in accordance with the set deadlines.

Also, the Republic of Serbia is one of the countries that has accepted and implemented the recommendation of the UN Human Rights Council and whose Government has established the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of the Recommendations of the United Nations Human Rights Mechanism. This Council has been holding meetings continuously since its establishment in 2014, and has been presented as an example of good practice on several occasions. The Council has also developed a Plan for Monitoring the Implementation of the Recommendations of the United Nations Human Rights Mechanism, containing the relevant departments, indicators, deadlines, the status of implementation, as well as the connection of the recommendation with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Currently the State Delegation is preparing for the presentation of the Third Periodic Report on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, from 21-23 February 2022 – for the first time in virtual (online) format.

The most recent experience of the Republic of Serbia was with the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, before which the State Delegation, led by the Minister of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, presented the Third Periodic Report of the Republic of Serbia on the application of Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) at its 72nd session held on 23 and 24 November 2021.

In order to have a more efficient and comprehensive view of the state of human rights in the Member States and globally, the Treaty bodies must indeed have full support for all their activities. These bodies, both with their concluding observations and the adoption of general recommendations, not only provide the necessary guidelines, but also significantly upgrade the international treaties in the field of protection and promotion of human rights. In this regard, we believe that it would be expedient to encourage cooperation between the Treaty Bodies and relevant partners at the international and regional level, with such coordination being of particular importance in cases of human rights violations and information on the human rights situation in the Member states. A concrete outcome and benefit for the Treaty Bodies but also for the Member States whose work and progress is being considered, would be the availability of relevant up-to-date information.

We also want to point out the specifics of issues related to the work of independent institutions, especially national human rights institutions. Namely, State delegations, as a rule, consist of representatives of the executive and judicial branches of government and can thus provide basic technical data, but not an assessment of the work of these bodies. On this occasion, we suggest that the Treaty bodies consider specific guidance for Member States on this issue. In this regard, we believe that the cooperation of the Treaty bodies with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) could contribute to a more complete review of the necessary information on national human rights institutions, with GANHRI submitting a report on the status, work and recommendations for the improvement of the relevant National Institution for Human Rights.

At the same time, we support the intensification of further work of the Treaty Bodies on simplifying the reporting procedure. In this regard, we also note that we consider the time available to Committee members for both reviewing the reports and for participating in interactive dialogues insufficient to address all the key issues in an optimal manner. We would like to especially stress the inadequate length in regards to deadlines that members of state delegations have for submitting their answers. At this point we particularly point out the deadline of 48 hours after the conclusion of an interactive dialogue not to be adequate, considering that the delegation spends half of those hours in transit, returning to the Member State.

We hereby make recommendations hoping the functioning of the System of Treaty Bodies for Human Rights will be as efficient and comprehensive as possible, and emphasize our full support to the principles and statements from UN General Assembly Resolutions 68/268 from 2014 and 75/174 from 2020.