

Joint Submission

September 2017

Report of High Commissioner

“Civil society space in multilateral institutions”

Dialogue with Civil Society

An NGO parallel event was held during the 36th session of the Human Rights Council.

Opening Remarks: Concerns about the situation at the HR Council

Ambassador Ronald Barnes from the *Indian Council of South America* made an opening statement concerning the need for more NGO space. This would be sent to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to the Director General and to the Bureau of the Human Rights Council. This submission is from all the NGOs who voiced concerns over the lack of adequate NGO space, this space is also part of all aspects of NGO participation.

Problem: The Press is taking all the space at the desks during the 35th session of the Human Rights Council claiming that they must make reports and send them out. When the Human Rights Council was created, Press took half of the seats and NGOs were allotted the other half. Press was never able to gain a monopoly of seating arrangements unilaterally. NGOs who engage with States and their Representatives cannot be removed since their work is just as important. Ambassador Barnes was asked to vacate seats that were reserved for Press, in fact all the seats at the desks were reserved for Press. NGO have only two seats that they cannot be removed from. Ambassador Barnes refused to move. The Press representative called UN Security and Ambassador Barnes refused to move stating that the Secretariat and the NGO Liaison Officer stated that the Press had not right to do this. I kept the seat. When I raised this question NGO Liaison Officer the representatives stated that I must do the same thing to obtain a seat: sit and refuse to be removed and they will negotiate for me.

Solution: NGOs need to have their designated seats where they cannot be removed, the Press taking half of the seats at the desks and NGOs taking the other half. Everyone has important work to carry out.

The following are topics that were raised during the meeting:

Rooms for panel events and other meetings

Speaking time

Sign up electronic

Ways to improve

REMARKS

- **Hisashi Saito, IUVENTUM**

- ✚ Draft resolution before informal consultation:

Problem: Currently, NGOs only take the printed copies just before the informal consultation.

Recommendations: The draft resolutions

- should be made available to extranet
- should be made available for the civil society

→ This will enable the civil society to have a more efficient way to comment the drafts.

- **Naji Haraj, International Lawyers.org**

→ **Speaks also in the name of EFORD, Union of Arab Jurists, Palestinian Return Center**

- ✚ Electronic registration

Problem: Many people are not familiar with the technical use of computers, many do not have internet, IDPs.

↳ Concrete examples:

- ⇒ IDPs coming from Brussels, didn't know how to register, no cooperation at the gate
=> Can only come if they have an accreditation letter
- ⇒ 19th September 2017: Three persons from Netherlands, had already registered. But when they arrived to the gate, the security prevented them from entering. Result: they came in late, did not get confirmation, and could only receive a gallery pass.

- ✚ Space of NGOs is crucial.

Problem: The NGO participation at each session, in international meetings, is crucial. But the UN system, physically, do not allow enough space for NGOs. There are not enough seats for the NGOs.

Recommendation:

- ⇒ The UN Should allocate space for NGOs
- ⇒ Especially, the space on left side of Council, where there are both NGOs and Press people: there is enough space for Press, but not for NGOs.

- **Jan Lönn, International Youth and Student Movement for United Nations (IYSMUN)**

Background: Time of creation of UN, building of NGO relations => most interesting places for NGO participation.

Problem: Cut of UN Budget for civil society, from big powers.

- ⇒ For example, number decreasing at library, need to have permission for each page, not at serpentine, entrance called saving trees of world, costs are modest, not bulletin of formal meetings, getting difficulties to print for ourselves, about compromise
- ⇒ 2006 HRC: gave up right summary records, actually no official records of HRC report, but no discussions at HRC, except webcast if the official record.
- ⇒ Long time up to year, collected these statements, always delivered to secretariat, full record, go back to what countries have said, reduce staff member, privatize so do it ourselves. No record of Council meetings. When wake up week after, now put up statement, deadline put up for putting statements passed. Sort of cost cutting, staff and resources, NGOs and civil society effected by this. By themselves, security so get immediately, supposed.
- ⇒ Look at step by step, document by Ambassadors to look into things to shrink costs of Council, in particular, meeting hours, no lunches, all the time panels, ideas, cutting time for UPRs, cut time of panels. Idea restore time for NGOs 1:30 to 2 minutes.
- ⇒ Cue is shorter, 3 days in advance, electronically. Raise voice against austerity in UN - coming in in the 5th Committee, 6.4 % for next Secretary General proposing. Programs disappearing.
- ⇒ Few percent. Has to shrink, developing countries have difficulty to do contribute, Funds consuming peanuts, compared to European Union, harmful and deceptive.
- ⇒ Handling badges, new system, difficulties, for us,
- ⇒ Many other people's difficult for online registration, invented system. Immediately without a transitional period to understand new system, need to upload accreditation and passport, until confirm approved lot of obstruction. Use both old and new way, register online, those who cannot use accreditation.
- ⇒ Registration, when can get the badges, during session, beginning, start week before, 3 days before, Monday, get to Thursday, long.
- ⇒ Hisashi, point when make a request, wiser to divide, low cost request, something that requires budget, deliver badges a week before, accreditation officer, do not have to pay extra, process that same number anyway, should receive it, something mission, fix on Monday.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Instead of this compromise, the UN could:

- ⇒ Put all statements on the extranet, as provided by the delegations
- ⇒ Accreditation: Allow NGOs to use both old and new way, register online, those who cannot use accreditation.

- **Catherine Morris, Lawyers Rights Watch Canada**

Problem:

- ✚ Financial issues and many changes

- ⇒ Dig into own pockets to come to Council.
- ⇒ Seen a lot of changes, Difficult to keep up to changes, better information all in one place, register statements then register oneself, very confusing.
- ⇒ Staff, constantly, after, should not do it, do that, UN secretariat with training do ourselves

- ✚ Discriminations

- ⇒ 1:30 in UPRS reduce statement ahead of time, can manage that what concerns this, discriminatory, trying to speak in official languages of the UN, do get concerned work in second language
- ⇒ Deprived opportunity, also discrimination, digital divide

- ✚ Practical issues

- ⇒ Paper and copier maintenance, where get some in Geneva. Paper gets wrinkled, address lack of paper, requiring piece of paper, have to provide 25, 1 did not have to register our papers, so interpreters have it.

Recommendations: Idea of flexibility

- ⇒ Registration and manual
- ⇒ Language of human rights in addressing these problems: equality and non-discrimination.
- ⇒ Make sure NGOs statements are registered. Particular lack of space in room 20 problem, delayed do not know where things going. Do not have a clue what going on in room 20, big screen, have that screen projected in serpentine or other locations, get NGOs donate for it. Eliminate problems.

- ✚ Lack of independence

Problem: independence

- ⇒ Issues of Reprisals, Panel, NGOs, do not know extent independence of selection of Special Rapporteurs, study and recommend processes for nomination, selection of Rapporteurs, monitor independence of competency

Recommendations: Detailed Dialogue on Special Rapporteur, to ensure independence

- **Princesse Micheline Makou Djouma, OCAPROCE International**


-  Protection of NGO members:

Problem:

- ⇒ NGO have many aggressions from Countries, lack of protection of NGOs, NGO aggressed when speak for countries
- ⇒ Number 2, because name not there, I signed my name, he does not speak, other cannot speak, something who we ask and know. If not ready to speak, Speak, do not know how, NGO cannot speak. Try to know if respect for our work, we have for Kofi Annan to do it, try to **get recommendation for protecting NGOs**

Recommendations:


- ⇒ Could get **protection from Human Rights Council**.
- ⇒ Enforcing mechanism for human rights council for NGOs, no implementation on the complaints, needs more discussion and thought

-  Room for NGOs:

Problem:

- ⇒ NGO do not have space, when enter for room twenty, cannot stay, UN Agency, NGO do not have specific space to stay.
- ⇒ Change for NGO, do not have space inside room.

- **Lamine Dianko, Africa Culture International**

-  Accreditation

Problem:

- ⇒ Certain discrimination, internet, certain locality does not have internet.
- ⇒ Problem, manipulate, cannot work well, different side event, do not have possibility to inscribe another name for accreditation.
- ⇒ Inscription online, think for someone who lives outside Geneva, to have access to system for accreditation. Timing, travel, passport, President to this accreditation.
- ⇒ Old system was good. Old was better, more workable, identity, security.

Recommendation:

- ⇒ Make the old system still available

Oral statements

Problem:

- ⇒ Timing for speaking, 1:30 seconds, not a lot
- ⇒ Signing up for speaking time = Signing up Electronically => Do not know how functions, ask them to be visible, oral statement or registration. Machine knows which organization registered, add the display screen. Do not know unfair.
- ⇒ Happened several times, items to be priority, 40, 50 or 20, It is a vague issue, come to choose according to the system actually, we must know this procedure, something should appear, what time. Raise this issue, vague, NGOs facing this problem, priority, at end does not appear, in beginning of list.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Need a system here, 2 minutes or more.
- ⇒ List of organizations and time received.
- ⇒ Who return to few sessions, always top speaking spots, question, cannot manipulating this.

● **Lisa-Marlen Gronemeier, Geneva International Center for Justice**

Discrimination between NGOs

Problem:

- ⇒ Selecting NGOs based on the time is discriminatory, not all equal access to internet, precise moment cannot register. Somehow ask for a complete change of the system. Random selection process. Too much to ask.
- ⇒ Left side of room, other side of room for press. Stick on that. Say many NGOs in previous session and this session, no place to stay, could not stay hours, Previous President, made us all sit down. No place to be, not stand, go with this extremely few seats. May change, annoyed, people standing, new rule, all sitting. Designate more

Recommendations:

- ⇒ One could surely request transparency
- ⇒ Extreme sense sends to public gallery, interpreters, not all occupied, baseball, can do from booth, many arrangements, Olympic, others give comments, ways to.

⇒ Previously allocated spaces for the NGO space and Press Space, Ratio between NGO and press. => was better.

- **Jan Lönn**

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Engage them to support a strong budget to meet the needs of the UN.
- ⇒ 2018 2019. Need to have requirement need to fulfil NGO space for our effective participation.
- ⇒ Would like to see resolutions to Extranet, diplomats and civil society.
- ⇒ Should not treat us as the last informed diplomats, their friend, last one informs, on par with the last informed diplomats.

Finally wait minutes.