

The implementation of UN General Assembly resolutions A/RES/68/268 and A/RES/77/210

Input by the Federal Institute for the protection and promotion of Human Rights in response to the questionnaire by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

23 February 2024

The Federal Institute for the protection and promotion of Human Rights

The Federal Institute for the protection and promotion of Human Rights (FIRM-IFDH) was established by the Law of 12 May 2019. It has been accredited with a B-status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). FIRM-IFDH has the objective to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in Belgium.

National human rights institutions (NHRIs) fulfil an important bridging function between the national and the international level. By complementing the information provided for in the State report, the input by NHRIs is crucial to enable UN treaty bodies to effectively perform their monitoring function.

In order to enhance such effectiveness, the submission of parallel reports by NHRIs must therefore be facilitated as much as possible. In practice, however, NHRIs are often confronted with challenges in this regard. Firstly, the work is complicated by the sheer amount of treaty bodies at the UN level, which each have their own practices. Secondly, the review calendar is often unpredictable, and subject to changes, which complicates the integration of the work on parallel reports in the multiannual planning of our institutions. Thirdly, the procedure on the basis of the List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LoIPR) is complicated. One really needs to be a repeat player to know what input can be relevant at which moment in time. UN treaty bodies need to take into account the constraints facing NHRIs, e.g. the fact that parallel reporting is just one of the activities NHRIs undertake alongside engaging with national authorities and regional human rights bodies, and the fact that reporting cycles are very long as a result of which it is often difficult for institutions to preserve their capacity on a particular reporting procedure in the long term.

More coherence regarding the working methods of UN treaty bodies and less complexity with regard to these procedures would certainly improve the effectiveness of NHRI engagement with the UN treaty bodies. Also a more proactive approach by UN treaty bodies themselves is warranted, for instance by way of the proactive provision of information on reporting deadlines or by capacity-building regarding the different stages in the reporting proceedings and on how NHRIs can effectively intervene at these various stages.

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