

**PROPOSALS FOR TREATY BODY REFORM**

As the UN General Assembly is reviewing the work of the ten treaty bodies—only the second time the General Assembly will have conducted such a review – United Families International proposes the following:

* Adopt a treaty body code of conduct to hold experts accountable. Most professional entities have in place codes of conduct, why not treaty bodies? This code of conduct should consider things such as conflict of interest, any political bias, groups associated with, and clearly state unethical practices to which an expert may be held accountable. Institute a mechanism where member states, agencies, and civil society can register concerns and ensure that action will be taken.
* Create a process and mechanism to investigate the background of candidates to the UN treaty bodies in order to ensure the independence and impartiality of the treaty bodies.
* Consider ending all OHCHR support for non-mandated activities for each of the treaty bodies as non-mandated activities lend themselves to exaggeration of the authority of the treaty bodies and serve as a vehicle to politicize their work.
* Insist on a textualist interpretation of human rights and the human rights documents. Move away from the view that UN treaties are “living instruments” and thus open to individualist and “modern” interpretation.
* The “living instrument” mindset lends itself to novel, extravagant, and inaccurate interpretations, such as the CEDAW and CRC Committee members routinely telling countries to make abortion legal – even though these treaties are silent on abortion. These committees have also promoted the legalization of prostitution, special new rights based on the highly controversial terms “sexual orientation and gender identity” and “comprehensive sexuality education.” Treaty bodies should be held accountable for fabricating positions that are not clearly outlined in the treaties themselves.

Without substantive reform, the treaty body process will continue to be viewed with suspicion by member states and civil society at large, thereby delegitimizing the entire human rights effort. The UN human rights framework should serve all member states, not just the narrow interests of a few powerful countries and well-funded special interest groups. No increases in the budget to treaty bodies should be permitted without real reform.