Excellencies,

In response to your letter dated 17 June 2020 requesting Member States to submit written contributions regarding the review process of the UN human rights treaty body system, I have the pleasure to bring forward a contribution from Denmark.

First of all, I would like to refer to the submission by the EU, which Denmark fully aligns itself with.

Denmark would moreover like to convey support to the "Treaty Body Chairpersons’ Position Paper on the Future of the Treaty Body System", which, to the extent implemented, would go a long way in building on the achievements of and in implementing resolution 68/268, particularly in facilitating reporting by State Parties.

Denmark would also like to refer to the non-paper initiated by Costa Rica regarding the review of the UN human rights treaty body system, which Denmark has endorsed.

In line with the contribution from the EU, Denmark advocates for a stronger, coherent and coordinated treaty body system by increasing harmonization and alignment and maximizing synergies within the system. Denmark will engage in the process with a view of enhancing the protection of rights holders and of safeguarding the independence and the integrity of the treaty bodies. We will strive for an outcome that contributes to the quality of their work and to the full and effective implementation of the human rights provisions contained in the treaties and in the optional protocols thereto.

Denmark believes that most of the provisions of resolution 68/268 continue to be relevant and that the review of the treaty body strengthening process should continue to lead to the full and effective implementation of the human rights treaties, through a higher level of compliance by the State Parties with their reporting obligations and by better follow-up of Concluding Observations of the respective committees. The process should also contribute to the adoption of measures that facilitate State Parties to meet their reporting obligations.

The aligning of working methods and the harmonization of the reporting procedures continues to be of high importance and in this context, Denmark supports and recognises the Chairpersons' efforts to do so through their common space for deliberating and for decision-making, exercising their self-regulatory capacity in line with the treaties.

During the review process, Denmark would not be in a position to agree with proposals to establish any accountability mechanism or additional regulation striving to limit the independence of the treaty bodies, including the ways in which they interact with relevant stakeholders, such as States, civil society representatives, National Human Rights Institutions etc. We will also oppose proposals limiting acceptable information which can be used by the treaty bodies (e.g. by referencing to "reliable", “quality” and government-provided information), limiting the interventions by treaty body members, excluding closed meetings between the committee experts and civil society, limiting or denying the treaty bodies' function to issue General Comments/ General Recommendations, or establishing regional quotas for membership.

Denmark calls for the treaty body strengthening process to respect the competences and autonomy of the various stakeholders (States, National Human Rights Institutions, civil society organizations and the treaty bodies). It should also duly consider the specificity of the respective committees and of their mandates, with view of ensuring an adequate allocation of financial and human resources for their activities.

Denmarkwill continue to support the multi-stakeholder character of the process, including making use of the expertise and views of the treaty body members, National Human Rights Institutions, civil society, human rights defenders, UN entities, academia and national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up.

As for specific areas of interest during the review, Denmark would like to highlight a few elements which we will give particular focus during the review.

**Firstly**, Denmark will support measures to ensure that all State Parties comply with their reporting obligations. Until now, a number of state parties have not submitted their initial report or remain behind schedule on cyclic reports. This is detrimental to the general acceptance of the human rights system. It must be recognised, however, that countries may have challenges in fulfilling these obligations, and Denmark will support efforts to strengthen the assistance to State Parties in developing the necessary national reporting systems and preparing reports. Denmark also supports the treaty bodies’ initiative to consider a fixed multiyear calendar, which would entail that all State Parties are examined, whether they have submitted the necessary reporting in advance or not. This procedure should not allow state parties to disregard their reporting obligations, but as an incentive to bring the reporting on track. Denmark will positively consider alternative models for carrying out reviews, including in-country visits by treaty bodies as also suggested in the chairperson’s position paper.

**Secondly**, Denmark will support measures that support the treaty bodies in maximising their efficiency. The Chairpersons’ position paper contain a number of initiatives that the treaty bodies are considering or are already in the process of implementing. This includes for instance the treaty bodies’ coordination of lists of issues with a view to avoiding overlaps and working in chambers in order to maximise the use of resources. Denmark fully supports the efforts of the treaty bodies in this regard and recognises the initiatives already undertaken.

There are a number of measures that could support them in this regard. With respect to the role of the Secretariat, Denmark underlines the importance of sufficient funding for the support functions of the treaty body system, as envisioned in resolution 68/268, recognizing that the workload of the treaty bodies is growing, and that the Secretariat’s funding should be based on the treaty bodies’ actual workload. Denmark would encourage the High Commissioner to, in line with the OHCHR’s mandate, make available adequate human, technological, material and financial resources for the effective functioning of the treaty bodies and to, given the increasing backlog on individual communications, especially take measures to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of the processing of such communications, including by ensuring the availability of highest level of expertise, in particular legal expertise, in handling individual complaints. Technological resources could include introducing case management systems. Denmark would also encourage the OHCHR to arrange opportunities for treaty bodies to work together on issues of common interest, whether procedural or substantive.

**Thirdly**, Denmark will support calls to State Parties to ensure that they nominate candidates who hold the highest standards of integrity, independence, impartiality and high moral standards. The candidates should be competent and hold extensive expertise in the field of human rights, through expertise in law or other relevant academic fields, keeping in mind the mandate of each treaty body and the gender balance. State Parties should only support candidates with a proven track record of expertise in the relevant human rights area and willingness to take on the full range of responsibilities related to the mandate of a treaty body member. State Parties should fully respect the independence of the treaty body members and avoid any actions that would interfere with the execution of their role.

In this light, Denmark supports initiatives to improve the information available online on the centralised treaty body elections website. This website could also serve as an open and transparent platform for the selection process where State Parties can present the merits and expertise of their potential candidates. The election processes could be further strengthened by the holding of inter-active dialogues with potential candidates in Geneva and/or New York, so as to enable all states to gain an impression of their competence, motivation and independence.

**Fourthly**, the increased number of conventions and the following increase in reporting requirements leave State Parties with a considerable workload, which may hamper efforts to follow-up on recommendations. To counter this, a number of initiatives have already been proposed and are under implementation. Denmark fully supports the use of simplified reporting and its continued implementation. In this light, the initiative of the treaty bodies in coordinating lists of issues with a view to avoiding overlap is also a very positive development, as is the suggestion to reschedule dialogues with state parties, if a state party would find itself with two or more dialogues in close proximity.