

MISSION PERMANENTE
DE LA
RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE
GENÈVE



الجمهورية العربية السورية
البعثة الدائمة لدى مكتب الأمم المتحدة
جنيف

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The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honor to refer to the communications No.GVA-0713-ENG of 14 November 2011 of the High Commissioner for Human Rights requesting comments from State Parties on the ongoing discussion on the Treaty Body Strengthening Process.

In this context, having taken note the report No.A/66/344 dated 7 September 2011 of the UN Secretary-General to the 66th UN General Assembly regarding "Measures to Improve Further the Effectiveness, Harmonization and Reform of the Treaty Body System" and the related consultations of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva would like to present the following comments (in attachment) regarding the proposed Treaty Body Strengthening Process.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic avails itself of this opportunity to renew to The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner , the assurances of its highest consideration.

Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner
for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva

OHCHR REGISTRY

30 JAN. 2012

Recipients : J. Salama



Comments by the Syrian Arab Republic on the proposed Treaty Body Strengthening Process

The Syrian Arab Republic considers that any review or reform process must not introduce issues that would affect the actual implementation of the provisions of the treaties and conventions establishing the treaty bodies, and should not lead to imposing obligations on a contracting state other than the ones agreed to by the concerned state.

The Syrian Arab Republic firmly believes in reforming the current system by including in the final reports issued by the different committees the actual course of the arguments made during the discussion of a country report as well as the state's answers and proposals in addition to the committee's remarks. The final reports should not include any matters or subjects not tackled during the report's discussions.

The current practice followed regarding the participation of non-governmental organizations during the discussion of country reports should remain unchanged –NGOs should only be allowed to be present and file their respective written shadow reports. NGOs that do not have consultative status with ECOSOC should not be present in the proceedings of the discussions of country reports, nor should they be allowed to present shadow reports.

The Syrian Arab Republic also presents the following comments:

- There is a need to formulate clear job descriptions and standards for experts of Human Rights treaty bodies when examining country reports, to be applied in an unbiased, objective, and non-politicized manner. These standards and job description have to be published for all to know.
- The establishment of an accountability system for experts.
- Capacity-building for committee experts (provide committees with advisors), with the possibility of increasing the numbers of experts to make them commensurate with the number of states parties to the concerned convention.
- Taking into account the cultural and religious background of experts and the diversity of their disciplines in a way that they would enjoy simultaneously the adequate legal and practical expertise –their actual

practice on the ground- in addition to other skills they require in fulfilling the duties and tasks of the commission they serve on.

- Limiting the terms of the experts to two consecutive mandates at the most.
- Establish quality standards for shadow reports without relying on them in their totality.
- Not to adopt recommendations from other committees in order to prevent conflicts in the tasks and to limit the overlap in mandates.
