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Sixteenth meeting of chairpersons
of the human rights treaty bodies
Geneva, 23-25 June 2004

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF CHAIRPERSONS AND OF
THE SECOND INTER-COMMITTEE MEETING**

Note by the Secretariat

1. This report contains information on the steps taken by the treaty bodies and the Secretariat to implement the recommendations adopted at the second Inter-Committee Meeting, which was held from 18 to 20 June 2003, and the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, held from 23 to 27 June 2003.
2. It will be considered at the third Inter-Committee Meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, which will take place in Geneva on 21 and 22 June 2004 and 23 to 25 June 2004 respectively.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report provides information on the follow-up actions taken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and by the treaty bodies with regard to the recommendations made by the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons and the second Inter-Committee Meeting in June 2003. Part II of the report examines the actions taken to follow up the recommendations made by the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies (A/58/350). Part III addresses implementation of the recommendations of the second Inter-Committee Meeting (A/58/350, annex), while Part IV provides information on other relevant developments.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF CHAIRPERSONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

A. Proposals for strengthening the human rights treaty body system

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended that OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women should explore ways and means of strengthening collaboration and coordination, in particular with regard to technical assistance and support to States parties, in order to ensure effective implementation of the relevant recommendations of the second Inter-Committee Meeting.

2. Pursuant to the annual joint work plan of OHCHR and DAW (E/CN.4/2004/65 E/CN.6/2004/7), and the recommendations of the fifteenth meeting of the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, DAW invited representatives of OHCHR to attend a workshop on reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and a judicial colloquium on implementation of international human rights norms in Nassau, the Bahamas, from 17-21 May 2004.

3. OHCHR also invited DAW to participate in a workshop on the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, held in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, from 17 to 19 December 2003.

4. A representative of OHCHR also participated as an observer at the informal meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held from 5 to 7 May 2004 in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

B. Lists of issues and pre-sessional working groups

Recommendation: Noting that States parties had underlined the usefulness of the provision by treaty bodies of lists of issues and questions prior to the examination of States parties' reports, the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons recommended that treaty bodies should harmonize their approaches to pre-sessional working groups and lists of issues.

5. Five of the seven human rights treaty bodies, the Committee against Torture (CAT), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee

on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Human Rights Committee (HRC), prepare lists of issues and questions which are addressed to States parties prior to the consideration of their reports. The Committee against Torture introduced this practice in November 2003. In its working paper on working methods (A/58/18, annex IV) adopted at its sixty-third session in August 2003, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination decided that country rapporteurs could decide whether to draw up a list of issues and questions with respect to the States parties' reports. At this Committee's sixty-fourth session, three out of nine country rapporteurs prepared lists of issues which were transmitted to the three States parties concerned.

6. Currently, CAT and CEDAW prepare lists of issues with respect to periodic reports only. CEDAW is currently considering extending this practice to initial reports, and should adopt a formal decision on this issue at its upcoming session in July 2004. The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW), which met for the first time from 1 to 5 March 2004, has yet to adopt a practice in this context.

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended that each treaty body should convene a pre-sessional working group to draft such lists of issues and questions. The working group should meet sufficiently in advance so that the State party concerned might have adequate time to provide written replies.

7. CEDAW, CESCR and CRC convene pre-sessional working groups, which, inter alia, prepare lists of issues of questions with respect to the reports of States parties. These meet either immediately before or after the session prior to that at which the report will be considered. Exceptionally, the CESCR pre-sessional working group meets 18 months before the report is considered.

8. The pre-sessional working groups of CAT and CRC do not prepare lists of issues and questions. In the case of HRC, the list of issues and questions is prepared by "Country Report Task Forces", consisting of the country rapporteur and three to five other members of the Committee, which meet during the Committee's session, one session in advance of the consideration of the State party's report. In the case of CAT, the lists of issues are prepared by the country rapporteurs and adopted in plenary after discussion.

9. Although it has discussed this option, most recently at its sixty-third session, CERD does not convene a pre-sessional working group. CMW has yet to consider the possibility of convening a pre-sessional working group.

Recommendation: The chairpersons also recommended that the pre-sessional working group should include, as far as possible, the individual country rapporteurs responsible for each of the States parties' reports to be considered at the session.

10. The pre-sessional working groups of CEDAW and CESCR consist of four to five members of these committees, and the pre-sessional working groups of CEDAW and CESCR include, as far as possible, country rapporteurs responsible for each of the States parties' reports to be considered at the session. The pre-sessional working group of CRC consists of all 18 members of the Committee, and accordingly the two rapporteurs nominated for individual countries are included.

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended that, when drafting lists of issues, treaty bodies should focus on requesting information on priority concerns and new developments and, in the case of periodic reports, on the implementation of concluding observations/comments.

11. The lists of issues and questions drawn up by treaty bodies generally focus on priority concerns and new developments. Those relating to periodic reports usually call for information on the implementation of previous concluding observations/comments, where these are not addressed in the report, although reference to these is not systematic.

C. Inter-Committee Meeting

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended that the Inter-Committee Meeting should be convened annually, immediately prior to the annual meeting of chairpersons, and that the two meetings should be convened within the same one-week period. The chairpersons also recommended that the agenda of the Inter-Committee Meeting should be devoted to specific substantive issues that affected all treaty bodies. In line with the recommendation of the second Inter-Committee Meeting, the chairpersons recommended that the third Inter-Committee Meeting in 2004 should examine draft guidelines for the expanded core document.

12. The third Inter-Committee Meeting will take place on 21 and 22 June, immediately followed by the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons from 23 to 25 June. The provisional agenda provides for discussion on the proposals for the expanded core document, harmonization of treaty body reporting procedures and working methods.

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended that the meeting of chairpersons should focus on technical and organizational issues and maintain responsibility for dialogue with States parties, the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and other partners, including United Nations entities and NGOs.

13. The provisional agenda for the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons includes meetings with States parties, the Expanded Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights, special rapporteurs, United Nations entities and NGOs. During their annual joint meeting, on 23 June, the chairpersons will meet with the eleventh meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives to consider the subject of anti-terrorism measures.

D. Secretary-General's study on violence against children

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended that treaty bodies should develop procedures to allow them to contribute actively to the Secretary-General's study on violence against children. They also encouraged the independent expert to meet with all the treaty bodies in order to keep them abreast of the progress of the study.

14. The independent expert leading the Secretary-General's study on violence against children (requested by the General Assembly through resolution 57/190) addressed the thirty-fifth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2004 and discussed ways and means of future collaboration. In August 2003, members of CRC and CEDAW

participated in an expert group meeting to develop a questionnaire on the issue of violence against children which was sent to Member States of the United Nations on 22 March 2004. Members of treaty bodies have also participated in other expert group meetings relating to the study. In May 2004, the independent expert addressed letters to the chairpersons of all treaty bodies informing them of the study and outlining proposals for collaboration.

E. Cooperation with the Commission and the Sub-Commission

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended continued development of cooperation with the Expanded Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights and the Chairperson of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

15. Cooperation between the treaty bodies and the Expanded Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights focused on the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights (see paragraph 17).

16. Insofar as the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights is concerned, informal contacts have been established by HRC with several members of the Sub-Commission. CESCR invites members of the Sub-Commission to attend the Committee's days of general discussion. As a result of a recommendation made by CESCR, the Sub-Commission requested that a special study on non-discrimination be undertaken (Sub-Commission resolutions 2001/23 and 2002/9). CERD has cooperated with the Sub-Commission, inter alia, on the issue of non-citizens. The special rapporteur of the Sub-Commission started work on this issue as a result of a request of CERD (final report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of non-citizens, E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/23). The special rapporteur also participated in the thematic discussion convened by CERD on the subject of non-citizens and non-discrimination in March 2004. Four members of the Sub-Commission participated in the thematic discussion on descent organized by this Committee in August 2002.

Recommendation: The chairpersons welcomed the invitation extended to them to participate in the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights. They recommended that the Commission should consider the possibility of issuing invitations to the chairpersons to attend each session. They also recommended that the Commission consider including an interactive dialogue with chairpersons on the agenda of the sixtieth session. They furthermore recommended that consideration be given to the provision of resources to support their attendance at the sixtieth session of the Commission.

17. All chairpersons were invited to participate in the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, although there was no provision of resources to support their attendance. Those chairpersons who were able to attend the session delivered an oral statement (HRC, CEDAW and CRC), while the written statements of those unable to attend were distributed to the Commission (CERD, CMW and CAT). The Commission did not include an interactive dialogue with the chairpersons on its agenda, and several chairpersons, including the chairperson of HRC, have suggested that the modalities for the participation of chairpersons at the Commission on Human Rights might be reviewed with a view to its improvement.

18. As in previous years, the Chairperson of CEDAW addressed the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women which took place from 1 to 12 March 2004.

F. Cooperation with special rapporteurs

Recommendation: The chairpersons noted the value of cooperation between treaty bodies and special procedures mandate-holders of the Commission on Human Rights, and recommended that treaty bodies consider appointing a liaison for relevant special rapporteurs in order to enhance collaboration.

19. Most treaty bodies cooperate with special procedures mandate-holders, with several rapporteurs being requested to provide briefings for treaty bodies during their sessions. For example, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance regularly addresses CERD, and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living has provided briefings to CESCR, CEDAW, CERD and CRC.

20. Briefings have also been provided to CRC by the Special Rapporteurs on the right to food and on the right to education and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, met with CEDAW during its thirtieth session in January 2004. CAT cooperates closely with the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture, as does HRC. CMW has initiated close links with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, who discussed modalities of exchange of information and coordination of the respective mandates of the Committee and the Rapporteur during the first session of CMW in March 2004.

21. Although this practice may be reviewed, CEDAW designates members to act as liaison with relevant special rapporteurs.

G. Press releases

Recommendation: The chairpersons noted the concerns expressed regarding the accuracy of press releases. They recommended that the Department of Public Information consider noting in its press releases that these were not official transcripts of the dialogue with States parties and did not reflect the opinion of the treaty body concerned. They recommended that each treaty body implement measures to enhance the accuracy of press releases.

22. The press releases of CESCR and CEDAW include disclaimers which indicate "For information media - not an official record", and other treaty bodies are considering recommending the inclusion of such disclaimers. Press releases are checked for accuracy by the secretariat or committee members in selected cases. The CRC country rapporteurs interact with press officers on press releases and the Committee routinely recommends that delegations meet with the press officers at the end of the consideration of reports.

H. Honoraria

Recommendation: The chairpersons recommended that treaty body experts of all committees receive an adequate honorarium.

23. With the exception of HRC, whose chairperson addressed letters to the Legal Counsel, the Chair of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the General Assembly with a

view to securing the reinstatement of honoraria (see resolution 56/272 of the General Assembly, March 2002), this issue was not taken up by any treaty body. No further action has been taken by the General Assembly in this regard.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO POINTS OF AGREEMENT OF THE SECOND INTER-COMMITTEE MEETING

A. Consistency

Recommendation: In the light of the principle of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, the Inter-Committee Meeting emphasized the need to ensure consistency in the examination of reports by all treaty bodies. To that end, the meeting recommended that the secretariat ensure that, in addition to the State party report, the same basic information be provided to all treaty bodies.

24. OHCHR is taking steps to standardize the documentation provided to the Geneva-based treaty bodies.

Recommendation: In order to enhance consistency, it was further recommended that the secretariat provide, to all members of the relevant treaty body prior to the examination of a State party's report, the concluding observations/recommendations of other committees and relevant decisions on individual communications/complaints, including from regional organizations when appropriate, from the preceding three years. Where the State party had been examined by another treaty body within the previous three months, the meeting recommended that the secretariat provide, where available, the summary records of that meeting.

25. The secretariat consistently provides all treaty bodies with relevant concluding observations, decisions on communications and summary records, where these exist, as well as relevant recommendations of special procedures mandate holders of the Commission on Human Rights. Relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), ECOSOC and the General Assembly are also provided. CERD is provided, on a regular basis, with the reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe, while HRC is provided with relevant reports of the Counter-terrorism Committee of the Security Council.

Recommendation: The Inter-Committee Meeting furthermore recommended that, where appropriate, committees should refer to relevant concluding observations/comments of other treaty bodies either during the dialogue or in their own concluding comments.

26. Treaty bodies frequently make specific mention to relevant concluding observations/comments during constructive dialogue with States parties. CESCR and CRC also refer to concluding observations of other committees in their own concluding observations, while CRC also refers to the recommendations of CHR and special procedures mandate-holders in appropriate cases.

B. Country information used in the consideration of reports

Recommendation: The meeting encouraged greater engagement by specialized agencies and funds and programmes of the United Nations in the reporting process at both the national and the international levels. It recommended that each treaty body designate a focal point to liaise with key relevant specialized agencies.

27. Although this practice is likely to be assessed, CERD and CEDAW currently designate members to act as focal points to liaise with relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

Recommendation: The meeting recommended that the secretariat should systematically summarize country-specific information in order to facilitate the work of experts, and that such a summary should consistently include relevant information from other treaty bodies, special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and other human rights mechanisms. Where appropriate, and in accordance with the decision of each committee, information from specialized agencies and United Nations programmes, regional or intergovernmental organizations, including the World Bank and other international financial institutions, national and international NGOs and national human rights institutions should also be included.

28. CAT, CEDAW, CESCR, CERD and CRC prepare country-specific documentation, variously named country briefs, country analyses and country presentations, which includes relevant information from the above-mentioned sources. Although this practice is under review, country analyses are prepared for HRC. Following a request made by the Committee at its sixty-second session in March 2003, country presentations have been prepared for CERD since August 2003.

C. The role of national human rights institutions in reporting

Recommendation: The Inter-Committee Meeting emphasized the constructive role that national human rights institutions could play in the human rights reporting process, at both international and national levels. It encouraged all national human rights institutions established in accordance with the Paris Principles to contribute independently, where appropriate, to the reporting process under international human rights instruments and to monitor the government reports to international treaty bodies. The meeting also encouraged national human rights institutions to actively monitor the implementation of concluding observations/comments of treaty bodies at the national level.

29. CRC, CERD, and CESCR have adopted general comments/recommendations on national human rights institutions (CERD general recommendation No. 17 of 25 March 1993; CESCR general comment No. 10 of 14 December 1998 and CRC general comment No. 2 of 15 November 2002). CRC invites representatives of national human rights institutions to participate in its pre-sessional working groups, and several, including CAT and CERD invite them to submit information.

D. Capacity-building

Recommendation: The Inter-Committee Meeting agreed that capacity-building was important for effective national reporting and recommended that OHCHR, the Division for the Advancement of Women and treaty bodies should coordinate the consideration of possible objectives and strategies that could contribute to the effectiveness of technical cooperation.

It also recommended that capacity-building efforts undertaken by OHCHR and DAW, United Nations agencies and programmes and NGOs, in particular those relating to follow-up to recommendations of treaty bodies, should be expanded and adequately funded.

30. In addition to the activities undertaken in Nassau, Bahamas (see paragraph 3 above), since June 2003, the Division for the Advancement of Women has convened a training workshop in Arusha, Tanzania (9-13 September 2003) and collaborated with Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to conduct a workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan (12-14 May 2004). OHCHR convened a workshop in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, from 17 to 19 December 2003 on the implementation of concluding observations of CRC, and is currently preparing similar workshops in other regions.

31. In the context of activities related to action 2 of the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387), which emphasizes strengthening of human rights-related action at the country level, training has been carried out by OHCHR and other United Nations partners for country teams in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, Lebanon, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Uganda and Viet Nam. These have focused on encouraging national level inputs into the reporting process and practical utilization of concluding observations/comments.

E. Joint or parallel general comments/recommendations

Recommendation: The Inter-Committee Meeting agreed that general comments/recommendations and the process of their elaboration provided opportunities for reflecting the holistic nature of the treaty body system. The meeting recommended that treaty bodies strengthen their efforts to exchange information and opinions on general comments/recommendations in order to ensure jurisprudential consistency among treaty bodies with respect to substantive issues.

32. CEDAW, CESCR, CRC and HRC request comments from all other treaty bodies when drafting their general comments/recommendations, and other treaty bodies have provided input.

Recommendation: On substantive issues, where the language of provisions of different treaties was virtually identical, treaty bodies should cooperate in the elaboration of general comments/recommendations, which would then be adopted by each of those committees in parallel.

The Inter-Committee Meeting agreed that common issues could be the subject of general comments/recommendations adopted by treaty bodies in parallel. The meeting considered that a general comment on non-reporting should be adopted by each committee in parallel.

33. Although CESCR and CRC have discussed the possibility of adopting general comments/recommendations in parallel with other treaty bodies, parallel general comments/recommendations have yet to be adopted. In 2003, CESCR and CEDAW discussed the possibility of the formulation of a joint or parallel general comment/recommendation on the subject of equality of men and women, but the difference in procedures of the two committees regarding preparation of general comments/recommendations precluded further progress.

F. Dissemination of concluding observations/comments

Recommendation: The Inter-Committee Meeting welcomed the secretariat's creation of a public listserve to facilitate the dissemination of concluding observations/comments electronically after each session. It recommended that the secretariat expand the listserve to include the work of other human rights mechanisms, in particular reports of the special mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights.

34. As a result of its expansion to include CEDAW during 2003, the concluding observations/comments, general comments/recommendations, jurisprudence and other output of all seven treaty bodies is currently disseminated via the listserve, following the conclusion of each session of the committees. Reports of the special mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights have not been included on the listserve, as mechanisms to distribute this output exist elsewhere in OHCHR.

G. Follow-up

Recommendation: In the light of the initiatives taken by the Human Rights Committee and the Committee against Torture, the Inter-Committee Meeting recommended that all treaty bodies should examine the possibility of introducing procedures to follow up their recommendations.

35. At its sixty-fourth session in March 2004, CERD amended article 65 of its rules of procedure to provide for the appointment of a coordinator for a period of two years, whose function is to consider, in cooperation with country rapporteurs, the need to request additional information from the State party on the implementation of its recommendations. Although the possibility of introducing a follow-up procedure has been discussed by CEDAW and CRC, such a procedure has not been introduced by these committees. CRC's earlier practice of requesting additional information before a specific deadline was discontinued in 1997, mainly due to the inefficiency of the procedure and lack of time.

H. Non-reporting

Recommendation: Taking into account the relevant provisions of the respective treaties and rules of procedure, the Inter-Committee Meeting recommended that each committee adopt appropriate procedures to examine the situation of human rights in a State party whose reports were long overdue and that had not responded to reminders of its reporting obligation. In that regard, all committees should adopt the following incremental and graduated measures to encourage submission of overdue reports:

(a) At each session, the secretariat shall notify the committee of all cases of non-submission of reports. In such cases, the committee shall transmit to the State party concerned a reminder concerning the submission of such reports;

(b) At each session, the secretariat shall provide the committee with a list of all reports that are substantially overdue. In such cases, the committee may notify the States parties concerned that the implementation of the treaty will be considered at a designated session and request the State party to indicate before the following session when it will submit the overdue report;

(c) The Committee shall also inform the State party of the availability of technical assistance with respect to reporting from OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women;

(d) If, at the following session, the State party has not responded, the Committee may schedule the examination of the situation of human rights of the State party for consideration in the absence of a report.

36. Lists of States parties whose reports are overdue are provided to CEDAW, CERD and HRC at each session, and CEDAW and CERD are also provided with a list of those States parties whose reports are more than 5 years or 10 years overdue. At its twenty-ninth session in July 2003, CEDAW was provided with a report analysing the situation of reporting with respect to CEDAW and under the other human rights treaties, excepting MWC, after which its Chairperson wrote to those 29 States parties which had never reported and whose reports were more than five years overdue. CAT, CERD and HRC issue a list of overdue reports in their annual reports, and may also decide to send reminders to States. At its twenty-ninth session in 2002, CAT asked two of its members to maintain contacts with representatives of non-reporting States in order to encourage the preparation and submission of reports.

37. Following the introduction of the document on the recent reporting history of States parties prepared for the annual meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, systematic reminders have not been sent by treaty bodies drawing States parties' attention to their reporting obligations, although most committees send targeted reminders, for example, to States whose reports, in particular initial reports, have been long overdue.

38. Since 1991, CERD has adopted the practice of considering implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the absence of a report (the review procedure). This procedure is applied to States parties whose reports have been

overdue for at least five years and following notification to the relevant State party. Currently, up to seven States parties are scheduled for consideration without a report at each CERD session. At its sixty-fourth session in March 2004, CERD introduced the practice of HRC of adopting provisional concluding comments where States parties are considered under its review procedure, which are then provided to the State party and which is given time to react and submit a report. Where the State party fails to react or submit a report, the provisional concluding observations are declared final at the next session.

39. Since its ninth session in 1993, CESCR has considered implementation of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the absence of a report where the report of the State party is significantly overdue. States are notified that the Committee intends to consider the situation with respect to that country at a specified future session, and the Committee considers the status of economic, social and cultural rights in the light of all available information. The Committee authorizes its Chairperson, in situations where the State party concerned indicates that a report will be provided, to defer consideration of the situation for one session.

40. At its twenty-ninth session in 2002, CRC agreed to send letters to all States parties whose initial reports were more than nine years overdue requesting the submission of a report within 12 months, indicating that the Committee would review the situation of child rights in the absence of a report if it were not submitted. Of the nine States parties which have received such letters, all have submitted their reports. Similarly, it is the practice of HRC to notify States parties whose reports are chronologically most overdue of the date on which it proposes to examine the measures taken by the State party to implement the rights guaranteed in the Covenant. The Committee prepares provisional concluding observations which are transmitted to the State party, and mentioned, but not published in its annual report.

41. CAT has also decided to review the implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report if the State does not respond positively to requests to report. The Committee will conduct the first review in the absence of a report at its thirty-third session in November 2004. CEDAW will discuss the possibility of considering implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report with a view to adopting a decision at its thirty-first session in July 2004.

42. CAT, CRC and HRC inform the State party, on an ad hoc basis and usually through the secretariat, of the availability of technical assistance with respect to meeting reporting obligations from OHCHR and DAW. Both CESCR and CERD draw attention to the availability of technical assistance in their concluding observations, including where States parties are taken up in the absence of a report.

IV. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

43. The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families convened its first session, at the United Nations Office at Geneva, from 1 to 5 March 2004. The Committee adopted provisional rules of procedure, discussed working methods and strategies to encourage ratification of the Convention. The Committee met with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the human rights of migrants and with the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on the rights of non-citizens. The Committee decided to hold two sessions of one week's duration in July and October 2005.

44. CEDAW adopted general recommendation No. 25 on article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention (temporary special measures), at its thirtieth session in January 2004. It continued to discuss the option of examining periodic reports in parallel working groups. At its informal meeting (May 2004), the Committee focused on its working methods, including consideration of reports of States parties; concluding comments; option of meeting in parallel working groups for consideration of periodic reports; and expanded core document and harmonized reporting guidelines. The Committee has decided that its next general recommendation will be on article 2, and will hold a general discussion with United Nations entities and NGOs at its thirty-first session.

45. CERD held a thematic discussion on non-citizens at its sixty-fourth session in 2004, and a general recommendation on this issue was also discussed by the Committee.

46. During its thirty-second session in May 2004, and as follow-up to the discussion held by the Commission on Human Rights at its sixtieth session in 2004, CESCR held a meeting with the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the open-ended working group to consider options regarding the elaboration of an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. At the same session, the Committee discussed and adopted a general comment on the right to work (article 6 of the Covenant) and continued its discussion of the draft general comment on article 3 of the Covenant. Also during this session, the Joint Expert Group of CESCR and UNESCO, which is composed of two members of CESCR and the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the UNESCO Executive Board, met for the second time to discuss the monitoring of right to education.

47. CRC held a day of general discussion on the rights of indigenous children at its thirty-fourth session in September 2003. The Committee also re-established its practice of informal country visits and visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from 6 to 10 April 2004. At its thirty-fourth session, which closed on 3 October 2003, CRC adopted a recommendation on its working methods in which it decided that for an initial period of two years it would consider the reports of States parties in two parallel chambers, each consisting of nine members of the Committee, taking due account of equitable geographical distribution. The Committee's recommendation was brought to the attention of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (A/C.3/58/10).

48. HRC has furthered contacts with the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council. The chairperson of this Committee is expected to address HRC at its July 2004 session. The Committee also adopted general comment 31 on article 2 (nature of general legal obligations imposed on States parties to the Covenant and right to an effective remedy) at its eightieth session on 29 March 2004.

49. As a follow-up to the letter of the Chairperson of the International Law Commission (ILC) to the chairpersons of all treaty bodies of 13 August 2002, several committees have held consultations with the International Law Commission to discuss the issue of reservations to multilateral treaties: CESCR and CAT in May 2003, HRC on 31 July 2003 and CRC on 19 May 2004. CERD will meet with members of ILC on 4 August 2004.

50. Pursuant to Action 2 of the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change, OHCHR, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, has developed a three-year inter-agency Plan of Action to improve the integration of human rights into the activities of United Nations entities at the country level. A key element of the plan, presented to the Secretary-General in September 2003, are the development of means to enhance cooperation between United Nations entities and human rights mechanisms so that the recommendations of these mechanisms are taken into account in United Nations action at the national level. OHCHR is preparing Country Human Rights Status Notes for United Nations country teams which seek to provide a user-friendly summary of the recommendations of the treaty bodies and special procedures mechanisms concerning each country. It is also providing training to country teams on how to use human rights norms and principles and the outputs of human rights mechanisms during the preparation of the country assessment and development assistance frameworks.
