



## PROMOTING QUALITY, INDEPENDENCE AND DIVERSITY IN TREATY BODY MEMBERSHIP: INTRODUCING THE CIVIL SOCIETY QUESTIONNAIRE TO CANDIDATES

Date: Friday, 1 June, 2018 – 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm

Place: Room 8, United Nations Headquarters, New York

### CONCEPT NOTE

#### I. - INTRODUCING “TB-Net - *NGO Network on UN Treaty Bodies*”

**TB-Net** is a network of NGOs, each of which work in regular partnership with a UN Treaty Body and its Secretariat and that specialise in the work of that Treaty Body. Its mission is to increase the effectiveness of the UN Treaty Body system in order to ensure accountability in respect of the UN human rights treaties.

Currently, TB-Net comprises the following members: Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR Centre), Child Rights Connect, the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GIESCR), the International Disability Alliance (IDA), the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), International Womens' Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-Asia Pacific) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT).

Sharing concerns and challenges in their activities regarding UN Treaty Bodies, TB-Net came together to advocate for increased accessibility and quality of TBs procedures and harmonization of Treaty Bodies' methods of work, as well as for substantive coherence among Treaty Bodies, with the view to increase well informed participation of civil society and to enhance the visibility of the UN Treaty Body system.

## **II - ADDRESSING NATIONAL NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS OF TREATY BODY MEMBERS**

A key determinant of the quality, visibility and impact of the work of Treaty Bodies is the quality, independence and diversity of their members. In this vein, several human rights treaties include provisions establishing criteria that candidates must fulfill and States should follow when nominating them, such as qualifications, gender and geographical balance.

To achieve these aims of quality, independence and diversity, there is a need for renewed and focused attention on nomination procedures at the national level and election processes at the international level. Open, participatory, transparent and structured **national nomination processes** are key to ensuring public scrutiny of candidates, prior to their nomination. Some States have taken the lead and developed nomination processes that emphasise transparency and participation, with the aim of ensuring a pool of highly qualified, independent and diverse candidates.

There is a pressing need to consider the election processes at the international level and how they can be improved to ensure quality, independent and diverse membership within each treaty body, and several UN documents can serve as guidance for States Parties to assess candidates and uphold high standards of qualifications.<sup>1</sup> Election processes are of course driven by States Parties and consequently can be politically charged processes. In addition, while there have been recent improvements in the case of CRC and CRPD Committees, the official form for nominating candidates (“Biographical Data Form”) remains very succinct and falls short in providing comprehensive and adequate information for States to assess the suitability of candidates prior to vote.

Overall, current practices at national and international levels remain opaque for civil society and other stake holders and consequently the persons whose rights are dependant on UN Treaty Bodies’ performance.

## **III - OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the event is to raise awareness on the pressing need to improve the transparency and accessibility of the nomination processes at the national level and the election processes at the international level for the promotion of quality, independence and diversity in treaty body membership. It will introduce the TB-Net’s questionnaire for the candidates to the elections taking place in June 2018 (CEDAW, CRPD, HRCtee and

---

<sup>1</sup> General Assembly Resolution on *Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system* (9 April 2014): A/RES/68/268, and the *Guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies (Addis Ababa Guidelines)*: HRI/MC/2012

CRC) which aims to fill in gaps in the current election processes. It will identify challenges and good practices of different stakeholders in identifying practical ways to promote these principles. States, Treaty Body members, civil society and other stakeholders are invited to present their insights and engage constructively in this discussion.

### **III – PANEL**

Moderator: Christian De Vos, OSJI (TBC)

Panellists:

- Member of a UN Treaty Body
- Representative of the UK
- Representative of TB-Net
- Representative of the OHCHR (TBC)

Presentations by panellists will be followed by a discussion with interventions from the floor.

### **IV - Accessibility features**

The event will be Webcasted via UN Web TV: [www.webtv.un.org](http://www.webtv.un.org)

We will also use Facebook and Twitter, to promote the event (TBC)

### **V – Co-Sponsors**

Co-Sponsoring States

- Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations in New York

[LOGO]

### **VI – Co-Sponsoring Civil Society Organisations**

- Open Society Justice Initiative
- Amnesty International