

Check against delivery

## **Human Rights Council 16<sup>th</sup> Session**



### **Launch of the Poznan Statement**

**Ms. Navanethem Pillay**  
**United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Geneva,**  
**7 March 2011**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Experts,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to participate in this important event aimed at launching the Poznan statement. On 18 January of this year, a similar event took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Poznan statement has been adopted following a very successful expert meeting which explored creative ways to strengthen the human rights treaty bodies system.

There is no denying that treaty bodies' own success over the past four decades is now straining the system at its seams. This is due to the fact that resources have not kept the pace with the system's growth in size, output, and visibility. We are now at a crossroad.

With the establishment of another new treaty body this year, the 10th, (on enforced disappearances) the system is probably not far from reaching its limits, especially in terms of coherence and resourcing. The treaty body framework has doubled in size in less than one decade and today the nine core international human rights treaties have received more than 1150 ratifications.

The ongoing fragmentation of the treaty body system and the multiplication of procedures – often not harmonized among various bodies - certainly allow for more specificity. However, the system is also vulnerable to become increasingly unwieldy, cumbersome and unpredictable. Consequently, the risk that treaty bodies reduce their positive impact on rights holders is real.

In response to my call in 2009 to all stakeholders to initiate a process of reflection on ways and means to strengthen the treaty body system, a series of events have taken place. Others are scheduled in the coming months. These events, organized by external partners and facilitated by our Office, are meant to gather the suggestions of different groups of stakeholders on how to bolster the treaty body system and make it more efficient and effective to improve the situation of human rights at the national level around the world.

The Dublin Statement, adopted in November 2009, which was endorsed by many treaty body experts, paved the way for the current treaty body strengthening process. It was followed in June 2010 by the Marrakesh Statement containing recommendations for an enhanced cooperation between national human rights institutions and treaty bodies. Last September, another significant step forward was taken with the adoption of the Poznan Statement in Poland. There, five treaty body chairs were present. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Dzidek Kedzia (pronunciation), member of the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, for taking forward this initiative with determination, and in a spirit of collegiality. We greatly regret his absence today but he certainly is with us in spirit.

This exchange of views on the future of treaty bodies will continue in 2011. On 12 and 13 May, all treaty body chairpersons and my Office will co-organize a technical consultation for States parties. This discussion aims at gathering their suggestions on ways and means to strengthen the preparation of States parties reports, to enhance the dialogue between States parties and treaty bodies, as well as the implementation of treaty bodies recommendations at the national level. The International Institute for the Rights of the Child in Sion, Switzerland, will host the event. Invitations to all States have been sent and we trust that this meeting will be well attended and successful.

Consultations for United Nations entities and civil society actors are also planned in the coming months. Finally, a meeting is expected to close the consultative phase in Dublin this autumn.

In parallel to these events, our Office is organizing a series of one-day consultations which bring together one or two treaty bodies during their respective sessions in Geneva. The objective of these retreats is both to allow treaty bodies members to discuss in advance the topics selected for the next Inter-Committee Meeting in June, and to provide members with a venue for creative thinking on how to bolster their working methods.

The process will culminate in a compilation of proposals stemming from this exercise which I will present at the end of 2011 or in early 2012. The compilation will, of course, be shared with all stakeholders involved.

I hope that this joint effort to strengthen an ever expanding treaty body system will result in tangible and innovative recommendations for a more robust and sustainable system. Indeed, we need a vision that captures lessons from the past, addresses present challenges and prepares for the future of the treaty body system which represents one of the major achievements in the history of the human rights movement.

Let me conclude by underscoring that efforts currently underway to strengthen the treaty body system are indeed crucial, but they will not replace the dire need for the human and financial resources that are indispensable to a well-functioning and credible treaty body system.

I thank you and look forward to your ideas.