



Human Rights Council

Information Service

United Nations Office in Geneva

About OHCHR

OHCHR is a department of the United Nations Secretariat and works for the protection of all human rights for all people. It helps empower individuals to realize their rights and assists those in positions of responsibility to protect and promote the human rights of everyone. OHCHR gives priority to addressing the most pressing human rights problems, both acute and chronic, with particular emphasis on those human rights violations that put life in imminent peril. It devotes special attention for those who are at risk and vulnerable on multiple fronts, and places equal emphasis on civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. High Commissioner Louise Arbour of Canada heads OHCHR. She has been in office since July 2004. The post of High Commissioner for Human Rights was created in 1993. Headquartered in the historic 'Palais Wilson' in Geneva, Switzerland, the Office is present in over 40 countries and employs more than 600 staff worldwide.

For more information on OHCHR, please visit: www.ohchr.org.

About the Human Rights Treaty Bodies

The human rights treaty bodies are committees of independent experts that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties. They are created in accordance with the provisions of the treaty that they monitor and perform a number of functions including consideration of state parties' reports and of complaints and communications by individuals. There are seven human rights treaty bodies:

The Human Rights Committee (HRC) monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 and its optional protocols;

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966;

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) monitors implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965;

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979;

The Committee Against Torture (CAT) monitors implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment;

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and its optional protocols; and

The Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) monitors implementation of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families 1990.

Each treaty body receives secretariat support from the Treaties and Commission Branch of OHCHR in Geneva except CEDAW, which is supported by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). CEDAW meets at United Nations headquarters in New York; the other treaty bodies generally meet at the United Nations Office in Geneva, although the Human Rights Committee usually holds its March session in New York.

For more information on the work of the Treaty Bodies, please visit:
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/treaty/index.htm>

About the Special Procedures

The fact-finding and investigatory mechanisms of the Council are collectively known as the special procedures. These include special rapporteurs, special representatives and experts, and working groups mandated by the Council and/or the United Nations Economic and Social Council, with the aim of documenting human rights violations. Mandate-holders are independent experts appointed to investigate specific types of human rights violations and conduct studies on particular themes and situations from a human rights perspective. The strength of the special procedures lies in their independence. The work of these special rapporteurs and the working groups in drawing the attention of Member States and the public to human rights violations in certain countries or to specific human rights issues is integral to human rights protection.

For more information on the work of the Special Procedures, please visit:
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/special/>