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Human rights bodies and mechanisms

Note by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has the honour to transmit to the Members of the Human Rights Council the report on the eighteenth meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives, independent experts and chairs of working groups of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva from 27 June to 1 July 2011.

Report on the eighteenth meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives, independent experts and chairs of working groups of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council

(Geneva, 27 June-1 July 2011)

Rapporteur: Michel Forst

Summary

The eighteenth annual meeting of special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council was held in Geneva from 27 June to 1 July 2011.

Farida Shaheed was elected as Chair of the eighteenth annual meeting and of the Coordination Committee. Michel Forst was elected Rapporteur of the meeting and member of the Coordination Committee. Kamala Chandrakirana, Chair of the Working Group on the elimination of discrimination against women in law and in practice, Juan Mendez, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and Jeremy Sarkin, Chair of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, were endorsed as the other three members of the Committee selected by the Chair. Maalla M'jid, as former Chair will remain as an ex officio member during the coming year.

Mandate holders exchanged views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council and the facilitator of the Council review segment on special procedures, and with States. The meeting convened a joint meeting with the twelfth inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies, and met with representatives of United Nations entities, field presences of the Office of the High Commissioner, representatives of non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions).

Discussions focused on the independence of the special procedures, harmonization of working methods, the outcome of the Human Rights Council review and measures to enhance the engagement of mandate holders with various stakeholders in order to strengthen their effectiveness. The meeting stressed the importance of increasing regular and extra-budgetary resources for special procedures. Participants noted the appointment of 16 new mandate holders by the Council at its fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth sessions , welcomed new mandate holders participating in the annual meeting for the first time, and paid tribute to outgoing mandate holders.

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I. Introduction

1. Annual meetings of special rapporteurs, representatives, independent experts and chairs of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council have been held since 1994. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, underlined the importance of preserving and strengthening the system of special procedures and specified that the procedures and mechanisms should be enabled to harmonize and rationalize their work through periodic meetings (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), part II, para. 95).

2. Mandate holders exchanged views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council, the facilitator of the Human Rights Council review segment relating to special procedures, and States. A joint meeting was convened with the twelfth inter-committee meeting of treaty bodies, and the special procedures mandate holders also met with representatives of United Nations entities, headquarters and field presences staff of the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR), representatives of non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions.

II. Organization of work

3. The meeting was opened by the Chair of the seventeenth annual meeting and Chair of the Coordination Committee of special procedures, Najat Maalla M'jid, She welcomed the recently appointed mandate holders, and expressed profound thanks to the outgoing mandate holders for their work and contributions. She also welcomed the observers to the meeting, including the Special Rapporteur on Disabilities of the Commission on Social Development of the Economic and Social Council.

4. The independent expert in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed, was elected Chair of the eighteenth annual meeting and of the Coordination Committee; the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti, Michel Forst, was elected Rapporteur of the meeting and a member of the Coordination Committee. The Chair of the Working Group on the elimination of discrimination against women in law and in practice, Kamala Chandrakirana, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan Mendez, and the Chair of the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances, Jeremy Sarkin, were endorsed as the other three members of the Committee selected by the meeting Chair Maalla M'jid, who, as former Chairwill remain as an ex officio member during the coming year.

5. The provisional agenda was adopted as revised.

III. Activities of the Coordination Committee

6. The Chair of the Coordination Committee briefed participants on the activities of the Committee in 2010/11, and made suggestions on how to strengthen the special procedures system. She thanked all mandate holders for their valuable contributions, and their encouragement and confidence throughout the year.

7. The Coordination Committee had focused on the engagement of the system with the Human Rights Council review and follow-up to the seventeenth annual meeting to improve working methods and cooperation with OHCHR. The Committee had ensured that the special procedures provided a joint contribution to the review, which emphasized their independence, cooperation by States, resources and the importance of the protection of persons cooperating with the special procedures system against reprisals. It had underlined the importance of the participation of mandate holders in the review process, including in

the inter-governmental working group, and through engagement with the President of the Council and the facilitator of the special procedures segment.

8. As part of the measures to improve working methods and to promote dialogue, the Coordination Committee and OHCHR had discussed questions frequently asked by special procedures and possible answers. The Chair noted that these discussions took into account aspects raised during the review, and information contained in the manual, which itself might warrant review, given the developments since its finalization. Discussions had not concluded and she encouraged the incoming Committee to continue to approach these as an ongoing process. Other Committee activities had included coordination of joint action, such as statements for special sessions and on the occasion of Human Rights Day; contribution to the selection procedure for new mandate holders; the formulation of proposals to enhance working methods; promoting dialogue and strengthening constructive engagement with States, suggesting further work on concrete recommendations to strengthen States' capacity; and cooperation with other mechanisms, such as the treaty bodies and the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council. Dissemination of information had been facilitated through an orientation session for new mandate holders and meetings with other new experts. The Committee had introduced a regular letter from the Chair to update mandate holders on Committee activities.

9. With regard to the code of conduct, no formal complaints had been received under the internal advisory procedure during the past cycle, but the Coordination Committee had provided individual guidance to mandate holders on working methods in a number of cases. There was a need for the Committee to remain proactive in responding to issues raised under the code of conduct and to continue to champion the independence of mandate holders.

IV. Exchange of views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

10. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights assured the meeting that she consistently emphasized the importance and added value of special procedures in the global system for the promotion and protection of human rights. She noted the high-quality professional support provided by OHCHR staff in Geneva, New York and Office's more than 50 field presences, and that the synergy between her Office and special procedures could be strengthened in order to maximize impact in implementation of human rights. She highlighted recent developments, including in countries in the Middle East and North Africa, and commended the special procedures for seizing opportunities to engage with States, including through recent visits, communications, outreach and technical assistance.

11. The High Commissioner referred to the role of special procedures in major thematic areas, such as the International Year of People of African Descent; the tenth anniversary of the Durban Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development; the open-ended working group on ageing of the General Assembly; and the work on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity. She commended the Coordination Committee for facilitating the common contribution by all mandate holders to the Human Rights Council review and for working with OHCHR on questions frequently asked by mandate holders. She encouraged mandate holders to consider updating the manual. On resources, she pointed out that the current financial climate, additional mandates and additional mandated activities had stretched the capacity of OHCHR to support mandate holders, and limited the scope of action of mandate holders, and that she was doing her utmost to secure additional regular budget resources for special procedures. Transparency relating to external support was important in order to counter perceptions that the independence and integrity of mandate holders could be compromised.

12. Discussions were held on the best use of synergy between the special procedures and the High Commissioner for maximum impact in the implementation of human rights; how best to advocate in the Human Rights Council; effective strategies to attract more regular budget and extra-budgetary resources; and ways in which field presences could integrate the work of special procedures at the national and local levels and within United Nations country teams more fully, including through collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to enhance the understanding of country representatives of the human rights mechanisms. Mandate holders expressed appreciation that some of their concerns raised at the seventeenth annual meeting had been addressed, but indicated that work was required on outstanding issues and that the Coordination Committee would seek to address these in partnership with OHCHR. Concern was raised in relation to conference servicing constraints, such as with regard to translation and the recruitment of local interpreters rather than of those based at the United Nations Office at Geneva for the visits of mandate holders, taking into account the integrity of the process and the safety of those cooperating with mandate holders and the interpreters themselves. Furthermore, concerns were raised in relation to inconsistencies among working groups in terms of meeting time and the number of missions. The High Commissioner was asked to provide information on the focus of her future thematic priorities, as these could be drawn upon by mandate holders. The importance of capitalizing on the linkages among the special procedures, the treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review was highlighted. Proactive engagement by special procedures with the United Nations at large, and the importance of linkages between the work of special procedures and OHCHR, was emphasized, as was flow of information, including from United Nations country teams.

V. Human Rights Council and the special procedures system

13. Participants exchanged views with the President of the Human Rights Council, Laura Dupuy Lasserre, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations Office at Geneva, who highlighted the fact that the work of the special procedures was essential for the protection of human rights, as it alerted the Council to emerging problems, and provided information and expertise in an independent manner on thematic and country-specific issues. She also stressed the importance of the regular participation of the special procedures in special sessions of the Council, including through innovative means, noting the recent example of a statement of all mandate holders delivered via video technology at the sixteenth special session.

14. The facilitator of the Human Rights Council review process on special procedures, Hannu Himanen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations Office at Geneva, underlined the good and regular contacts he had had with the previous chair of the Coordination Committee, in particular in the context of the Council review and discussed resolution 16/21 on the review of the work and functioning of the Council, as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/281 on the outcome of the review. Where special procedures were concerned, the outcome had addressed selection and appointment of mandate holders, working methods, resources and funding.

15. With regard to the selection process of mandate holders, the Human Rights Council, in the annex to resolution 16/21, envisaged that individual candidates would submit an application, accompanied by a short motivation letter, and the Consultative Group would interview shortlisted candidates to ensure equal treatment of all candidates. National human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles now may also nominate candidates. With regard to working methods, the review reaffirmed that States should cooperate with mandate holders in the performance of their tasks; it was incumbent on mandate holders to exercise their functions in accordance with their mandates and in compliance with the code of conduct. Their integrity and independence and the principles

of cooperation, transparency and accountability are integral to ensuring a robust system to enhance the capacity of the Council to address human rights situations on the ground. The national human rights institution of the country concerned would be entitled to intervene immediately after that country during the interactive dialogue following a mandate holder's presentation of a country mission report. OHCHR will continue to maintain information on special procedures in a comprehensive and easily accessible manner and any act of intimidation or reprisal against individuals and groups who cooperate with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights was strongly rejected.

16. More transparency in special procedures resources and funding was a recurring theme throughout the review, and the outcome highlights the need for full transparency in this context, while recognizing the importance of ensuring the provision of adequate and equitable funding to the special procedures according to their specific needs through the regular budget. The Human Rights Council recognized the continued need for extra-budgetary funding and welcomed further voluntary contributions, which should be, to the extent possible, unearmarked.

17. Participants agreed with the principle of transparency, and emphasized the importance of greater interaction to address misconceptions. Cooperation by States, through timely responses to requests for visits, including when a standing invitation has been issued, and communications were considered essential, and it was suggested that assessment of cooperation might be useful. Feedback was requested on the expectations of States in relation to constructive dialogue. It was suggested that outgoing mandate holders might provide a list of qualities required for incoming mandate holders to assist in selection. The modalities of how the comments of the State concerned would be included as an addendum to the country mission reports of mandate holders as required by the review outcome were raised. Concern was expressed that Council decision 17/119 on the follow-up to resolution 16/21 with regard to the universal periodic review, which emphasized that the second and subsequent cycles of the review should focus on, inter alia, the implementation of accepted recommendations and the development of human rights situations in the State under review, could result in the weakening of special procedures recommendations that had not been accepted by the State under review. The point was made that these recommendations and any follow-up, such as communications or recent country visits, should be included under the rubric of the development of human rights situations in the State under review. Follow-up to special procedures recommendations was raised, as was the role of special procedures in following up on universal periodic recommendations and those of the treaty bodies, particularly in the light of the plethora of recommendations directed at States.

VI. Thematic issues and working methods

A. Strengthening follow-up, working with external support and enhancing information-sharing

18. Strengthening mechanisms and structures for follow-up and implementation of recommendations, working with external support, enhancing information-sharing among mandate holders, with OHCHR, and other stakeholders, and common issues relating to the five special procedures working groups were discussed by mandate holders and OHCHR.

1. Strengthening mechanisms and structures for follow-up to and implementation of recommendations

19. Participants noted that the primary responsibility for implementation rested with States. Mandate holders and United Nations entities had a strong interest and responsibility

to enhance follow-up and to strengthen their cooperation and coordination to that end. Ways in which recommendations were taken into account through existing mechanisms and procedures, including other human rights mechanisms, such as the universal periodic review and the procedures of treaty bodies, entities such as OHCHR field presences, New York-based bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission, and in the development and implementation by New York-based bodies of Common Country Assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other national level mechanisms, were discussed. The initiatives of several individual mandates in relation to follow-up were highlighted, with the differences between country and thematic mandates being taken into account. These included regional consultations to take stock of the status of implementation of recommendations in countries of a particular region; and follow-up reports and visits and the practice of sending letters and questionnaires to Governments and other stakeholders to seek feedback on the status of implementation of recommendations on a systematic basis. Feedback was used to inform strategies and work plans of mandate holders. A compilation of good practices on follow-up was recommended.

2. External support

20. Participants were briefed on the effects of the current financial climate on the United Nations and OHCHR, particularly in the light of the fact that new mandates and additional tasks required of special procedures were not always funded. It was pointed out that, although statements of programme budget implications had been presented to the Human Rights Council, new activities were frequently required to be undertaken within existing resources. While increased regular budget funding was essential, voluntary funding from States, sometimes generated through the activities of mandate holders, had been very valuable, with the Office taking advantage of unearmarked contributions to ensure that resources were equitably distributed among mandates. The independence and integrity of mandate holders were underlined, and it was emphasized that contributions should come without conditions. Various arrangements to support mandate holders through a combination of United Nations and non-United Nations resources existed in the light of the insufficiency of regular budget resources. There were several positive examples of how staff within the United Nations and teams based outside the Organization worked together on the basis of a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. The importance of transparency among and between mandate holders and OHCHR and disclosure of resources available for the functioning of the mandates was emphasized by mandate holders. Good practices in seeking and accepting non-OHCHR support were discussed, as were the different considerations to be taken into account in respect of country and thematic mandates. Mandate holders agreed that further work should be undertaken to enhance transparency and safeguard mandate holders' independence and impartiality.

3. Enhancing information-sharing

21. Ways to improve information-sharing on thematic issues, existing resources and tools, including the Universal Human Rights Index, were presented and discussed. While acknowledging the current workload and resource constraints, additional ways to institutionalize and exchange knowledge of thematic issues, tools and methodologies (for example, the preparation of missions, reports, formulation of recommendations and cooperation with United Nations agencies), including through new technologies, such as extranets or databases accessible by mandate holders and staff, were also considered. It was suggested that guidance on the use of new technologies to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness of the work of mandate holders be developed. It was recommended that reports should be made more user-friendly for the general public by, for example, including short summaries of the findings in more accessible language and making the thematic focus of reports more visible. Efforts to make the website more user-friendly, including through the posting of additional information on the impact of the work of mandates and cross-cutting themes or mandates' thematic focus, were recommended. Suggestions on ways to

enhance provision of information on the thematic work of OHCHR and treaty body priorities (for example, future general comments and recommendations) through internal or external information tools were also discussed.

4. Special procedures working groups

22. Additional meetings and meeting time, extra resources for missions, participation by all or by at least two members of each working group in the annual meeting and the creation of further opportunities to exchange information about working group practices and procedures to ensure greater consistency were highlighted as common issues confronting the five special procedures working groups.

B. Strengthening the effectiveness of the special procedures: a joint report on communications

23. Mandate holders recalled that that, at their sixteenth annual meeting in 2009, they decided to report on their communications jointly (A/HRC/12/47, paras. 24-26), which was endorsed at the seventeenth annual meeting (A/HRC/15/44, paras. 26-27). Mandate holders discussed methodological issues, including ways to reflect statistical and other information, given that the first joint communications report was to be submitted to the Human Rights Council at its eighteenth session.

24. It was recalled that two thirds of all communications were issued jointly by two or more mandate holders, but communications had been reported on in more than 20 individual reports submitted as an addendum to main reports. The joint communications report, to be arranged chronologically, would increase consistency, transparency and efficiency, including by enabling communications and related State responses to be accessible in full. It would also reduce documentation costs and respond to the call by the Human Rights Council to make documents available in accessible electronic formats. Victim protection measures relating to reporting on communications would also be implemented across mandates in a more harmonized manner.

C. Documentation issues

25. Participants were briefed by representatives of the United Nations Office at Geneva on issues relating to documentation and interpretation and translation services. Guidelines regarding interpretation services during missions with human rights mechanisms were shared. Participants were informed of the increasing workload of translators and interpreters that has not been matched by commensurate increases in human or financial resources of the United Nations. They were informed of contracting arrangements with local interpreters through the relevant UNDP office or by the United Nations Office. Participants raised the concern that more frequent use of local interpreters could harm the integrity and credibility of special procedures and place the victims, their families and interpreters at risk of reprisal. Some participants raised concerns about editing and enquired about the possibility of reviewing translations. Some asked whether resources for the translation of reports into languages other than those of the United Nations were available in order to raise awareness at the domestic level. The lack of translation of documents for the current annual meeting was noted with regret.

VII. Consultations with human rights mechanisms, States and others

A. Joint meeting with human rights treaty bodies

26. The joint meeting with the twelfth inter-committee meeting focused on good practices in cooperation between the treaty bodies and the special procedures, and welcomed the compilation of good practices on cooperation between the two mechanisms prepared by OHCHR at the request of participants in the 2010 joint meeting. The discussion was informed by examples of cooperation identified in the report; additional positive examples of cooperation were shared and further modalities were suggested to coordinate work on issues of common interest.

27. Participants noted that collaboration between treaty bodies and special procedures was extensive and had contributed to the mutual reinforcement of each mechanism's recommendations. It was also noted that collaboration and coordination was essential to avoid divergence in the interpretation of human rights norms by special procedures and treaty bodies. Increased cross-referencing of recommendations, joint meetings on thematic issues and country situations, joint activities on follow-up to recommendations, and joint advocacy (for example aimed at increasing the number of ratifications of human rights treaties) were advocated. It was noted that special procedures, in particular country mandates, could contribute to the preparation by treaty bodies of consideration of States parties' reports through briefings and other input.

28. Several participants referred to cases where special procedures had contributed or were actively contributing to the development of treaty bodies' general comments and where treaty bodies had been engaged in the development of guiding principles supported by special procedures. The importance of strategic information-sharing, in particular in relation to thematic priorities, was identified as an area requiring further strengthening; it was agreed that measures, such as an exchange of work plans and the use of new technologies, should be adopted to facilitate cooperation. It was also suggested that examples of best practices in implementation relating to themes common to treaty bodies and mandates should be collected. Systematic and more structured exchanges and interactions between the two mechanisms were also regarded as crucial.

29. At the joint meeting, it was recommended that the compilation should include additional and recent examples of good practices, such as those highlighted by treaty body members and special procedures mandate holders during the joint meeting or immediately afterwards. It was also recommended that the consolidated document should be finalized in consultation with the chairs of the joint meeting, kept updated and made publicly available.

30. The provision by OHCHR over the past year of regular updates and newsletters on the outputs and activities of treaty bodies and special procedures was welcomed, and participants in the joint meeting recommended further promotion of the Universal Human Rights Index website and use of other new technologies to increase the availability and accessibility of recommendations of the treaty bodies and special procedures, as well as those made in the context of the universal periodic review. OHCHR was also urged to maintain the forecast of country visits of special procedures and to make this available to treaty bodies, and also to inform treaty bodies when mandate holders were available at the time of their sessions.

31. Recalling that it was the primary responsibility of States to follow up on and implement the recommendations of the human rights mechanisms, participants in the joint meeting noted that the political bodies, including the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, also had a role to play in following up with States on the implementation of these recommendations.

32. Participants reiterated points of agreement adopted at the eleventh inter-committee meeting and at the seventeenth annual meeting of special procedures mandate holders¹ and agreed that the next joint meeting should focus on substantive issues and specific themes to be agreed upon by the two Chairs prior to the meeting.

B. Exchange of views with States

33. Opening the exchange of views, the Chair of the Coordination Committee underlined the importance of mandate holders and of States maintaining open and constructive dialogue in relation to their common objectives of ensuring human rights protection at the national level. Appreciation was extended to the former President of the Human Rights Council and to the facilitator of the Council review segment on special procedures for allowing the Committee to contribute actively to the review process on behalf of mandate holders.

34. States welcomed the opportunity to meet with mandate holders and looked forward to enhanced interaction, emphasizing the importance of the integrity, impartiality and independence of special procedures. It was observed that the outcome of the Human Rights Council review reaffirmed these principles and the obligation of States to cooperate with special procedures. Mandate holders were urged to coordinate their visit requests and to ensure that their recommendations were practical, concrete and realistic, and took into account the context of the State concerned. More resources had to be provided from the regular budget to support special procedures, and transparency in relation to extra-budgetary and non-United Nations resources should be the guiding principle; special procedures were urged to be proactive in this context. Ways to enhance interactive dialogues with mandate holders during the Council sessions were discussed, and more informal interaction with States, such as through side events and other imaginative formats, was encouraged, including, if possible, with States recently visited. It was noted that multiple visit requests and follow-up to the recommendations of special procedures sometimes posed a challenge for States, particularly as there were also requirements to follow up on the recommendations of the universal periodic review and treaty bodies. Harmonization and synchronization of all recommendations were encouraged, and special procedures were urged to provide recommendations for technical assistance and capacity-building. It was noted that special procedures could track the implementation of treaty body and universal periodic review recommendations. They also had a role to play in the second round of the review, which would be diluted if the compilation report failed to include developments reported by mandate holders. States also called for improved follow-up to country visits; a suggestion was made that thematic reports might contain a section on this. Consistency across mandates in relation to communications should be an objective, and mandate holders were asked to strengthen efforts to verify information in respect of these and to take into account the constraints that some States faced in responding by deadlines.

35. Mandate holders raised concerns regarding the lack of adequate regular budgetary support for their work and noted that the creation of additional mandates by the Human Rights Council without additional and sufficient resources posed significant challenges to the system. While regular budgetary funding remains inadequate, mandate holders noted that they would continue to rely upon voluntary extra-budgetary support. There was agreement that transparency should apply to all such support and that it should be distributed among mandates as equitably as possible, taking into account their requirements.

36. The importance of building on the outcome of the Human Rights Council review as a basis for further joint efforts to strengthen the work of the Council was underlined. The

¹ See A/HRC/15/44 and A/65/190.

increase in the number of standing invitations by States was welcomed by special procedures; however, concern was expressed that some States that had issued an invitation had not permitted visits by mandate holders. Mandate holders and States both emphasized the importance of dialogue and meeting with each other to discuss cooperation and follow-up on the basis of mutual respect.

C. Exchange of views with United Nations entities and field presences of the Office of the High Commissioner

37. Mandate holders exchanged views with representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the World Health Organization. Participants welcomed the work of United Nations entities in support of their activities, in particular with regard to visits. Several good practices of engagement and partnerships were underlined, and it was noted that United Nations entities helped to identify priority issues, provide information regarding the national context, organize meetings with stakeholders, recommend areas to visit during country missions and support implementation of recommendations of mandate holders by enhancing their incorporation into policies, programmes and strategies at the national level by means of sustained and coordinated advocacy and technical cooperation with States. The benefit of United Nations statistics, tools and guidelines to mandate holders was underlined.

38. Participants highlighted the ways in which the work of mandate holders could support that of United Nations entities. For example, mandate holders could alert the international community to issues that might be ignored, encourage States to act on recommendations of United Nations country teams, and provide international expert advice to actors at the regional, national and local levels, including through facilitating the participation of mandate holders in national events and by highlighting good practices from other countries.

39. Good practices of cooperation between United Nations entities and mandate holders were identified, such as joint ratification campaigns, issuing of joint press releases on critical situations, and individual and systemic collaboration in relation to protection concerns. The importance of providing members of United Nations entities and country teams with additional, structured awareness-raising and training on how to apply a human rights-based approach was noted.

40. The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division and representatives of field presences from Ecuador and the Russian Federation also provided input on the role, responsibilities and scope for action of different types of field presences, adding that the recommendations of special procedures often informed their strategies.

41. Participants discussed specific examples of collaboration with special procedures in all regions, and the importance of ensuring that cooperation was part of a cycle of engagement aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights on the ground. Regular consultations with mandate holders where views on priority countries and issues could be exchanged were considered valuable, as were the mutual support and joint action on issues of common concerns. OHCHR could encourage greater cooperation by States and advocate for acceptance of country visit requests. It could also facilitate joint action with regional bodies and mechanisms. In addition, special procedures had a role in the development of national human rights action plans and their implementation.

42. Mandate holders expressed their appreciation for the support provided by OHCHR at Headquarters and in the field. They emphasized the need to enhance information-sharing and priority-setting, and decided to continue to discuss ways of maximizing collaboration for greater impact, particular in the light of resource constraints.

43. Participants also exchanged views with Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission on Social Development, Shuaib Chalklen, who described his mandate and referred to ongoing cooperation with several thematic and country-specific special procedures. Ways in which to enhance communication with special procedures were discussed, and greater interaction between the Special Rapporteur and mandate holders was recommended.

D. Exchange of views with civil society and national human rights institutions

44. Opening the exchange of views with civil society and national human rights institutions, the Chair of the Coordination Committee stressed the fact that mandate holders regarded civil society organizations and national human rights institutions as critical partners in their efforts to promote and protect human rights on the ground. The civil society organizations congratulated the Chair on her election, welcomed the new mandate holders, provided information on their collaboration with special procedures, made specific proposals on how to enhance their effectiveness and encouraged special procedures to dedicate more time to meeting them. It was suggested that enhanced cooperation by States was required, as low response rates to communications and negative responses by States, including those that had issued standing invitations, to visit requests were a matter of concern, as was the lack of resources available to special procedures. The organizations encouraged mandate holders to include information on cooperation with States in their annual reports and specific follow-up activities in their work plans. They also encouraged the Human Rights Council and States to take additional steps to follow up on implementation of recommendations. It was suggested that special procedures should engage strategically in the second cycle of the universal periodic review, including by using the preparation for the review in the country under review to issue invitations for country visits and to conduct follow-up. In relation to treaty bodies, the organizations commended the use by mandate holders of the recommendations made by treaty bodies in their preparation for country missions, and suggested that this should be strengthened. They also suggested that mandate holders should provide input into the development of Council resolutions, particularly those relating to the subject matter of their mandate, and to follow up on the implementation of them.

45. It was noted the space for civil society was shrinking in some countries, but it was positive that the outcome of the Human Rights Council review strongly rejected reprisals against persons who cooperated with human rights mechanisms. Reprisals were regarded as an attack on the integrity of the Council and the special procedures system, and mandate holders had the responsibility to follow up on cases of reprisals proactively, including by informing the President of the Council and the State concerned. The civil society organizations called for enhanced interaction of mandate holders during Council sessions and opportunities to provide input for thematic reports. They also encouraged mandate holders to obtain detailed and updated information from the organizations prior to country visits, and to coordinate their visit planning with each other to achieve more comprehensive coverage. The work of mandate holders on specific areas, such as the fight against torture, was welcomed and further encouraged. In particular, mandate holders were urged to strengthen the mainstreaming of disability issues into their work, including through the incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to cooperate with disabled persons' organizations, especially in the preparation of and during visits. The use of language in accordance with that of the Convention and further efforts to make documentation disability-accessible were also encouraged.

46. Mandate holders reiterated that civil society organizations are drivers of change, and encouraged human rights organizations to create coalitions beyond the traditional human rights mainstream for greater impact and change. They noted the challenges to the

recognition of economic, social and cultural rights, and emphasized the need for civil society organizations to enhance their communications with special procedures by including more detailed and reliable information. The importance of follow-up on communications to safeguard the safety of victims was stressed; mandate holders noted that they were considering further practical measures to protect individuals against reprisals. Civil society organizations were informed that a new joint communications report was being drafted to facilitate access and streamline reporting on communications, and the organizations were encouraged to use such reports as a basis of further advocacy and work with States.

47. The Chair highlighted the important role of civil society organizations in early warning and follow-up, and welcomed the concrete recommendations they had made. She encouraged non-governmental organizations working at the international level to disseminate information to local organizations, and to ensure that the opinions and concerns of the local organizations were transmitted to international human rights forums, including the special procedures. She emphasized the importance of social movements in accelerating human rights implementation, noting that they shared the objectives of human rights organizations.

48. A statement delivered by the Director of the German Institute for Human Rights on behalf of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions outlined the role of national human rights institutions in preparing and supporting country visits and following up on recommendations of special procedures. It was suggested that the manual of special procedures should be enhanced through the addition of guidance on working with national human rights institutions, that future induction sessions for new mandate holders include additional information on interaction with such institutions, and that a compilation of best practices on cooperation between institutions and special procedures be prepared. It was furthermore suggested by participants that mandate holders should participate in the proceedings of the International Coordination Committee.

Annex

List of special procedures of the Human Rights Council and other mandate holders invited to attend the eighteenth meeting

I. Thematic mandates

1. Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context
Rachel Rolnik (Brazil)
2. Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent
Mirjana Najcevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
3. Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
Malick El Hadji Sow (Senegal)
4. Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
Najat Maalla M'jid (Morocco)
5. Independent expert in the field of cultural rights
Farida Shaheed (Pakistan)
6. Special Rapporteur on the right to education
Kishore Singh (India)
7. Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
Jeremy Sarkin (South Africa)
8. Independent expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights
Cephas Lumina (Zambia)
9. Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions
Christof Heyns (South Africa)
10. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights
María Magdalena Sepúlveda (Chile)
11. Special Rapporteur on the right to food
Olivier De Schutter (Belgium)
12. Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
Frank William La Rue Lewy (Guatemala)*
13. Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief
Heiner Bielefeldt (Germany)*

* Did not attend.

14. Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
Anand Grover (India)
15. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders
Margaret Sekaggya (Uganda)
16. Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers
Gabriela Knaul (Brazil)
17. Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples
James Anaya (United States of America)
18. Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons
Chaloka Beyani (Zambia)
19. Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination
José Luis Gomez del Prado (Spain)
20. Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants
Jorge Bustamante (Mexico)
21. Independent expert on minority issues
Gay McDougall (United States of America)
22. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
Githu Muigai (Kenya)
23. Independent expert on human rights and international solidarity
Rudi Rizki (Indonesia)
24. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery
Gulnara Shahinian (Armenia)
25. Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism
Martin Scheinin (Finland)
26. Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
Juan Mendez (Argentina)
27. Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights
Calin Georgescu (Romania)
28. Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children
Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (Nigeria)
29. Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises
John Ruggie (United States of America)
30. Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences
Rashida Manjoo (South Africa)
31. Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation
Catarina de Albuquerque (Portugal)

32. Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice
Kamala Chandrakirana (Indonesia)
33. Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association
Maina Kiai (Kenya)

II. Country mandates

34. Independent expert on the situation of human rights in Burundi
Fatsah Ougergouz (Algeria)
35. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia
Surya Prasad Subedi (Nepal)
36. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Marzuki Darusman (Indonesia)
37. Independent expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti
Michel Forst (France)
38. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar
Tomás Ojea Quintana (Argentina)*
39. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967
Richard Falk (United States of America)*
40. Independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia
Shamsul Bari (Bangladesh)
41. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan
Mohamed Chande Othman (United Republic of Tanzania)

III. Other

42. Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide
Francis Deng
43. Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children
Marta Santos Pais
44. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
Radhika Coomaraswamy*
45. Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission on Social Development of the Economic and Social Council
Shuaib Chalklen
46. Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict
Margot Wallström*