



Informal consultations on the long-term review of UN human rights implementation mechanisms

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Statement by
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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue takes note of the reform proposals expressed in the Roadmap for 2019 and of the five fundamental questions raised by the President of the Human Rights Council in his letter of 11 March 2019.

The whole point of the reform in 2006, establishing the Human Rights Council, and the subsequent review exercise in 2010/2011, was to increase the credibility, efficiency and coherence of UN human rights mechanisms and to provide a cooperative atmosphere that would be conducive to their advancement, avoiding the “*naming and shaming*” which doomed the predecessor Commission of Human Rights.

In response to the questions posed by the President of the Council on the review of the status of the Council, our position is as follows:

Question 1

The Human Rights Council can of course contribute to the review of its status and submit its recommendations to the UN General Assembly.

Question 2

The crux of the issue is the forms that the Council’s contribution should take. Were the Council’s status to be enhanced to that of a main organ interacting with the UN Security Council, this would have two adverse impacts:

- a) it would limit the endorsement of human rights resolutions to a restricted body within which five members have veto power. This would therefore politicise human rights at a time when civil society organizations are exerting themselves to make values prevail over politics;
- b) The Council would likewise lose its access to universality which it gets from reporting to the UN General Assembly. This loss of universality would in fact downgrade the impact of its work unless the Council itself is enlarged to become a universal body.

Question 3

The question of making the Council a main organ of the UN should therefore be discussed jointly with that of broadening its membership to become a universal body.

Question 4

A pragmatic review of progress so far will give an opportunity to assess the transparency, efficiency, coherence and democratic operations of the UN human rights mechanisms as a whole in a way that would enhance its moral authority worldwide. The review of 2010/2011 was too politicized and therefore did not make much progress. The time has come to see whether a pragmatic review could take place.

Question 5

We suggest this could be undertaken during 2021 as foreseen in OP 3 of UN General Assembly Resolution 65/281 and be allocated adequate meeting time to avoid precipitation.

I thank you for your attention.