

FUNCTIONING OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (CCPR) IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract: This contribution critically discusses the actual and potential role of the UN Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) within the broader United Nations system, including its interactions with other treaty-based human rights bodies (e.g., the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), as well as other UN human rights mechanisms (i.e., political bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, its mechanisms, and procedures). It also turns to the analysis of the Committee's interactions with other parts of the UN system more broadly, and lastly, it looks beyond the UN system and analyzes working contacts with other international organizations and, particularly, the judicial bodies (e.g., the European Court of Human Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights) established in regional contexts. It evaluates the synergies and challenges of existing linkages and shares proposals for potential further enhancement of the interactions with international organizations, with the aim of supporting the achievement of their interconnected fundamental purposes in the 21st century.

Keywords: Human Rights, UN Human Rights Committee, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Human Rights Council, UN System, International Organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) system comprises the United Nations, established as an international intergovernmental organization in 1945. It currently has 173 member states and many funds, programs, and specialized agencies. Both are full-fledged international intergovernmental organizations, with their own areas of work, leadership, and budget. The UN coordinates its work with these separate UN system entities, which cooperate with it to help it achieve its goals (UN System website, 2022). Human rights, which have faced enormous challenges in recent years (e.g., phenomena of nationalism, populist, authoritarian, and illiberal democratic regimes, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination, coupled by responses to pandemic diseases, such as a global pandemic of COVID-19), have been one of the three main pillars (in addition to security and development) and areas of work of the UN, especially in the last decades (United Nations, Treaty Series, 1945).¹ Although human rights are at the very centre of the institutional and normative activities of the UN, it happens that they do not act promptly or decisively when they are faced with their most serious violations, which often result in mass atrocities (Sancin, 2017; 2019).² As a result, it is constantly faced with the need for dynamic adaptation in response to numerous challenges, which is exacerbated by competition and overlap between organs and institutions working in or related to human rights. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the UN is the only, although major, part of a much broader international human rights regime, which in addition to many specialized agencies (e.g., the International Labour Organization, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the World Health Organization), also encompasses a number of regional organizations (e.g., the Council of Europe, the European Union, the African Union, and the Organization of American States), which are significantly more focused on judicial adjudication (Alston, Mégret, 2020, p. 4). Although the role of civil society, particularly human rights-oriented NGOs, is ever-increasing globally,

¹ Article 1 of the UN Charter stipulates among its Purposes and Principles “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” (Para. 2) and to promote and encourage “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” (Para. 3).

² For example, abundant literature has been written on the principle of Responsibility to Protect, which has emerged from the above-mentioned failures.

regionally, and nationally, this contribution does not allow for further reflection on this important phenomenon. Recognizing the diversity and complexity of the international human rights regime, it is nevertheless still “the UN bodies, with their deep and varied legal mandates, based on the UN Charter, widely ratified treaties, or other initiatives, that give them a unique legitimacy and authority in developing human rights standards and policy”, while at the same time, the relationship between the UN and human rights remains infused with “the tension between the project of human rights and that of universal organization, both promising projects in their own rights, but whose *modus operandi* may be incompatible in a multiplicity of ways, both foreseeable and not” (Alston, Mégret, 2020, p. 5 and 7). Since the establishment of the UN, there has been a constant increase in the number of UN bodies devoted primarily to dealing with human rights matters. In recent decades, an increase in the time devoted to the human rights part of their mandate can be observed in some of the main organs of the UN that were initially not so invested in these topics (e.g., the Security Council and the International Court of Justice). There is also a degree of overlap between various bodies, which is particularly notable in the case of reporting obligations under treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council (HRC). Thus, the resulting complexity, and at times, inconsistency, is the inevitable result of a multiplicity of actors, sometimes seeking to achieve diverse objectives within the same overall institutional architecture. There is a multiplicity of classifications of different types of UN human rights bodies. One can distinguish between those composed of governmental (political) representatives and those composed of (legal) experts, but even this boundary is often blurred in practice. Although experts are elected or appointed, predominantly subject to prior nomination by their governments, they need to remain independent from the UN, and more importantly, their own governments, in order to further a less partisan vision of human rights. However, some degree of overlap exists even within the main intergovernmental body, the HRC, which establishes subsidiary expert bodies and special procedures, with independent human rights experts holding thematic or country mandates (e.g., special reporters, independent experts, working groups) (United Nations, 2022). It is also important to emphasize that the High Commissioner for Human Rights, heading the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), represents a special category of someone who is neither an independent expert nor a government representative, but a UN civil servant and a focal point for human rights at the UN, while at the same time enjoying a degree of autonomy in presenting views and assessments of events and situations that goes well beyond that of ordinary UN civil servants. For analytical purposes, however, it seems more

useful to make a distinction on the basis of whether the bodies were established under the UN Charter (i.e., Charter-based organs) or specific international human rights treaties (i.e., treaty bodies). The UN Human Rights Committee was established on the basis of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted in 1966.³ Unlike the political bodies of the UN, such as the Human Rights Council, since its foundation, this body has been a treaty and expert body of the world organization and is often called the Committee on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR). (United Nations, Treaty Series United Nations, 1976, p. 171; 1977, p. 407; UN Treaty Collection, 2022).⁴ The aim of this contribution is to critically discuss its role in the contemporary UN system, taking into account the challenges it is facing and possible solutions going forward. It tackles its interactions with other UN treaty-based human rights bodies as well as UN Charter-based bodies (Schultz, & Castan, 2004; Schabas, 2019). It includes insights into the CCPR's interactions with other parts of the UN system more broadly and looks beyond the UN system and analyses working contacts with other international organisations,

³ The ICCPR entered into force on March 23, 1976, in accordance with Article 49 for all provisions except those of Article 41, and on March 28, 1979, for the provisions of article 41 (Human Rights Committee), in accordance with paragraph 2 of the said Article 41. As of June 29, 2022, it has 173 states parties.

⁴ There currently exist ten human rights treaty bodies: in addition to the CCPR, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) monitoring the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) under the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) under the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee against Torture (CAT) under the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT) under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) under the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) under the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) under the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) under the 2006 International Convention for the Protection of all Persons against Enforced Disappearance.

particularly the regional human rights courts (e.g., the European Court of Human Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights). It assesses synergies and challenges of existing linkages or lack thereof, and shares proposals for potential further enhancement of interactions with international organizations, with the aim of supporting the achievement of their interconnected goals in the 21st century.

THE ROLE AND MANDATE OF THE CCPR

The essential role of each treaty body is to monitor and encourage compliance with a particular treaty regime. A significant treaty body system growth since the establishment of the first treaty body in 1969 has greatly enhanced human rights protection, but has also brought about some challenges, such as a growing backlog of State reports, individual communications, and urgent actions, insufficient compliance by States parties with their reporting obligations (over 80% of States fail to comply), diverging working methods among the treaty bodies. In response, several initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of the treaty body system were undertaken (Independent Expert Philip Alston's reports (1988–1996); the UN Secretary-General's proposal of a single report (2002–2006); High Commissioner's proposal of a unified standing treaty body (2006)), including the adoption in 2014, by the UN General Assembly, of a resolution 68/268 titled "Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system" (A/RES/68/268), to "consider the state of the human rights treaty body system no later than six years from the date of adoption of the present resolution, to review the effectiveness of the measures taken in order to ensure their sustainability, and, if appropriate, to decide on further action to strengthen and enhance the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system". In 2020, the two co-facilitators, Switzerland and Morocco, presented their report for the review of the UN human rights treaty body system. However, in its "omnibus" biennial resolution on the treaty body system, adopted on October 30, 2020, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly "takes note" of the co-facilitator's report but falls short of welcoming it, or recommending any action towards the implementation of the recommendations it makes. One of the central aspects of the process started by resolution 68/268 is that, according to the 68/268 formula, the member states must provide adequate resources for the treaty body system and should seek to ensure they adequately fund all aspects of the treaty bodies' work, a prospect that is yet to be fully realized. Another important aspect, where the functioning of the treaty bodies should be further strengthened and rendered

more effective, is the improved coordination of their periodic review function, which increases the accessibility and predictability of the process. The CCPR monitors the implementation of the ICCPR and encourages each state party: to adopt and maintain in place those laws, policies, and practices that enhance the enjoyment of these rights; possibly withdraw or suitably amend those measures that are destructive or corrosive of ICCPR rights; take appropriate positive action when a state party has failed to act to promote and protect these rights; and consider appropriately the effects in terms of the ICCPR of new laws, policies and practices that a state party proposes to introduce in order to ensure that it does not regress in giving practical effect to ICCPR rights. Over the years, the CCPR's work has resulted in many changes in law, policy, and practice. Although the cause and effect relationship of its work is not necessarily easy to determine, there are many positive stories where, for example, a recommendation was followed-up with the establishment of a human rights institution and its operation significantly improved the situation of human rights holders in a particular state party, or where an individual complaint led to positive results for the individual(s) concerned, be it in the form of a payment of compensation, a commutation of a death sentence, a retrial, an investigation into particular events, or a number of other remedies in the state party concerned. The states parties are obligated to submit periodic reports to the CCPR on how civil and political rights are being implemented in their respective legal frameworks and practice. After the initial report, which needs to be submitted one year after acceding to the ICCPR, each state party is to be reviewed every eight years in accordance with the adopted Predictable Review Cycle (PRC), pioneered by the CCPR and accepted as a common approach by all treaty-bodies at the 2022 annual meeting of the treaty-body chairs (The Geneva Human Rights Platform. 2022).⁵ The CCPR examines each state's report and replies to the List of Issues (LOI) or List of Issues prior to reporting (LOIPR) – the latter in accordance with its simplified reporting procedure, accepted by a great majority of its state parties – and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the state party in the form of “Concluding observations” (COBs) after it has conducted a “constructive dialogue” of six

⁵ The Conclusions of the Chairs of the treaty bodies at the 34th meeting of the Chairs of the treaty bodies from June 17, 2022, (unpublished at the time of submission of this contribution) stipulate: “All treaty bodies agreed to establish a predictable schedule of reviews. The Committees that have periodic reviews (CESCR, HRC, CERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, CRPD, and CMW) will establish an eight-year review cycle for full reviews with follow-up reviews in between”.

hours over two days (when the delegation is present in Geneva), or, exceptionally, over three days (when the delegation participates online). In each COB, 2-4 (usually 3) “priority recommendations” are selected for the process of Follow-up to COBs, led by the CCPR’s Special Reporter on Follow-up to COBs to monitor progress during the cycle by adopting a Follow-up report in the middle of the cycle (under the 8-year PRC, in the fourth year) (Note by the Human Rights Committee, December 23, 2021). The CCPR initiated the process of follow-up to concluding observations in 2001, 2002 and 2009. The inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies recommended that all treaty bodies should develop procedures for follow-up on concluding observations as these are an integral part of the reporting procedure. In the review process, in addition to the information submitted by the state party, all available sources of information, including those originating from other treaty bodies, special procedures, the Universal Periodic Review, and the UN system, as well as from regional human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), can be, and regularly are, considered. One challenge yet to be fully overcome in practice is how to organise all the periodic reviews in a manner that does not add to, but rather alleviates the reporting burden on the state parties, through a well-organised and managed review calendar (Shany & Cleveland, 2016). A “digital uplift” project ongoing within the OHCHR will undoubtedly provide a great impetus towards the realisation of this objective. Although Article 41 of the ICCPR provides for the CCPR to consider inter-state complaints, no state has initiated this procedure to date.⁶ Furthermore, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (OP), adopted at the same time as the ICCPR, gives the CCPR competence to examine individual complaints regarding alleged violations of the ICCPR by the states parties to the OP (a quasi-judicial function of the CCPR) (UN Treaty Collection, 2022).⁷ The fact that not all states parties to the ICCPR have joined the OP creates a situation where an individual’s access to this supervisory mechanism depends on whether the alleged human rights

⁶ However, on March 8, 2018, for the first time in history, the CEDAW received two interstate communications submitted by Qatar against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates under Article 11 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. On April 23, 2018, the State of Palestine submitted an interstate communication to the CEDAW against Israel.

⁷ The OP entered into force on March 23, 1976, in accordance with Article 9. As of June 29, 2022, it has 117 states parties.

violation occurred within a state party's territory or the individual was at the time of its occurrence subject to its jurisdiction.

The CCPR appears nowadays to be the closest institution to an international adjudicatory body for human rights or a "universal human rights court" (Hennebel, 2020, p. 355). If it accepts the complaint and finds a violation or a non-violation of the CCPR, it adopts Views, which are not legally-binding judgments such as those adopted by regional human rights courts, but carry significant weight and the states parties found to have committed a violation of the ICCPR are expected to report to the CCPR on measures taken to ensure effective remedy and full reparation to the victims (a separate follow-up process to Views is carried out by designated special reporters). The CCPR developed rich jurisprudence, which is being regularly consulted also by other UN charter and treaty bodies and regional human rights courts (Nowak, 2005; Schabas, 2019). With regard to the latter, the CCPR started organising periodic consultations to exchange views on certain jurisprudential developments and methods of work. A serious challenge for the CCPR in recent years has been the increasing backlog of individual communications, which is a source of frustration for individuals alleging violations of their rights, as well as members of the committee and secretariat staff, which can, within the existing capacities, process only a certain number of communications. In addition to various civil society organizations raising concerns, a group of states parties to the OP wrote to the OHCHR in 2022, suggesting that certain measures be taken to address this growing concern. Taking into account the developments in recent years, including the withdrawal of the Russian Federation from the European Convention on Human Rights, the pressure on the CCPR in terms of new individual communications can be reasonably expected to grow exponentially, and a new strategy for effectively addressing this serious concern is desperately needed.

In 1989, states adopted the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, which has yet to achieve universal acceptance (United Nations Treaty Series, 1991).⁸ The CCPR also publishes its interpretations of the content of ICCPR's provisions, known as "General Comments" (GC), on thematic issues or its methods of work (Sancin, 2022).⁹ A number of domestic and

⁸ The Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights entered into force on July 11, 1991, in accordance with Article 8(1). As of June 29, 2022, it has 90 states parties.

⁹ The CCPR has so far adopted 37 GC, although some of them address the same topic. A few of these address procedural matters, others relate to general or overarching

international, including regional, judicial bodies ascribe to them significant legal authority and weight (e.g., the Grand Chamber of the ECtHR in *Perinçek v Switzerland*, 2015; IACtHR, *Poblete Vilches and Others v Chile*, 2018). The arguably most prominent pronouncement on this issue comes from the International Court of Justice in *Ahmadou Sadio Diallo* (2010), where the Court stated that “it should ascribe great weight to the interpretation adopted by this independent body (CCPR) that was established specifically to supervise the application of that treaty. The point here is to achieve the necessary clarity and the essential consistency of international law, as well as legal security, to which both the individuals with guaranteed rights and the States obliged to comply with treaty obligations are entitled” (Para. 66). Therefore, GCs “tend to have a quasi-legislative character” (Ando, 2008, Para. 41) and “form some sort of persuasive body of jurisprudence” (Hennebel, 2020, p. 370).

THE COMPOSITION OF THE CCPR

The CCPR is composed of 18 independent experts, who are nationals of the states parties to the ICCPR (only one national of the same state can be a member of each CCPR’s composition (Art. 31(1) ICCPR) and shall be persons of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights, consideration being given to the usefulness of the participation of some persons having legal experience (Art. 28(2) ICCPR) and to an equitable geographical distribution of membership and the representation of the different forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems (Art. 31(2) ICCPR). The members shall be elected for a term of four years (Art. 32 ICCPR) by secret ballot by all states parties and shall serve in their personal capacity (Art. 28(3) and 29 ICCPR). Experts can be nominated only by the states parties of their own nationalities, which in practice makes a nomination for election or re-election of the members dependent strictly on the will and timely action of the respective governments, as well as their “vote” prior to each election, raising a number of concerns regarding the polarization of the process, transparency issues, etc. (Callejon, 2021). Although the ICCPR (Art. 35) envisages that “the members of the Committee shall, with the approval of the General Assembly of the United Nations, receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the General Assembly may

matters concerning the ICCPR or substantive obligations. However, the majority relate to a particular provision of the ICCPR and the substantive rights and obligations flowing therefrom.

decide, having regard to the importance of the Committee's responsibilities", the members work strictly *pro bono* and have never been paid for their work, which, considering the ever-growing workload, raises another set of concerns, including the availability of competent experts. Furthermore, the composition of the CCPR does not reflect the gender representation in the world population, although it should. When electing new members, the states parties should also give special emphasis to this criterion in an attempt to ensure gender parity in the composition of the committee.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK AND WORKING METHODS OF THE CCPR

The CCPR adopted its Rules of procedure that guide its work in addition to the ICCPR (Human Rights Committee, 2021). It normally holds three sessions per year and, in principle, meets in Geneva at the OHCHR Secretariat premises, where dedicated staff from the office support its work. It used to meet for one session per year also in New York and is currently discussing the option of introducing the possibility of "rowing sessions", which would if adopted as an approach for the future, mean that once a year, a session would be organized in a selected region and the CCPR would review the states parties from that region. Such "country reviews" in the regions at the UN Headquarters could, among other advantages,¹⁰ strengthen the UN nature of committees' work and facilitate a focus on the challenges of a particular region, with multiple country reviews from that region. A number of other ideas have been circulated, including the one to consider conducting *in situ* reviews (in one country). That would, however, necessitate prior invitations by respective countries, which might be difficult to reconcile with an 8-year PRC and would also not facilitate multiple country reviews.¹¹ Another idea, presented by the Geneva Academy, is to introduce the "mid-term focused reviews (originally called "TRIPS")", where a committee would send a couple of members to a country for a few days to review the implementation of selected COBs, could again only happen by invitation of the respective state party, and departs from the idea of reviews being

¹⁰ The idea was initiated in the CCPR by its member Christof Heyns (2017-2020) and further developed by its member, Marcia Kran (2017-2024).

¹¹ In 2019, the CRC was conducted as a pilot project such as the *in situ* review in Samoa, which was very resource intensive, and the necessary resources for the effective work of the treaty bodies are already lacking to efficiently tackle the growing backlogs.

conducted by the entirety of the committees' membership observing the principle of "equitable geographical distribution of membership and representation of the different forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems" (Art. 31(2), ICCPR), which could in consequence negatively impact the COBs.

In preparation for each session, the selected CCPR members are organized into various task forces, led by a country reporter, for reviews of state parties up for "constructive dialogues" in that session. Those who participate in a pre-sessional working group on individual communications are also assigned as reporters for drafting decisions on individual communications and need to prepare drafts in advance of the session. For the states parties' reviews, the members distribute the issues (from LOI or LOIPR) among themselves, prepare questions for the respective state party, and, in this process, consult all available materials from all parts of the UN system, who have worked on the relevant aspects of the state party under review. Before each review, the CCPR regularly holds briefings with various stakeholders, including different international organisations and separate briefings with civil society organisations, in person and increasingly also online (Centre for Civil and Political Rights, 2022).¹² In particular, the experience with the COVID-19 pandemic has led the CCPR to continue its work online, which was far from an optimal setting. But after returning to in-person sessions in Geneva, it proved that some reasonable combination of the core members of the delegation being present in the room with the committee members, and some others offering some specific information online (limited to short intervention due to restrictions of available interpretation for online participation) might be maintained going forward when this increases accessibility and ensures greater participation while lessening the burden on the states parties. During the dialogue, which always takes place in a public session and is webcasted, the members are asked to observe a "3-minute per question" rule when they are members of the task force, and a "1-minute per question" rule when they are not, in order to leave sufficient time for the delegation of the state party to provide answers. Oftentimes, the questions of task force members and answers of the members of the delegation use up all the allocated time, meaning that other members will rarely have an opportunity to ask additional questions, which is regrettable, but necessary given the limited time available

¹² Particularly for the CCPR, the members benefit enormously from all the work in support of the Committee's mandate conducted by the NGO, called the Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre).

for the review of each state party. Thus, external observers might sometimes wish that more detailed questions and more questions generally, including about findings by other bodies and international organisations, could be asked during the dialogue, but there is simply no time to do that under the current architecture of the CCPR's functioning. Should the state party wish to provide the committee with any further information or explanation, it can do so within 48 hours after the conclusion of the last day of the dialogue. The CCPR then moves to the drafting of the COBs and adopts them in a closed session. They are shared with the state party for technical errors first, and afterwards published on the designated OHCHR website. The working group on individual communication discusses all drafts one week prior to each session and prepares them for adoption in the plenary during the session. Trying to tackle the increasing backlog of individual communications within the existing insufficient resources, the CCPR adopted various techniques that could speed up its decision-making, including working in chambers, joining communications based on similar facts arising out of the same events in a concrete state party, preparing separate folders of repetitive cases, etc. All of these measures, while important and helpful, cannot address the persistent growth of the backlog. When the committee works on the elaboration of the new GC, usually one member serves as a reporter for that GC. This person is also the one who coordinates, with the assistance of the office staff, any meetings with relevant stakeholders, including international organizations, to receive their input on the topic of discussion in the GC under elaboration. In cases where any extra-budgetary resources are donated by certain states or available within relevant international organisations, the CCPR may also organise regional consultations, including with the regional human rights courts on relevant jurisprudence concerning the topic of the GC. The three working languages of the CCPR are English, French, and Spanish. Each document of the Committee thus needs to be translated into these three languages, which indirectly impacts the permitted length of the decisions adopted by the committee (max. 10,700 words).¹³ Therefore, the quality of argumentation, particularly in Views, and even more so in separate opinions, is oftentimes a victim of the strict word count limits, which is regrettable as it might affect its persuasiveness.

¹³ The word limit was set by the UN General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/68/268, Para. 15.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite various efforts to avoid unnecessary repetition and overlaps and the organization of coordination meetings among treaty-body chairs and the HRC's Special Procedures mandate-holders, the problems of duplication have by no means been resolved. Nevertheless, efforts are underway to reduce them and even profit from them (e.g., by organizing back-to-back reviews with the CESCR even before the adoption of a global calendar for all treaty bodies), while trying to ensure overall coherency, avoid competition, and rather endeavour to achieve synergies among them. Despite occasional attempts by the states parties to demonstrate to the CCPR otherwise, no country's record of protecting and promoting civil and political rights is without challenges that consequently trigger concerns expressed in COBs or Views. For the treaty bodies, including the CCPR, to be able to successfully continue their mandates, the states parties will need to address some of the major obstacles they are facing in the 21st century, such as providing them with sufficient material and human resources and elect best qualified and independent members in a transparent process, taking into account the need for gender parity. The increasing workload also calls for re-consideration of the long-term feasibility of the system as it currently stands with only a limited number of weeks of sessions per year. While the CCPR has already developed some practices of reaching out to other treaty bodies, through the appointment of focal points among members for each of the other treaty bodies, arranging briefings with other parts of the UN human rights system and organising inter-sessional meetings with regional human rights courts, there is certainly still room for more systematic consultation and coordination with various parts of the UN system and broader. However, to be fully materialized seems to require a shift from the *pro bono* work of its members to full-time paid positions on the committee for, ideally, a non-renewable 8-year mandate. Finally, the committees regularly refer to the General Comments and Recommendations when examining reports and engaging in constructive dialogue with state representatives or adopting Views, and it is noteworthy that in recent years, some of them have engaged in the preparation of joint projects. In particular, when it comes to issues that are of concern to most or all of them, such an approach seems a welcome innovation, and the CCPR should in the future consider the benefits and feasibility of a common approach to some crosscutting human rights issues, including the impact of climate change on fundamental human rights. In these endeavours, it seems indispensable that committees take into account and are informed by developments in all other subject-matter relevant mechanisms, organs and international organisations,

in addition to contributions from the states parties and all other relevant stakeholders (e.g., NGOs and academia), which again requires more time and resources. For the CCPR to keep its significance going forward, it is urgent to ensure its evolution, including through the use of modern technologies in its functioning. Nevertheless, given the developments in the global community of the 21st century and the growing world population that should enjoy fundamental civil and political rights at all times, nothing short of a small revolution, resulting in the establishment of a full-time permanent human rights body, capable of timely legal assessments of the human rights situations and alleged violations at a universal level, is warranted.

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