

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



= Enhancement dialogue and cooperation UN HR machinery =

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Summary

The most essential part of the UN HR (United Nations Human Rights) machinery is the follow-up. The UN HR machinery should be defined broadly to ensure effective follow-up on concluding observations, decisions and resolutions among others. In addition to the HRC (Human Rights Council), treaty bodies, special procedures, UPR (Universal Periodic Review) and OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights), other UN bodies should be included. To capitalize the dialogue and cooperation within the HR machinery cross-cutting issues can be used to build best practices.

Broadening the UN HR machinery

The UN HR machinery can be viewed in a narrow perspective by purely looking at the HRC, treaty bodies, UPR, special procedures and OHCHR. WILPF believes that a broad definition is needed which includes other UN programmes, funds, ECOSOC commissions, specialized agencies and secretariats.

WILPF would like to put a focus on the following UN organs, in line with its organisational interest:

UN Organs	Role in UN HR Machinery:
<i>Principal Organs</i> Security Council General Assembly	Follow-up on HRC Resolutions which are addressed to the SC. Address non-compliance with human rights and improve compliance.
<i>Programmes and Funds</i> UNCTAD UNEP UNDP UNIFEM UNRWA	Provision of essential information to OHCHR, HRC member and observer states, Special Procedure holders and treaty body members. Implementation of HRC Resolutions.
<i>Research Institutes</i> UNICRI INSTRAW UNRISD	Provision of essential information to OHCHR, HRC member and observer states, Special Procedure holders and treaty body members. Research specified issues upon request.
<i>ECOSOC Commissions</i> CSW CSD CCPCJ	Inform Member and Observer States within the HRC of the main developments.
<i>Specialized Agencies</i> ILO FAO WHO UNESCO	Inform Member and Observer States within the HRC of the main developments. Implementation of HRC Resolutions.

Increasing cooperation

Human Rights Council:

The HRC is at the core of the HR machinery. The OHCHR plays a crucial role in informing the HRC Members and Observers of developments within other UN organs. To increase the importance of the HRC work, Members and Observers need to have access to comprehensive and sufficient streams of information from within the full UN

system. In order to make this happen the OHCHR should reach out more strongly to UN organs that can provide information and direction. Another challenge is the follow-up on annual discussions, specifically those on the integration of a gender perspective. The reports on these discussions should be spread further among the UN organs which could be involved. In the case of gender discussions one could think of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI, UNIFEM, CSW and in the near future the new UN Entity for Women.

Universal Periodic Review:

The UPR is currently already functioning beneficially for the HR machinery. It reviews all UN Member States, increases national consultations with civil society and has stakeholder and OHCHR documents as its basis. Attention is put on certain Conventions which have not been signed yet or where there is a lack of reporting towards. In some countries UPR reporting mechanisms are set up, which strengthens the national reporting to the Treaty Bodies.

The main opportunity can be found in the complementarity between treaty bodies and the UPR. It is wise to cite the treaty body when a recommendation is given by a State, to add normative strength. Another opportunity can be found in the organization of the UPR follow-up system. WILPF recommends that greater collaboration between the UPR and treaty bodies can be reached via a vigorous forum in which chairs of all treaty bodies and the UPR meet regularly. The role of grassroots information is an important opportunity in developing the UN HR machinery. Accurate information of de facto situations is crucial. WILPF recommends further strengthening of grassroots NGO capacities through training in understanding the UN system, writing reports and cooperation with the government. This will both lead to successful transfer of global UN developments to the grassroots level, as it will provide the UN system with the crucial knowledge of the situation on the ground.

Treaty bodies:

The role of the independent experts that make up the committees and in-depth reviews are strengths of the treaty bodies. Weaknesses can be found in its lack of follow-up on concluding observations and compliance with reporting requirements and overall human rights commitments connected to ratifying human rights treaties. Both the UPR & treaty bodies have to learn from each other to improve this. An opportunity for the treaty bodies lies in a further reach out of its concluding observations and general comments in comprehensive easy accessible booklets.

Cross-cutting issues

Dialogue and cooperation in the HR machinery can be capitalized to its fullest via cross-cutting issues. WILPF would like to propose the following two cross-cutting issues.

- UN Gender Architecture:

On the 15th of September of this year a General Assembly resolution was passed to establish a new UN agency for women. This allows different entities within the UN HR machinery to increase their cooperation. The HRC for example can act and support this major development by strengthening the Women's Rights and Gender Unit within the OHCHR and facilitate information sharing with this new agency in the near future. It could in addition push for an effective mandate and sufficient funding to ensure the new agency's success via the General Assembly. Furthermore it could be an incentive to follow-up on the Annual Day on Women's Rights held in June 2009 and the Council's installation of a Special Procedure to Research and Make Known the Continued Discrimination and Inequality of Women Before the Law. On top of the roles of the HRC and the OHCHR, the UPR and CEDAW play a role. Within the UPR CEDAW's Concluding Observations should be reiterated more strongly and a focus should be put on the level of CEDAW ratification and compliance by the States.

- Military expenditure:

Human rights defenders are continually faced with non-compliance with human rights standards and the lack of financial strength within governments to turn this around. Although the UN is at the core of disarmament, it seems that the disarmament discussion has not been streamlined throughout the UN HR machinery. How would the human rights situation of the world be when there were less armed conflicts? What would it mean if people would have a right to peace? What would be the effects if armed conflict would be seen as an illegal way to react to conflict?

These are questions which should be asked throughout the UN HR machinery. WILPF sees a possibility in the discussion surrounding military expenditure as one that would increase the international cooperation and dialogue between the main UN organs involved. Independent experts in treaty bodies could raise the question of military expenditure, which could be followed up by a discussion within the HRC. Furthermore, UNIDIR (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research) for example could be requested to research the matter further.