

tive approaches; (b) facilitating a differentiation between small but rich and well-resourced states and others; and (c) suggesting ways in which the reporting burden for such states might be eased;

- ♦ in relation to the possibility of adopting a "focussed report" method, the principal criteria in determining the appropriate focus of more limited reports include the recommendations contained in the previous concluding observations on that state, significant new measures of a legislative, judicial, administrative or policy nature, and any issues identified by a pre-sessional working group as requiring a sustained focus;
- ♦ the Secretariat aim to provide each treaty body, as a minimum, with a structured analysis of the issues raised during the dialogue with states and the responses provided or not provided; this analysis be prepared in such a way as to provide a good foundation for the drafting of the concluding observations according to the approach adopted by each committee;
- ♦ a new genre of "joint statements" be considered to enable the committees to address issues of common concern, and without taking such matters to the level of general comments, and enable different treaty bodies to work together to address issues of current importance;
- ♦ the High Commissioner for Human Rights launch a major new programme to make available adequate human rights training to a wide range of interested parties; such training be undertaken primarily at the national level, rather than on a regional basis, and be made available to all government departments involved in implementation of the treaties, the judiciary, police, etc., and all interested parts of civil society; an inventory of all training programmes in this area be undertaken; and the OHCHR make an effort to coordinate with other institutions providing training in order to maximize the effectiveness of the training provided and to explore the possibility of exploiting electronic means of providing target audiences with training materials and information;
- ♦ human rights training be provided to all UN personnel in the field, particularly those engaged in missions that may have an impact on the enjoyment of human rights in the areas where they are stationed, including peacekeepers; and
- ♦ that, in the future, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights not be required to report to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Human Rights, but rather that steps be taken to ensure that the report of the Committee is made available to the Commission for its consideration, without altering the formal reporting arrangements now in place.

The report of the September 1998 regular meeting of the chairpersons (A/53/432, Annex) notes that a private meeting with the representatives of states parties was

held to discuss how to improve the work of the treaty bodies and to promote implementation of their concluding observations. Among the issues discussed were: that the success in obtaining ratifications had not been accompanied by an increase in the human resources made available to meet the increased workload; the serious backlog of communications in those committees which have communications procedures; two recent denunciations of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the backlog of state reports received and not yet examined; the problem of overdue reports; and the problem of giving effect to the recommendations of the expert committees.

The agenda of the meeting covered a number of the points raised in previous sessions. The observations and recommendations of the meeting included some of those noted above as well as, *inter alia*, that:

- ♦ the geographical and gender imbalances reflected in the composition of certain of the treaty bodies was entirely unsatisfactory; states parties should make a concerted effort to remedy the imbalances;
- ♦ the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities increasingly draw on the expertise of the treaty bodies in general, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in particular, when preparing studies on such topics as ethnic conflict, education and racial discrimination, globalization in the context of the increase in incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, affirmative action, migrant workers and the rights of non-citizens;
- ♦ ways to improve the communication and information flow between the various UN mechanisms be explored; the current practice of special rapporteurs occasionally participating in meetings of treaty bodies be institutionalized;
- ♦ the OHCHR develop a concerted and comprehensive action programme to promote universal ratification in cooperation with specialized agencies and UN funds and programmes, in particular with the UNDP;
- ♦ it was desirable to strive towards focussed periodic reports, taking into account the limited scope of the issues covered by some of the treaties;
- ♦ it would be desirable for the treaty bodies to meet in both Geneva and New York on the basis that: this would enhance the effectiveness and visibility of their work; occasional sessions in New York would enable the four committees that do not presently meet there (CRC, CAT, CESCR and CERD) to: establish better contacts with states parties which do not have permanent missions in Geneva, make their work much more widely known to a broader range of interested groups, facilitate contacts with non-governmental organizations and media, and provide an important opportunity for interaction with other international organizations which do not actively follow the work of the treaty bodies in Geneva; such a system would also