

Section B.

Bodies, Procedures and Terminology

This section is intended to provide very brief descriptions of bodies, procedures and terminology used throughout this report. The terms are listed alphabetically. As well, each volume contains a glossary of acronyms commonly used throughout the report.

1503 Procedure: ECOSOC Resolution 1503 (1970) authorized the Sub-Commission on Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to appoint a working group (i.e., the Working Group on Communications) to consider all communications received by the United Nations "with a view to bringing to the attention of the Sub-Commission those communications, together with replies of Governments, if any, which appear to reveal a consistent pattern of gross and reliably-attested violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms." Under the 1503 procedure, the deliberations of the WG which makes recommendations to the Sub-Commission, the deliberations of the Sub-Commission which makes recommendations to the Commission, and the deliberations of the CHR, which makes recommendations to ECOSOC are all confidential. However, the Commission publicly announces the names of the countries which it is considering under 1503, as well as countries dropped from this list. Governments often go to great lengths to avoid being put on this "black list" of gross violators.

Accession: See *Ratification*.

Commission on Human Rights (CHR): a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), established in 1945 in accordance with article 68 of the United Nations Charter. The CHR, currently comprised of 53 member States, meets annually for a six week session (in March/April) in Geneva. The CHR has played a major role in setting international human rights standards by drafting the International Bill of Human Rights, and many other seminal UN conventions and declarations. The Commission also monitors the implementation of human rights standards and, for this purpose, it has developed a complex system of thematic and country-specific mechanisms, including special rapporteurs and representatives, working groups, and independent experts. In recent years, it has also set up several funds to assist victims of human rights abuses. Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC may attend sessions of the CHR and make written or oral interventions.

Committee Against Torture (CAT): one of six treaty bodies, the CAT is comprised of 10 experts mandated to oversee the implementation of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entered into force on 26 June 1987. States parties which have ratified the Convention are required to submit reports to the Committee every four years on the measures they have taken towards its implementation. Members of CAT review these reports and engage in a dialogue with representatives of the States parties before presenting CAT's concluding observations. As well, CAT considers communications from or on behalf of individuals claiming to be victims of torture, and may consider communications from one State claiming that another is not fulfilling its obligations

under the Convention. The Committee may make confidential inquiries into reliably-attested practices of torture in States, and it has developed an urgent action procedure to respond to cases where individuals are under threat of torture.

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) was created in May 1985 by a resolution of ECOSOC to monitor the effective implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which entered into force in 3 January 1976. CESCR is comprised of 18 independent experts who are elected for four year terms. The Committee meets twice a year in three week sessions in Geneva to examine reports of States parties on the action they have taken and the progress made towards the full enjoyment of the rights contained in the Covenant. As well, the Committee has held general discussions on specific human rights concerns and written General Comments which serve as jurisprudential statements interpreting articles of the Covenant.

Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was created to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which was adopted 1979 by the General Assembly and entered into force on 3 September 1981. CEDAW, which meets twice a year for two week sessions in New York, is composed of 23 women, experts in the field of their work, elected by the States parties. CEDAW is mandated to examine periodic reports that States parties to the Convention are required to submit every four years, on the legal, judicial and policy measures taken and on the actual situation of the process of fully integrating women in the political, economic, social and cultural areas of their society. The Committee offers suggestions and makes recommendations to States parties based on their discussions with government representatives. Recently, CERD also began issuing General Comments interpreting the content of articles of the Convention.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) monitors the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination which entered into force on 4 January 1969. CERD, comprised of 18 independent experts who serve for four year terms, meets twice a year for sessions of three weeks. CERD's members examine the periodic reports States parties are required to make every two years, and issue comments and recommendations on the basis of their dialogue with government representatives. In addition, CERD may not receive, study and give following to individual and State complaints alleging non-respect of the obligations set by the Convention by a State party to that Convention. CERD is also designated to monitors the aim of the Convention regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC): CRC, composed of 10 experts who serve in their individual capacity, monitors the effective implementation by States parties of the rights set out in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Convention was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2 September 1990. This convention is the one which has the largest number of ratifications; only two States (USA and Somalia) have not yet ratified. States parties to the