**Third Annual Seminar series for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) on the topic: Participations of NHRIs in the International Human Rights System and the Role of NHRIs as Institutions of Accountability**

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**“Why the United Nations New York based processes need NHRIs – with reference to the Sustainable Development Goals”**

Please let me thank the United Nations Development Programme, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the German Permanent Mission for facilitating this important event.

The question I wish to address is why the UN New York based processes need NHRIs.

In answering this question I shall refer to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

*What is the role of NHRIs in the SDGs?*

There are many dimensions and all fit with the framework and needs of the SDGs..

It is important to note the cross-regional nature of NHRIs which are organised in four regional networks across Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe.

Also important is the primary focus of all NHRIs on the national implementation of all internationally recognised human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural.

NHRI activities shall include influencing national plans and indicators. Of critical importance shall then be the monitoring and reporting on implementation. In this regard NHRIs shall become valuable actors as institutions of accountability.

*Where shall NHRIs report to?*

NHRIs have reported to date to the UN Geneva based processes. These include the UN Human Rights Council, the Universal Periodic Review, treaty body committees and Special Rapporteurs.

This Geneva-based engagement has worked well for all concerned. For example, through the Universal Periodic Review process member states regularly call on their peers to take steps to establish Paris Principles compliant NHRIs.

This is in recognition of the added value brought by the unique role of constructive accountability played by NHRIs as bridges between the national context and the international human rights system.

*What shall the UN New York based SDG review process gain from NHRI reporting to Geneva?*

The answer is that it shall not gain as much as it needs to.

For example, it shall only receive the NHRI reports to Geneva on a second hand basis.

Additionally, such NHRI reports shall only be able to report indirectly to Geneva on SDG implementation. This is because such reports have to be tailored to fit the treaty based structures and not directly and comprehensively review SDG implementation per se.

Furthermore, such NHRI reports shall not directly contribute to the dynamic and distinctive nature of the SDG review process in New York. This shall inhibit the sharing of good practice and relevant experiences – both positive as well as negative - of SDG implementation.

There is already across the regions a wealth of such relevant experience gained by NHRIs as part of the Millennium Development Goals implementation process.

For example, the South Africa Human Rights Commission’s focus on maternal mortality; the recommendations from the German Institute for Human Rights on the establishment by Germany of an independent complaints mechanism in relation to its international development programme; the nationwide investigation by the Columbian Ombudsman’s Office into access to and quality of the water supply and the examination by the Indian National Human Rights Commission of the budget expenditures at mental health centres.

*Finally, what of the three UN pillars of peace and security, development and human rights?*

Experience has shown that the first two pillars can only be effectively realised if aligned with the third pillar. The first two pillars are primarily New York based and the third primarily Geneva based although we now note the plans of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to re-locate significant resources to New York.

Member states have successfully established NHRIs as part of the bricks of the third pillar. My message to you today is to let the pillars stand together. Let NHRIs also work constructively with you here in New York to help review and realise the SDGs.

I thank you for your attention.