

## HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

The human rights treaty bodies are committees of independent experts that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties. They are created in accordance with the provisions of the treaty that they monitor. There are nine human rights treaty bodies and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT). Following is the list of the main treaty bodies:

1. **The Human Rights Committee** : Monitors implementation of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) and its optional protocols
2. **The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)**: Monitors implementation of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966)
3. **The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)**: Monitors implementation of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (1965)
4. **The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**: Monitors implementation of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979) and its optional protocol (1999)
5. **The Committee Against Torture (CAT)**: Monitors implementation of the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment* (1984)
6. **The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**: Monitors implementation of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) and its optional protocols (2000)
7. **The Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW)**: Monitors implementation of the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families* (1990).
8. **The Committee on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**: Monitors implementation of the *International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006).
9. **The Committee on Enforced Disappearance (CED)**: Monitors implementation of the *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance* (2006)

## WORKING OF TREATY BODIES

The treaty bodies perform a number of functions in accordance with the provisions of the treaties that created them. These include the following:

### Consideration of State parties' reports

When a country ratifies one of these treaties, it assumes a legal obligation to implement the rights recognized in that treaty. It also incurs an additional obligation to submit regular reports to the monitoring committee set up under that treaty on how the rights under the treaty are being implemented. This system of human rights monitoring is common to most of the UN human rights treaties. To meet their reporting obligation, States must report submit an initial report usually one year after joining (two years in the case of the CRC) and then periodically in accordance with the provisions of the treaty (usually every four or five years). In addition to the government report, the treaty bodies may receive information on a country's human rights situation from

other sources, including non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, academic institutions and the press. In the light of all the information available, the Committee examines the report together with government representatives. Based on this dialogue, the Committee publishes its concerns and recommendations, referred to as "*concluding observations*".

### **Consideration of individual complaints or communications**

In addition to the reporting procedure, some of the treaty bodies may perform additional monitoring functions through three other mechanisms: the inquiry procedure, the examination of inter-state complaints and the examination of individual complaints. Four of the Committees (CCPR, CERD, CAT and CEDAW) can, under certain conditions, receive petitions from individuals who claim that their rights under the treaties have been violated.

### **General Comments**

The Committees also publish their interpretation of the content of human rights provisions, known as 'general comments' on thematic issues or methods of work.