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Help

Consider the summary (/c4x/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/asset/_Materials__HR_Treaty_Bodies_and_State_reporting_Final_.pdf) of the purposes of State reporting under UN human rights treaties in the *Compilation of Guidelines on the Form and Content of Reports to be submitted by States Parties to the International Human Rights Treaties*, prepared in 2009. Please note the following:

1. Compliance with human rights begins with recognizing the reality of the challenges, and identifying how different groups within society fare with respect to the enjoyment of rights. Thus, the first benefit of State reporting may be simply to oblige the State to become aware of the problems it must address. This is encouraged in particular by the expectation that the State will provide information using a range of indicators, that will allow to assess progress made, for instance, in the different regions of the country, for the benefit of different ethnic groups, or for women and girls specifically.
2. The purposes of State reporting are not limited to feeding into a supervisory process established at international level. The preparation of the reports and, later, the implementation of recommendations that emerge from the constructive dialogue with the human rights treaty body, should in principle be as participatory as possible, involving civil society organizations and parliament, thus encouraging a dialogue at domestic level on how to improve the human rights record of the State.
3. One of the purposes of State reporting and the resulting dialogue with the committee concerned, is that this allows for a form of collective learning to take place: the best practices developed in some States confronting certain problems can inspire solutions elsewhere, and human rights bodies may encourage this, *inter alia*, by identifying such best practices in their General Comments.
4. Finally, note that although States' reports are presented to the relevant human rights treaty body, leading to a dialogue between the State's representatives and the independent experts, and subsequently to the adoption by the committee of Concluding Observations/Comments which identify both positive aspects and issues of concern, the process should not be seen as purely bilateral. Instead, non-governmental organisations play a major role, by providing information to the experts, both through "shadow reports" (that in some cases are more detailed and better informed by realities than the official governmental report) and through informal briefings held with members of the committee in question.

In order to grasp the process better and to get a sense of the relevance (of the lack thereof, in certain cases) of the recommendations made by UN human rights treaty bodies on the basis of States' reports and the other sources of information used by the committees, you may benefit from examining recent Concluding Observations adopted concerning your own country.

Consider, for instance, the latest Observations adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or by the Human Rights Committee (that is, if your State ratified at least one of these two treaties; otherwise choose another, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child).



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