

UN to consider opening door to national human rights institutions

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(New York) – National human rights institutions may soon be able to participate in UN deliberations following a decision by a committee of the UN General Assembly.

UN meetings have traditionally been dominated by governments, despite pressure from civil society on the UN to take greater account of the views of non-governmental organisations and national human rights institutions.

'We strongly welcome the resolution adopted by the Third Committee of the General Assembly today. It is a major step forward in affirming the essential and unique role that national human rights institutions play in the international community, and the increasing acknowledgment within the UN of the expert and independent advice these bodies can provide,' said Michelle Evans of the International Service for Human Rights.

The German-led resolution, 'National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights', was adopted by consensus in the General Assembly's Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee (Third Committee). The General Assembly itself is expected to adopt the resolution before the end of the year. The resolution requests the UN Secretary General to prepare a report on the feasibility of enabling 'Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs' – that is, NHRIs that comply with international standards relating to composition, independence and expertise – to participate independently in UN mechanisms and processes.

'We look forward to the report of the Secretary General, and see it as a concrete step towards strengthening opportunities for NHRIs to participate in important UN meetings, including in the General Assembly,' Ms Evans said.

'The Secretary General's report should lay the foundation for Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs to participate in other parts of the UN system on the same basis that they do at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, which is the model for NHRI participation.'

Several other important issues were addressed by the resolution, including recognition of the role that NHRIs can play in preventing and addressing cases of reprisals and intimidations against persons who cooperate with the UN. The text also underlines the value of NHRIs in providing information to governments about the specific impact of legislation on the activities of human rights defenders.

'The International Service for Human Rights is committed to strengthening NHRI participation system-wide and will continue to work with States, international NGOs and the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs (ICC) to achieve this goal,' Ms Evans said.

'ISHR also appreciates Germany's leadership in bringing the negotiations on this ground-breaking resolution to a successful conclusion,' she said.

The resolution is available [here](#).

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