

[Call for endorsement of the Pretoria Statement on strengthening the treaty body system](#)

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On 20 and 21 June 2011 the Centre for Human Rights at the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, hosted a civil society consultation on strengthening the UN treaty body system. The consultation was attended by eight national and regional NGOs^[1] and facilitated by two international NGOs.^[2] Also in attendance were members of OHCHR and the Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Ms Zonke Majodina.

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This meeting was the latest in a series of consultations on reform of the treaty bodies. Previous consultations have resulted in the [Dublin Statement](#) and the [Poznan Statement](#) (both by current and former treaty body members acting in a personal capacity), the [Marrakech Statement](#) (by National Human Rights Institutions), and the [Seoul Statement](#) (by mostly international NGOs). A group of mostly international NGOs also came together to produce the [NGO response to the Dublin Statement](#).

The [Pretoria Statement](#) is an important addition to these documents, as it represents the views of regional and national level organisations. These groups are some of the most active in engaging with the treaty bodies, have the ground level knowledge to make effective and necessary contributions to the review of a State, and are the best placed to follow-up on the recommendations that come from the various committees. Their perspective on the process of reform of the treaty bodies is essential, but up until now it has been largely lacking, certainly in any focused form. The views of these NGOs, as represented in the Pretoria statement, must be taken forwards as an indispensable element of the discussions on reform as they continue throughout the course of this year. You can find more information on upcoming consultations [here](#).

The strong backing of wider civil society for the Pretoria Statement and the perspective it represents would go some way towards ensuring that the voice of regional and national organisations cannot be ignored. To this end the statement has been opened for endorsement beyond the original group of drafters. Any organisation that wishes to endorse the statement can do so through the [OHCHR site](#). Endorsements should be made by 15 August.

[1] Human Rights Law Centre, Australia; Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Argentina; Human Rights Working Group, Indonesia; Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, Uganda; East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, Kenya; Community Law Centre, South Africa; Liga dos Direitos Humanos, Mozambique; Asian Legal Resource Centre, Hong Kong.

[2] Amnesty International and the International Service for Human Rights