

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as an instrument for change

Marie-Dominique Parent
UN Human Rights
Regional Office for Europe



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
Europe Regional Office

Session outline

- Treaty-body monitoring, reporting & follow-up
- The role of NGOs and why does it matter
- How the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has been addressing the human rights of older persons
- Existing resources on engaging with the Committee and other UN human rights mechanisms



Reminder - What is a treaty body? (video)



Exercise – The treaty reporting process



Reporting cycle



At what stage(s) can you engage with the Committee?



NGOs can engage with the Committee...

Prior to Review

- Submit own reports (i.e. parallel reports) to the Committee prior to adoption of List of Issues and/or prior to the examination of the State party report.

During Review

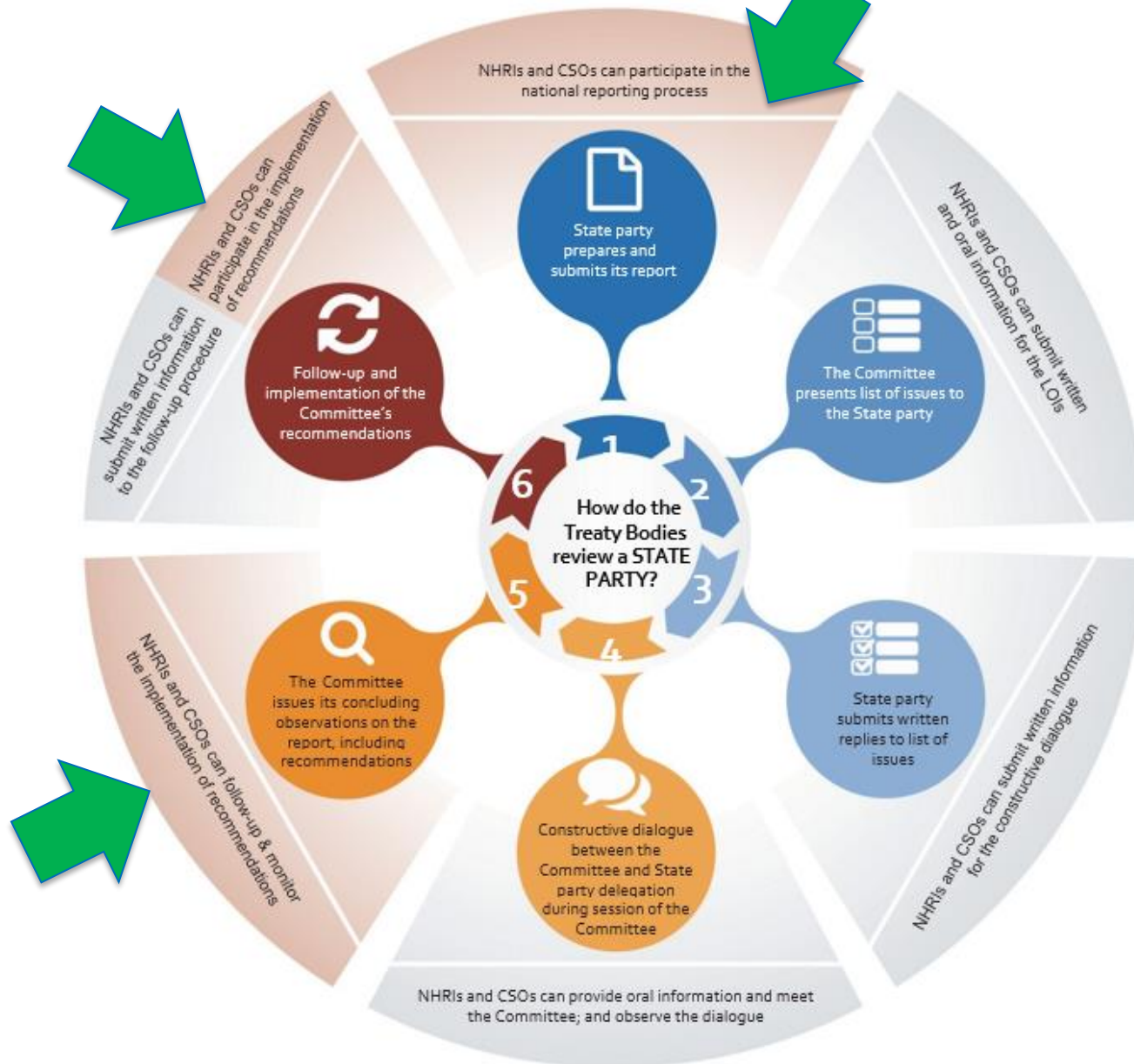
- Attend the Committee's plenary sessions as observers
 - Brief Committee members, either during formal or informal meetings
- (To address the Committee during its meeting time and/or to arrange a lunchtime briefing, contact the Secretariat **latest 4 weeks** prior to the session.)



Following Review

- Advocate for, track and monitor implementation of the concluding observations (COBs)
- Interact and cooperate between NHRI and civil society (public reporting)

Treaty reporting cycle with stakeholders



The simplified reporting procedure (5 EU countries)

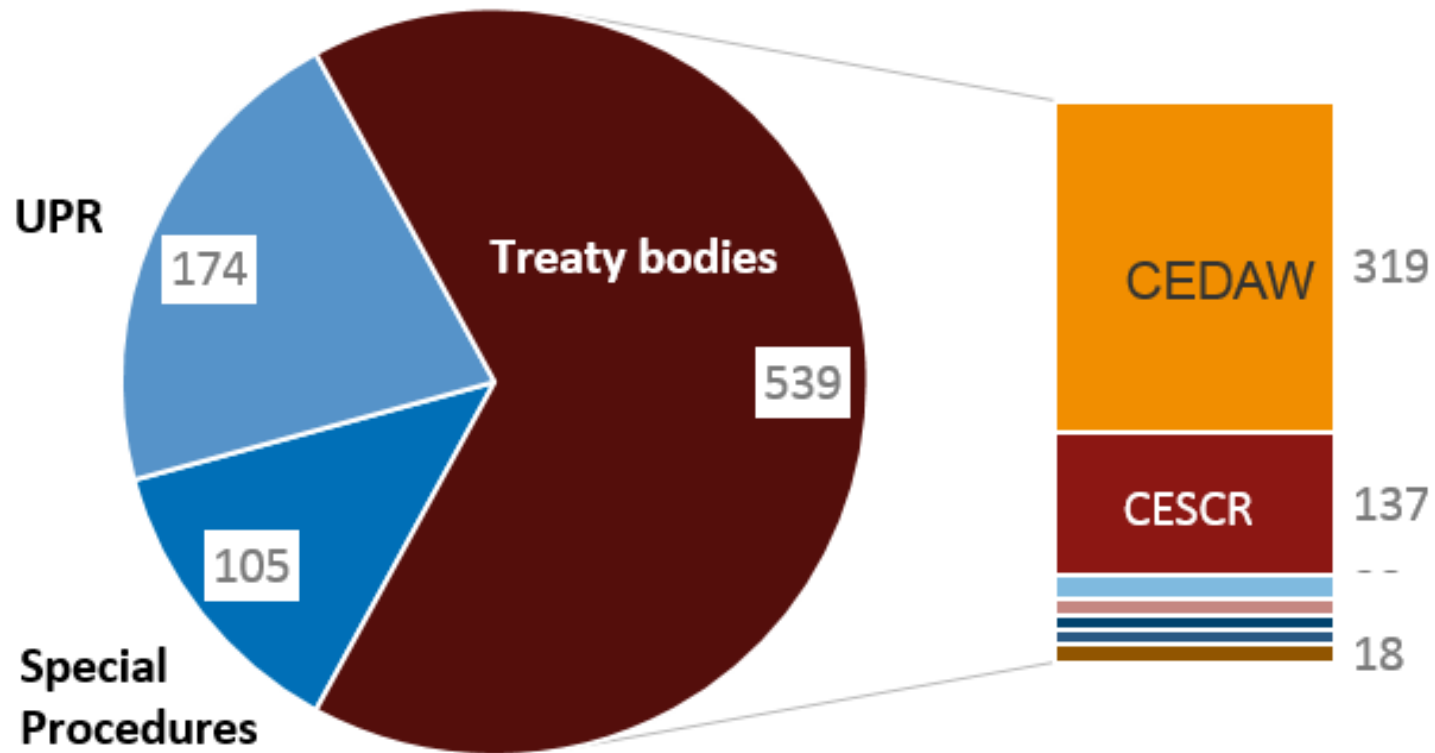


Discussion - Why does your participation matter?

- Stimulation of national dialogue and “buy-in”
 - Providing the perspective from your organisation
 - Enhancing the Committee’s recognition of older persons’ concerns and priorities
 - Ensuring more pertinent recommendations to the States
- ⇒ **Reporting should ultimately benefit rights holders, you, at the national level. Protection**

Universal Human Rights Index - worldwide

“Older Persons” entries – total 853



■ SP ■ UPR ■ CEDAW ■ CESCRC ■ CRPD ■ CAT ■ CRC ■ CCPR ■ Others



Universal Human Rights Index

CESCR - EU countries - “Older Persons” entries



- **18 countries:** Austria – Belgium – Bulgaria – Czech Republic – Denmark – Estonia – Finland – France – Germany - Greece – Ireland - Lithuania – Netherlands – Poland – Slovenia – Spain – Sweden - United Kingdom

- 21 Observations and 21 Recommendations
- **Themes:** Social Security. Health. Employment. Standard of living. Poverty. Education. Cultural Life. Standards of care. De-institutionalization.
- <https://uhri.ohchr.org/search/results#>

Discussion - Follow-up methods and activities

- **Compiling and clustering recommendations** by themes or responsible institutions, can help prioritization and serve as a basis for developing a monitoring and follow-up plan
- **Monitoring implementation** – Indicators. Social Watch & Center for Economic and Social Rights.
- **Seizing momentum** – media attention, high-level visits, new govt interlocutors, other upcoming reviews
- **Creating and working with coalitions** – enhanced scope and skills, mutually supportive, increased influence
- **Partnering** – also with the State
- **Dissemination and awareness raising**
- **Advocacy** (legal and policy reforms, resources, others)
- **Capacity building**



Parallel reports to CESCR - Key guidance



- ✓ Reports in **English, French or Spanish**, preferably in the language of State report. Very useful if report and/or summary translated into **English**. No translation by UN Secretariat.
- ✓ **Joint submissions** very welcome.
- ✓ **For PSWG**: preferably 10 weeks and latest 8 weeks before the beginning of the PSWG.
- ✓ **For Session**: preferably 6 weeks and latest 3 weeks before the beginning of the session.
- ✓ Transmitted **electronically** in word format to cescr@ohchr.org (paper copies no longer distributed)
- ✓ As **specific, reliable, objective and concise** as possible. Max. 10 pages (15 p. for coalition submissions).



OHCHR tools to support civil society engagement with UN human rights mechanisms



Live Webcasting of sessions at <http://webtv.un.org/>, combined with possibly a panel discussion between State and civil society



Working with the United Nations Human Rights Programme: A Handbook for Civil Society



How to Follow Up on United Nations Human Rights Recommendations

All TB documentation available

- Per country, all treaties, all sessions
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/countries.aspx
- Per treaty body, per sessions
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionList.aspx?Treaty=CESCR

Thank you!

- For more information, reach out to the **UN Human Rights Civil Society Unit**

- Email - civilsociety@ohchr.org

- Website -

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/aboutus/pages/civilsociety.aspx>

