



UiO : Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
University of Oslo

2021 Annual Conference

CONCEPT NOTE PLENARY PANEL 1

Coordination among national human rights actors as key to effective engagement with the UN Human Rights System

**Maison de la Paix (Pétale 5) and online event (Zoom),
Tuesday 12 October 2021, 9:45 – 11:15 (CET)**

A project of the:



Académie de droit international
humanitaire et de droits humains
Academy of International
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The Geneva Academy, a Joint Centre of



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TOPIC

The UN Human Rights System requires strong and interconnected institutional counterparts at the national level in order to maximize its effectiveness. Constructive coordination at the national level serves the purpose of avoiding duplication and facilitating a more harmonized approach to the actions necessary for States to implement the many recommendations issued by the different UN human rights mechanisms. Agenda 2030 underscores the importance of this link through SDG16, Target 16.a, according to which States are required to “strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels [...]”.

Today, every National Human Rights System (NHRS) consists of different sets of state and non-state actors (governmental bodies, independent state institutions, CSOs, etc.), each with its own designated mandate to monitor, implement and follow-up to UN human rights recommendations. A strong NHRS is one that prescribes formal and informal interactions among its actors as well as frameworks that connect the domestic and international efforts of human rights monitoring. In such way, the NHRS fosters synergetic action between the international and domestic levels. These synergies can be both *horizontal*, through cooperation among national human rights actors, at central and local levels, and *vertical*, between national actors and the UN Human Rights System (composed, in turn, of different UN human rights mechanisms, including the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures mandate holders and the Universal Periodic Review). However, coordination is not a straightforward process, with a multitude of factors affecting different contexts. For example, how has the ongoing pandemic affected the ability of national actors to coordinate their work? What are the effects that reprisals, attacks on liberties and the shrinking space for civil society have on the operation of national human rights actors at home, let alone their ability to engage meaningfully with UN human rights mechanisms? How to solve the uneven capacity among countries and within countries (capital vs periphery) in terms of formal institutional infrastructure, organized civil society, available funding, and in-house competence for covering different human rights issues? What kind of issues and dynamics result from such differing realities?

This plenary panel will focus on the importance of coordination at the national level and will discuss the capacity of different domestic actors to *mutually engage* with each other and liaise with UN human rights mechanisms in the context of monitoring, implementation and follow-up. More specifically, this session will discuss the capacity of different domestic actors to *coordinate and jointly facilitate* the preparation of both state reports and alternative reports to UN human rights mechanisms, the facilitation of visits by special procedure mandate holders as well as the preparation of responses to recommendations, requests for follow-up and communications received from such mechanisms. Mirroring this national coordination, it will discuss the need for coordination at international level among the UN human rights mechanisms to deliver in a coherent and interconnected way, facilitating national uptake and engagement.

PANELISTS

- **Mahamane Cissé-Gouro**, Director, Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- **Fiona McCluney**, UN Resident Coordinator, UN Albania Country Team
- **Asha Burrenchobay**, Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Human Rights Division), Mauritius
- **Christoffer Badse**, Director, Monitoring Department, The Danish Institute for Human Rights
- **Roselyn Hanzi**, Executive Director, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights or Human Rights Law Centre

MODERATOR

- **Felix Kirchmeier**, Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform

PARTNERS

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