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Agenda item 3

**Organizational and other matters, including the adoption
of the report of the working group on individual communications**

Simplified reporting procedure*

Report of the Working Group**

Summary

Since 2010, the Human Rights Committee has, on a pilot basis, offered States parties the option of submitting their periodic reports by way of a simplified procedure. In 2017, the Committee appointed a Working Group to assess whether the simplified reporting procedure should be adopted as a permanent procedure of the Committee.

Under the standard procedure, three principal documents are exchanged between States parties and the Committee before the interactive dialogue takes place: a report by the State party; a list of issues drafted by the Committee; and replies by the State. Under the simplified procedure, only two such documents are exchanged: a list of issues prior to reporting, drawn up by the Committee; and replies by the State. The replies constitute the State party's report.

The simplified reporting procedure was introduced to make reporting more focused. Drawing on publicly available documentation, and questionnaires and interviews conducted by the Working Group for the purpose of this study, the present report concludes that the simplified reporting procedure significantly contributes to the goal of making reporting more focused, firstly by reducing the overall workload generated by the system and secondly by increasing the relevance of the information generated to the Committee's dialogue with the State party.

The Working Group recommends that the simplified reporting procedure become a permanent feature of the work of the Committee, and suggests improvements to the system.

* The annexes to the present document are reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments.



I. Introduction

1. In 2009, the Human Rights Committee decided to adopt a simplified reporting procedure for States to use when submitting their periodic reports to it under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (see CCPR/C/99/4). In 2010, the Committee first invited States to use the new procedure, sometimes called the “optional procedure”.

2. The simplified reporting procedure was introduced by the Committee as a pilot project. At the time, the Committee decided that before the new procedure could be used on a permanent basis, it had to be reviewed by a working group tasked with assessing and evaluating the new procedure “in terms of its practicability, effectiveness and capacity to improve the examination of the human rights situation in the States parties” (*ibid.*, para. 7). Accordingly, in July 2017 the Committee appointed a Working Group (A/73/40, para. 52) comprised of Committee members Christof Heyns (chair), Marcia Kran and Margo Waterval to assess the simplified procedure.¹

3. The present report is the final report of the Working Group. Based on an earlier version, the Committee decided in July 2018 to accept the main recommendation — that the simplified reporting procedure become a permanent procedure of the Committee — and some of the other recommendations.

4. As discussed in more detail below, the objective of the new procedure is to make the reporting process more focused. This greater focus has two elements: firstly, to reduce the workload associated with the system, thus making it easier for States to meet their reporting obligations, and secondly, to improve the quality of the monitoring of States’ progress in implementing the Covenant. The aim is for the Committee to “work smarter” by simultaneously achieving both goals. Achieving one at the cost of the other would not be acceptable. The main questions addressed in the present report are thus whether the simplified procedure is succeeding in achieving both these objectives, and if so, how the procedure can be improved further.

5. Addressing these questions requires a comparison of the experience of the Committee when following the standard procedure and the simplified procedure. It is also useful to compare the experience of the Committee with that of the other treaty bodies that have introduced simplified reporting. At the same time, the treaty body system is in a process of flux, and it is important to take note of some of the potential changes that may have an impact on the simplified reporting procedure.

II. Methodology

6. The Working Group considered the documents that were introduced for the new simplified procedure in the Human Rights Committee, and subsequent relevant documentation from within the broader treaty body system dealing with the implementation of simplified reporting, available on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

7. Questionnaires were sent out to States that have submitted reports to the Committee under both the standard and the simplified procedures (10 responses were received); the national human rights institutions in these States (2 responded); States that have been invited to use the simplified procedure but have not yet taken up the invitation (10 responded); and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (2 responded) (see annex I).

¹ The Working Group thanks Simon Bill and Clarita Montant, interns, for their research assistance. Gabriella Habtom provided welcome support. The OHCHR website served as the starting point to obtain information. Where necessary, for example where the website was not complete, the Working Group supplemented this information by using other sources. Thanks go to Lilian Durnescu from OHCHR for his assistance in this regard.

8. Oral interviews, both formal and informal, were conducted with a range of people involved in the reporting process in OHCHR, the treaty bodies and NGOs. No academic publications dealing specifically with the simplified reporting procedure were found.² Such research is clearly needed.

9. The data in the present report reflect the situation up to 31 December 2017, the cut-off date of the Working Group's study.

III. Background to the simplified reporting procedure

10. As at the cut-off date of the Working Group's study, there were 169 States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. States parties have to submit reports to the Committee on a regular basis; first an initial report, then periodic reports. Article 40 (1) of the Covenant provides that States parties to the Covenant undertake to submit reports on the measures they have adopted that give effect to the rights recognized in the Covenant and on the progress made in the enjoyment of those rights.

11. Each reporting cycle follows four stages. The first stage entails the exchange of a set of documents between the State party and the Committee, which forms the basis of the rest of the reporting process, referred to in the present report as the "principal documents". At the second stage, a "constructive dialogue" or face-to-face discussion between the Committee and representatives of the State in question takes place. During the third stage, the Committee adopts its concluding observations, in which it provides an assessment of the State's implementation of the Covenant and makes recommendations. The fourth and final stage consists of follow-up procedures. The present report is concerned primarily with the first stage, the preparation and exchange of the principal documents.

12. Not all States comply with their reporting obligations, but when they do, this process starts with the exchange of the principal documents. One of two procedures may be used in the process of preparing and exchanging these documents.

13. Under the standard procedure, three principal documents are exchanged: (a) the report submitted by the State party; (b) the list of issues drafted by the Committee in response to the report; and (c) the replies of the State in response to that list.

14. Under the simplified procedure, only two principal documents are exchanged: (a) the list of issues prior to reporting, prepared by the Committee; and (b) the replies prepared by the State in response to that list. These replies constitute the report of the State in question, as required under article 40 of the Covenant.

15. NGOs, national human rights institutions and others play an important role in providing information at various stages of the two processes. Under both types of reporting procedure, the common core documents prepared by States also play a supplementary role in making relevant information available to the Committee. The common core document is not further elaborated upon in the present report.

16. The central event of the reporting procedure is the dialogue, and the principal and other documents are aimed at the facilitation of this event, while the concluding observations and follow-up procedures flow from it.

17. In 2014, in its resolution 68/268, the General Assembly encouraged the human rights treaty bodies to offer to States parties for their consideration the simplified procedure, and encouraged States parties to consider the possibility of using the simplified reporting procedure, when offered.

² Felice Gaer, Vice-Chair of the Committee against Torture, kindly made available to the Working Group an unpublished initial assessment of the procedure involving the list of issues prior to reporting that had been drafted by that Committee in 2015. See also CAT/C/47/2.

IV. Detailed comparison of the standard and simplified reporting procedures in the Human Rights Committee

18. According to the Covenant, when a State adheres to the Covenant, it has to submit its initial report to the Committee within one year of entry into force of the Covenant for that State (art. 40 (1) (a)). The first reporting cycle commences when this report is submitted. The Committee then determines the period within which States parties have to submit their subsequent, periodic reports in the concluding observations (art. 40 (1) (b)). This period can differ for each new report, and ranges in principle from three to six years.

19. Within this framework, States can decide which of the two reporting procedures they wish to follow. The most recent guidance on the standard reporting procedure is provided in the guidelines on reporting adopted by the Committee in 2010 (CCPR/C/2009/1). According to the guidelines, a State party initiates each reporting cycle by submitting a report to the Committee in which it provides an overview of its implementation of all the rights contained in the Covenant during the period under review. The State thus conducts what could be called a 360-degree internal review of its compliance with the Covenant. In response to that report, the Committee drafts the second principal document, the list of issues. In drafting that list, the Committee selects those issues from the State party report, as well as from submissions from NGOs, national human rights institutions and other information in the public domain, that it wishes to assess further.

20. The reporting State is expected to respond to the list of issues by means of the third principal document, the State's replies to the Committee. In this, normally brief, document, States provide more detailed information on the issues selected by the Committee.

21. For States that have elected to follow the simplified reporting procedure, the process relating to the exchange of the principal documents follows the route described below. Here the initiative changes hands, and the Committee starts the reporting cycle.

22. Under the system as currently used by the Committee, the simplified reporting procedure may only be offered to States that have submitted their initial reports. In other words, only the periodic reports of States may be submitted under this procedure.³

23. The Committee typically uses the concluding observations to a State's most recent report to invite the State in question to use the simplified procedure in the subsequent reporting cycle. Such invitations are now extended as standard procedure to all States that have completed the initial reporting cycle.⁴ The simplified reporting procedure may in principle also be offered to States outside the context of concluding observations, for example, through a note verbale. Shortly after the introduction of the new system, all States parties were invited to submit their periodic reports under the simplified reporting procedure. This invitation has not been repeated to date. From the Working Group's engagement with State party representatives who are responsible for reporting, it is clear that in many cases, the relevant officials do not know that they have been invited to follow the simplified reporting procedure. The concluding observations are thus currently the main vehicle used to invite States to use the simplified reporting procedure.

24. After an invitation to use the simplified reporting procedure has been extended, States are given three months to inform the Committee whether they wish to take up the offer (CCPR/C/99/4, para. 13). When a State has informed the Committee that it has accepted an invitation to follow the simplified procedure, that fact is made public by

³ States may still decide to resort back to the standard procedure (CCPR/C/99/4, para. 9), or the Committee may require them to do so.

⁴ According to the founding document of the list of issues prior to reporting procedure in the Committee (CCPR/C/99/4, para. 18), the States concerned were primarily to be selected from among the list of States whose reports were due in 2013 and beyond, and lists of issues prior to reporting were to be drafted and sent to those States whose periodic report was at least 10 years overdue and that had agreed to the new reporting procedure. However, at its 111th session, in July 2014, the Committee decided that the simplified reporting procedure would be offered to all States, whether their reports were 10 years overdue or not, although that would apply only to periodic reports, as opposed to initial reports.

OHCHR at least nine months prior to the session during which the list of issues prior to reporting will be drafted. During this period, NGOs, United Nations agencies and others who wish to do so can suggest inputs for the list of issues prior to reporting. In preparing the lists of issues prior to reporting, the Committee draws on the same kinds of additional information that are available under the standard procedure, including the submissions from NGOs, United Nations agencies and others. The difference is that no current State party report is available under this process.

25. The list of issues prior to reporting is the first principal document to be exchanged under the simplified procedure. This list is sent to States at least a year before their replies are due. A State's replies to the list of issues prior to reporting then constitute the State's periodic report (CCPR/C/99/4, para. 1). Since they are, in effect, the periodic reports, the documents containing the replies under the simplified reporting procedure are generally much longer than those submitted under the standard procedure.

26. Once the replies from the State have been received, the Committee is required to prioritize the examination of reports prepared in response to the list of issues prior to reporting over that of other reports, except initial reports, in order to ensure that the exchange during the constructive dialogue is as current as possible (CCPR/C/99/4, para. 16).

27. At the end of the reporting cycle, when the Committee determines the number of years within which a State party must submit its next report, it routinely gives States using the simplified reporting procedure an additional year to do so.

28. Once a State has accepted the simplified reporting procedure, it continues to be invited by the Committee to follow that procedure. This is thus an "opt-in" system.

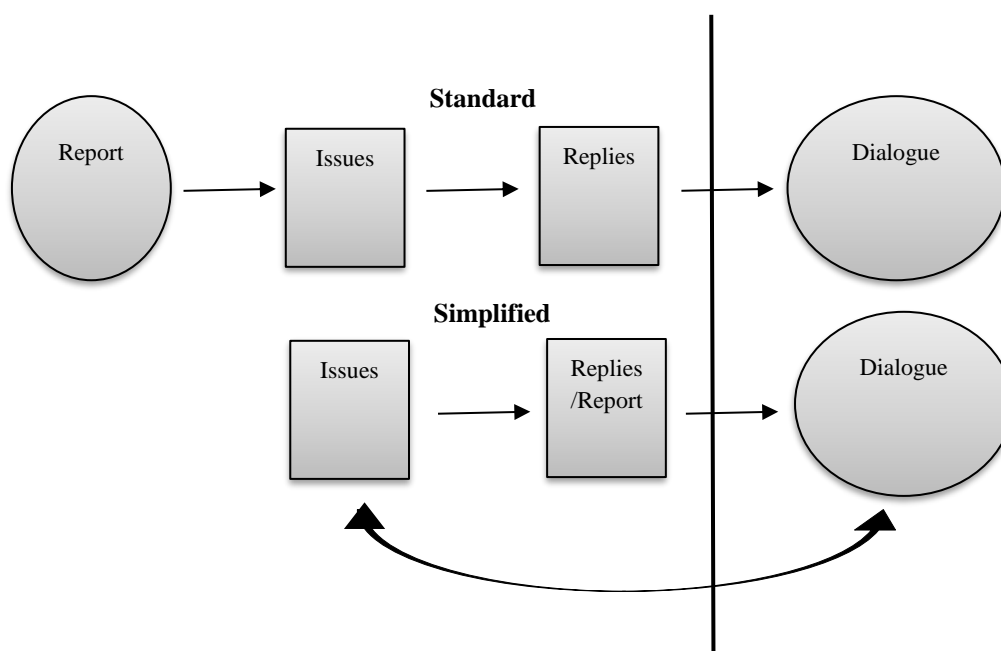
29. The core structural difference between the standard and the simplified procedures thus relates to the number and nature of the principal documents exchanged. The reduction in the number of documents from three to two is achieved by eliminating the first stage of the standard process, namely the submission of the periodic State report. In effect, that stage of the process is incorporated under the simplified reporting procedure by accepting the replies provided by the State as the full report.

30. This changes the dynamics of the reporting process. The standard procedure is initiated by comments made by the States on their performance under the Covenant in general, and only later does the Committee identify specific questions for discussion. It is thus a broad-based and general process, which becomes focused on a selected set of issues relatively late in the process. Under the simplified procedure, the process is initiated by a series of specific questions formulated by the Committee. The simplified procedure is question-driven, and focused on the most relevant issues for the dialogue, right from the start.

31. Under both reporting systems, the Committee has the mandate to identify the matters it wants to discuss during the dialogue through the issues it selects (either by means of a list of issues or list of issues prior to reporting), but under the simplified reporting procedure, this point is reached much earlier.

32. Table 1 provides a visual representation of the reporting process under the standard and the simplified procedures.

Table 1

Visual representation of the standard and the simplified reporting procedures

V. Comparison of the simplified reporting procedures used by the different human rights treaty bodies

33. The first treaty body to offer States the option of following the simplified reporting procedure was the Committee against Torture, which adopted the procedure in 2007 (A/62/44, paras. 23–24). Subsequently, all the other treaty bodies with regular reporting procedures adopted the simplified procedure (with some variations) as an option: the Human Rights Committee in 2009, the Committee on Migrant Workers in 2011, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2014, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2016. A total of 8 out of the 10 treaty bodies currently thus offer this procedure.⁵

34. The human rights treaty bodies offer the simplified procedure to States parties under diverse conditions.⁶ The treaty bodies are also at different stages of implementing the new procedure, and by the end of 2017, some had not considered any of the reports that had been submitted to them under this procedure. Given the fact that States are invited several years in advance to use it, the simplified procedure requires a long lead-up period for implementation. As a result, the experience with this procedure across the treaty body system is uneven.

35. That said, the following general observations may be made:

- (a) In essence, the model for simplified reporting followed by the various treaty bodies is similar. Instead of a “report > list of issues > replies” sequence, a “list of issues prior to reporting > replies” sequence is followed. The replies constitute the report;
- (b) The simplified reporting procedure is optional in all the committees that offer it;

⁵ The two treaty bodies that do not offer the simplified procedure as an option are the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances has a reporting procedure, but not a simplified procedure. The mandate of the Subcommittee does not provide for a reporting system.

⁶ For an overview, see HRI/MC/2018/3.

(c) The Committee against Torture and the Committee on Migrant Workers offer the procedure for initial reports; the other committees do not. In principle, the Committee against Torture offers the simplified reporting procedure also for long overdue initial reports (two per year, due to the lack of capacity of the secretariat);

(d) The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has offered the simplified reporting procedure to a number of States that had been through several rounds of reporting and dialogues with the Committee. Thus the procedure would allow the Committee to focus the dialogue on recurring issues;

(e) The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is implementing the procedure gradually by offering it to States parties whose periodic reports are more than 5 years overdue and by prioritizing those that are more than 10 years overdue. That Committee uses the procedure essentially as a means of encouraging States with overdue reports to rejoin the system;

(f) The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women requires States parties wishing to use the simplified reporting procedure for the submission of periodic reports to have submitted a core document in accordance with the harmonized guidelines, no more than five years previously;

(g) That same Committee limits the number of issues to be included in the list of issues prior to reporting to 25;

(h) The Committee on the Rights of the Child has made the simplified reporting procedure available to States parties whose periodic reports are due from 1 September 2019 onwards, through quarterly invitations.

36. The main motivations for offering the procedure appear to differ. As stated above, the aim of simplified reporting is to make reporting both easier and better, but the weight placed on these considerations differs. In some committees, the main goal seems to be to encourage States to (re)engage with treaty bodies by making reporting easier. For others, the main aim is to improve the quality of the dialogue. Not all committees regard the dialogue as a central feature of the reporting process to the same extent.

VI. Take-up of simplified reporting by States

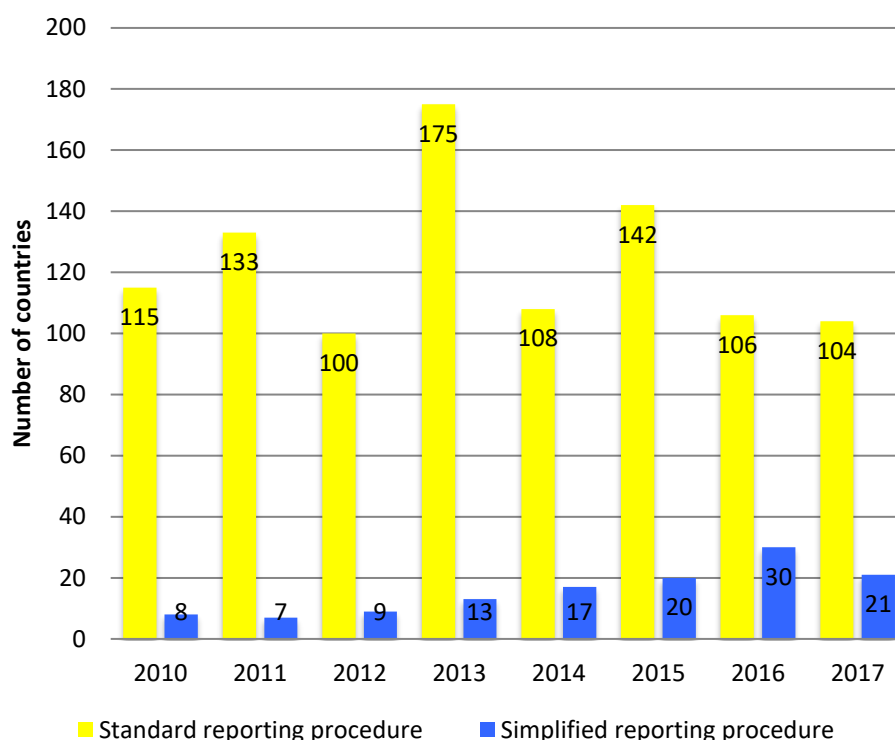
37. While the uptake of the simplified procedures offered by the treaty bodies is growing, the vast majority of reports submitted to human rights treaty bodies are still prepared using the standard procedure. By the end of 2017, some 135 States had, in principle, accepted the simplified procedure of at least one of the human rights treaty bodies.

38. By the end of 2017, a total of 81 reports had been submitted to the Committee against Torture under the simplified reporting procedure, 24 to the Human Rights Committee, 12 to the Committee on Migrant Workers, 2 to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and 5 to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.⁷ The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had yet to receive such reports.

39. As reflected in table 2, there has been a steady rise in the use of the simplified reporting procedure in the treaty body system as a whole.

⁷ See https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en.

Table 2

Procedures used for State party reports to all treaty bodies⁸

40. More directly pertinent to the present report, by the cut-off date of the study, 44 of the 169 States parties to the Covenant (roughly a quarter) had accepted the simplified procedure.⁹ A total of 24 States had submitted reports to the Human Rights Committee under this procedure,¹⁰ and 17 of those reports had been considered by the Committee during the dialogues with the States in question.¹¹ Some States are already reporting for the second time under the simplified reporting procedure.

41. The 24 States that have submitted at least one report to the Committee under the simplified procedure have all submitted reports under the standard procedure in the past. It is therefore useful to compare the experiences of these 24 States to gain an understanding of the relative value of each procedure.

42. As addressed in more detail below, the States that have accepted the simplified reporting procedure and have responded to the questionnaires sent out by the Working Group almost unanimously indicated that the reason they had done so was the more focused nature of the new procedure, which makes it easier for States to prepare reports and ensures that the matters covered in the reports are taken up by the Committee during the dialogue.

43. Some States that had not accepted the simplified reporting procedure indicated that they planned to use it for their forthcoming report. One State had waited to use the

⁸ Information obtained from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en. Years based on date of publication of reports.

⁹ Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Lesotho, Lithuania, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia and Uruguay.

¹⁰ Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay.

¹¹ Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Israel, Monaco, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay.

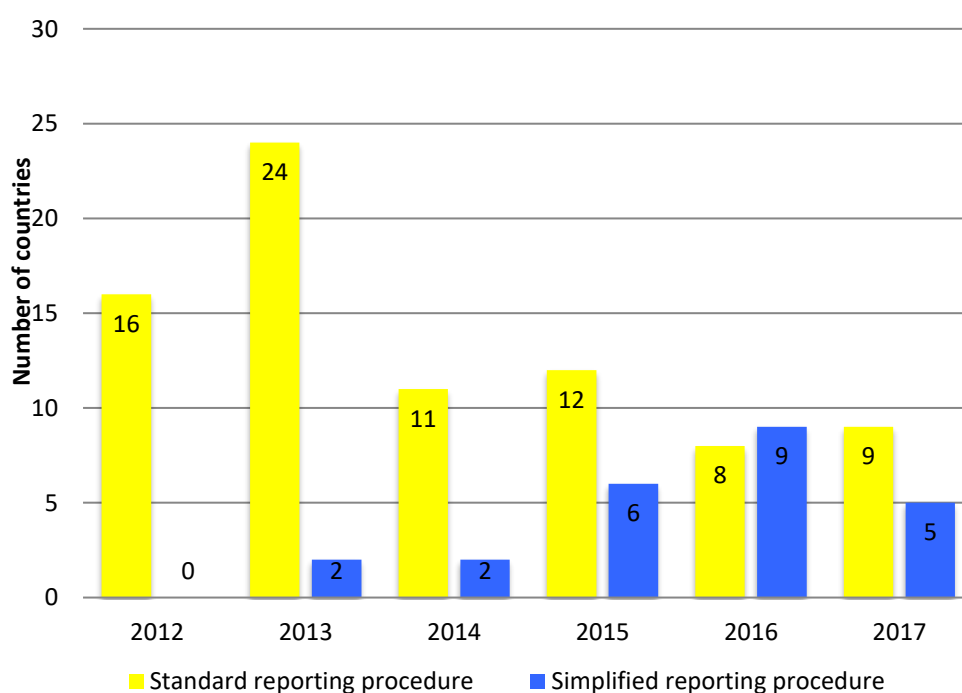
procedure in order first to prepare an up-to-date core document. Another State indicated that its report was long overdue and it wanted to provide a full picture, and another that there had been fundamental changes in the country that it wished to reflect. All of these States confirmed that they were at least to some extent aware of the existence of the simplified reporting procedure. In a number of States, the officials responsible for reporting were not aware that their States had been invited to use the simplified procedure.

44. While more States are using the procedure, it is likely that a saturation point will be reached and that not all States will opt to follow the procedure. For example, some of the States that have not yet accepted the simplified reporting procedure may be so disengaged from the system that the benefits of the new option may not on their own be enough to persuade them to accept it and to start reporting.

45. As illustrated in table 3, over the past six years, the number of reports under each reporting procedure has, by and large, reached a point of parity. While it may take some years before the majority of States parties have formally accepted the simplified procedure, it appears that the Committee has reached, or is close to reaching, a tipping point where the majority of reports actually received by the Committee has been prepared under the simplified reporting procedure. In other words, dealing with the simplified procedure will be the norm of the Committee in the future, as far as the consideration of reports is concerned.

Table 3

Reports by States parties to the Human Rights Committee¹²



VII. Rationale and changing environment of human rights reporting

46. The merits and internal dynamics of the simplified reporting procedure should be considered against the background of the purpose of reporting.¹³ Reporting involves the

¹² Information obtained from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en. Years based on the date of publication of reports.

¹³ See, for example, HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, para. 10.

pursuit of two interrelated goals: introspection on the part of the reporting State, and inspection by others, particularly the Committee.¹⁴

47. The simplified procedure has the potential to ensure that both introspection and inspection take place at all stages of the reporting process. Reporting is an evolving process, with the later steps building on the earlier ones. An articulation of the issues that will be addressed when the dialogue takes place, at the start of the process, can help to ensure that the broad range of players who make inputs at various points during the process do so in as relevant and useful a manner as possible. The simplified procedure can thus facilitate the process of introspection and inspection by ensuring that the process remains centred around the most relevant issues from its inception.

48. The preparation of a full report by a State party under the standard procedure has the advantage that it prompts a broad process of introspection (a 360-degree internal review). However, if much of the information gathered is then discarded along the way and is not subjected to the second element of reporting, namely inspection during the dialogue, it may not be the best use of resources.

49. Moreover, following the simplified procedure can help to ensure that the purely descriptive elements concerning a specific issue that has been identified as particularly relevant (e.g. which national laws apply to domestic violence, what those laws provide, what the statistics reveal) have been addressed by the time the dialogue occurs, thus allowing the debate, as far as possible, to be on the level of analysis and synthesis (what can be done to improve the situation).

50. The move to simplified reporting should also be seen as a consequence of the fact that international human rights reporting in general has evolved considerably since it was introduced in the 1970s. Many new human rights treaties have appeared since the Covenant entered into force, and the treaty body system as a whole, which once involved only a small number of States, is now approaching universal ratification. Reporting has grown into a massive enterprise. Moreover, reporting under the Covenant is only one of many similar obligations of States on the human rights front. The requirements of States under the universal periodic review are only the most obvious example. The expanding scope of the introspection and inspection exercises required by these developments has made it important to ensure that each process has a clearly defined role and is closely centred around the most relevant issues.

51. The roles of the various participants in the reporting process have also changed. Reporting under the Covenant, as with the other mechanisms, has long ceased to be a process that involves merely a few people in the State concerned and in the Committee. An ever-widening range of players is involved in preparing reports and providing comments. On the part of States, this includes various departments, agencies and institutions, such as national human rights institutions, often at different levels of government. They participate in a collective effort requiring large-scale coordination. Moreover, civil society, at the domestic and the international level, is also involved at various stages of the process through shadow reports. Hence, clarity as to the issues involved is increasingly important to ensure that limited resources are used wisely and the process is as valuable as possible.

52. The expansion of reporting has placed considerable strain on States and on the human rights treaty body system. The term “reporting fatigue” has become commonplace, and does not only apply to States, but to everyone involved in the process. There is little room for ineffectiveness and waste in an increasingly complex environment involving multiple stakeholders. An overly broad approach to the subject matter in the principal documents of the reporting system, and in the way in which the issues at stake are formulated, is bound to have a ripple effect throughout the system and lead to waste on many fronts.

53. When the Covenant was first adopted, there was a relative dearth of information on human rights practices. The net, therefore, had to be cast widely. Today, in many cases, the

¹⁴ F. Viljoen, *International Human Rights Law in Africa* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 351–360.

opposite is true. There is often a danger of information overload, and the challenge is to retain focus.

54. At the same time, word and time limits have shrunk the space available for reporting to the Committee, making focus crucial. There is a further danger that “cut and paste” technology can make reporting a largely mechanical enterprise, not involving real introspection and inspection. This is less likely to happen when reporting takes place in response to focused questions.

VIII. Why the treaty bodies have adopted simplified reporting

55. A perusal of the founding documents of the simplified procedure suggests that the simplified reporting procedure was introduced by the Committee as a response to the issues raised above. It was done to make the system more focused, in the sense of making the process easier by reducing the workload, and improving its quality by ensuring that everyone involved directs their energies at the introspection and inspection of the issues that will be on the table during the dialogue.

56. The potential benefits and costs of the simplified reporting procedure were described by the Human Rights Committee in the founding document (CCPR/C/99/4), as follows:

- (a) For States parties, the reporting burden will be alleviated in two ways:
 - (i) Lists of issues prior to reporting will provide detailed guidance on the expected content of the report, thereby facilitating the drafting process;
 - (ii) States will no longer be requested to submit both a report and written replies to a list of issues;
- (b) Furthermore, the reporting process will be speedier for those States to which the list of issues prior to reporting procedure applies, as focused periodic reports drafted on the basis of a list of issues prior to reporting are given priority for consideration over other periodic reports, so as to ensure that they are considered within a maximum time frame of one year after submission;
- (c) The Committee’s effectiveness will be strengthened as follows:
 - (i) This procedure will allow the Committee to receive more focused information and therefore assist it in improving its assessment of States parties’ compliance with their Covenant obligations;
 - (ii) The Committee will be able to reinstitute a dialogue with States that, owing to lack of financial and human resources, are long overdue in submitting their periodic reports;
- (d) The challenges to be taken into account include the significant increase in the workload of the Committee and the secretariat. It will be necessary, therefore, at an initial stage, to take this difficulty into account and to assess the capacity of the Committee and the secretariat in order to decide on the number of lists of issues prior to reporting to be adopted at each session. In the long term, however, standard lists of issues will need to be prepared and adopted only for initial reports and for a limited number of periodic reports (those for States that have not accepted the new optional reporting procedure or from which the Committee continues to request a full report), and the workload will progressively diminish;
- (e) Another challenge is the fact that, as long as the Committee continues to adopt both lists of issues prior to reporting and a large number of standard lists of issues, additional meeting time will be needed for the Committee’s country report task forces, which will adopt both the standard lists of issues and lists of issues prior to reporting. Furthermore, additional human resources will also be required from the secretariat for the drafting of lists of issues prior to reporting.

57. Similar considerations to a greater or lesser extent motivated the other committees. Almost all the committees stated their expectation that the new system would result in more focused reports.

58. In introducing the simplified procedure, the Committee against Torture, for example, expressed the view that the new reporting procedure “could assist States parties in preparing focused reports” and “would facilitate reporting by States parties and strengthen their capacity to fulfil their reporting obligations in a timely and effective manner” (A/62/44, para. 23). Similarly, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women declared that “the simplified reporting procedure will assist States parties to prepare and submit more focused reports”.¹⁵

59. It therefore seems that the move from the standard to the simplified procedure by the various treaty bodies was primarily aimed at making their procedures more efficient. Efficiency, in a management context, means “doing things right” by achieving maximum productivity and causing minimum waste in the process of trying to achieve a result, irrespective of the deemed merits of the result.¹⁶ Effectiveness relates to “doing the right thing” or producing a desired result. The Covenant, like the other main human rights treaties, proceeds from the assumption that State party reporting is an effective mechanism to monitor and bring about implementation of human rights obligations. The introduction of the simplified reporting procedure is primarily aimed at improving the efficiency of the reporting processes.

60. The idea underlying the drive for more focused reporting thus seems to be that of “less is more”. The aim is a procedure stripped of waste that helps the multiplicity of participants involved in the reporting process to get to the relevant issues more easily, and thus results in a more pertinent process of both introspection and inspection.

IX. Has the simplified procedure led to a more focused process?

61. In its study, the Working Group aimed to address whether the simplified reporting procedure makes reporting to the Human Rights Committee more focused in the sense described above.

A. Reducing the workload

62. The resources involved in reporting, as far as the preparation and exchange of the principal documents are concerned, can largely be measured in terms of the workload it generates. How can the impact of the simplified reporting procedure on the workload associated with the production of these documents be assessed?

63. One potential answer is to quantify the volume of the documentation generated by the reporting process. Volume in this context has two components: the number of documents that are produced and exchanged, and the length of those documents, measured by word count.

64. The volume of the documentation involved cannot serve as a perfect proxy for the workload or the cost generated by the system (it can in some cases be more difficult to write a short document than a long one, or one than two). Nonetheless, all else being equal, it is a valuable point of reference and can serve as a rough proxy.

65. The number of documents involved, aside from their length, is in itself important because each document requires its own elaborate process of drafting and assessment, especially where a multiplicity of stakeholders is involved. Within the State, it must be established who is best suited to conduct the drafting process of each document; their work must be monitored; the draft must be sent out to the responsible parties, as often different governmental departments and agencies are involved, at the central, subnational and local levels; and their inputs must be integrated into the final version. The document must be

¹⁵ See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/ReportingProcedures.aspx.

¹⁶ See www.insightsquared.com/2013/08/effectiveness-vs-efficiency-whats-the-difference.

compared with other documents. In many cases, it must be translated and edited. Similar considerations apply to other stakeholders.

66. The fact that there is one document fewer under the simplified procedure in itself, irrespective of word count, thus points strongly in the direction of a decreased workload.

67. Has the new system also led to a reduction in the cumulative word count of the principal documents? Such a reduction could serve as an indication that it would take less time for those who produce and read these documents to do so. It seems natural to assume that the simplified reporting procedure may tend to lead to a reduction in the total word count, because fewer documents are involved, but also because States are required to provide information in their reports only on issues that will be discussed during the dialogue, and not on all aspects of the Covenant.

68. What does the evidence show? The Working Group compared the word count of the principal documents exchanged under the standard procedure with the word count of the principal documents submitted under the simplified reporting procedure for the 24 States that have submitted reports under both processes. The overall word count is indeed significantly lower for documents submitted under the simplified reporting procedure (see annex II).

69. On average, the overall word count for the three principal documents exchanged under the standard procedure combined was 37,805. Under the simplified procedure, the average overall word count for the two principal documents was 20,569. The length of the combined set of documents has therefore been almost halved for the documents submitted by these 24 States under the simplified reporting procedure.

70. The matter is, however, complicated by the fact that the reduction in the overall word count was not exclusively a function of the introduction of the simplified procedure. Another important development occurred during the timespan when most of these States switched over to simplified reporting, which had significant implications for the word count: in its resolution 68/268, the General Assembly imposed a maximum of 21,200 words for reports under both the standard and the simplified procedure. These word count limits came into effect on 1 January 2015. Twenty of the 24 States used as a sample in this study submitted their reports under the simplified reporting procedure in accordance with these limits.

71. This means that the drop in word count is not solely attributable to the simplified procedure. However, the introduction of the simplified reporting procedure was an important factor contributing to the significant reduction in the word count of the principal documents and, as such, of the workload associated with reporting under the Covenant during the relevant period. The average length of the 20 State party reports submitted under the simplified reporting procedure after the word count limit was introduced in January 2015 dropped to 19,212, which suggests that the simplified reporting procedure had a significant additional impact on the reduction in the number of words. Furthermore, there was a huge drop in the word count of the documents submitted by the four States that reported under the simplified reporting procedure before the word limit was imposed, from an average of 46,413 to 27,355.

72. As stated above, the volume of the documentation is at best a rough proxy for the workload. What do the different stakeholders say about their experience under the respective systems?

73. Five of the States that responded to this point in the questionnaire reported “a significant decrease” in their workload, while three said there was “some decrease”. None reported an increase. One State noted that “national resources are optimized in the preparation of country reports”.

74. What are the implications for the Committee and OHCHR/the secretariat? According to OHCHR, on average, a total of 15 working days is allocated to preparing the draft list of issues under the two systems, but this has not been calculated in greater detail.

75. However, according to those interviewed, there is little doubt that the simplified reporting procedure leads to some increase in the Committee’s workload. Preparing a list of

issues prior to reporting is more onerous than preparing a list of issues. When preparing the list of issues prior to reporting, OHCHR and the experts do not have a recent report by the State available as a basis on which to draw. As more States use the simplified reporting procedure, there is an increasing necessity for the Committee and OHCHR to do their own research on what they wish to focus on in the reporting cycle.

76. However, this should be seen in context. The introduction of the new system does not suddenly require that the Committee start from scratch, even though it does not have a current State report on which to rely when drafting a list of issues prior to reporting. Today, human rights information is generally more readily available than in the past, and the other sources that were used under the list of issues system, such as NGO and United Nations agency reports, remain the same. Moreover, while it entails some increase in the workload of the Committee, the simplified reporting procedure offers the prospect of a much more efficient and sustainable system of reporting.

77. Furthermore, some steps can be taken by the Committee and others to manage the situation. The Committee determines the periodicity of the reports that States have to submit. The periodicity of reports can potentially be decreased, as is anticipated, for example, under the proposed global review calendar mentioned below. Clearly, changes in the capacity of OHCHR/the secretariat can also change the situation. Given the gains offered by the new system, especially for States, enhancing capacity in the secretariat may indeed be a good investment.

78. The national human rights institutions that responded to the study questionnaire indicated that the simplified reporting procedure does not have a significant impact on their workload.

79. The feedback from NGOs was that it does not have a significant impact on their workload either.

80. The simplified procedure was also intended by the Committee to reinitiate contact with States whose reports are overdue, since the new procedure is less demanding. There is little hard evidence to prove or disprove the extent to which the new procedure has had this effect. Only one State with a report that was over 10 years overdue (Romania) has in fact been invited to and has reported to the Committee under the terms of the simplified reporting procedure (see CCPR/C/ROU/5). However, it seems reasonable to assume that the lighter workload could increase the chances that States with overdue reports will meet their reporting obligations, and do so in a timely way.

81. For the same reason it can be argued that the States that have never reported may be more inclined to undertake this task if offered the simplified reporting procedure. However, it is unlikely that the prospect of following the simplified reporting procedure for subsequent periodic reports will make much difference to States if their initial report still has to be submitted under the more burdensome standard procedure. From this perspective, it may be useful, at some point, to reconsider the current practice of the Committee not to allow simplified reporting for initial reports.

82. As a somewhat peripheral matter, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that Committee members involved in dialogues have noted that greater consistency in the way in which States cross-reference the issues in the principal documents would be helpful. Some States cut and paste the entire question, as formulated in the list of issues prior to reporting (and the same applies to the list of issues procedure) into their response, before addressing the matter that is raised. This makes their documents long and unwieldy. Other States refer to the paragraph numbers in the document where the issue is listed, while yet others refer to the numbers of the issues as provided by the Committee. These discrepancies make it difficult for the reader who has to go back and forth between documents, especially in a paperless era when this is done on a computer screen. A standard procedure used by OHCHR/the secretariat to indicate the number of each issue clearly, accompanied by a request to States merely to refer to the numbers of the issues as provided by the Committee in their responses, can serve to reduce these inefficiencies.

B. Increasing the quality of the engagement of all participants in the process

83. To answer the question of whether the simplified reporting procedure helps to improve the quality of the reporting process, one needs to ask whether the new procedure helps to ensure that the information contained in the principal documentation is as relevant as possible to the evolving process of introspection and inspection. If the information provided is more pertinent to the discussion, which is then more targeted, the energy of everyone involved will be spent more fruitfully.

84. The inner logic of the system suggests that it should have this effect. As stated above, the pivotal part of the reporting cycle is the dialogue. The principal documents lead up to it, and what follows afterwards flows from it. The standard reporting process starts very broadly, with an overview of all the rights contained in the Covenant, before the focus is narrowed, when the Committee in the lists of issue selects some matters for the oral discussion. This means that considerable effort by everyone involved — the States, but also the other parties — goes into issues that are dropped along the way.

85. By switching the sequence around, and putting the identification of the issues to be discussed at the start of the reporting cycle, before the State drafts its report, the simplified reporting procedure ensures that the State and others focus their efforts from the outset on the matters that will be discussed in the dialogue. It also facilitates the relevance and impact of the broader information gathering and consultation process. Introspection accompanied by inspection takes place at every step of the process.

86. Many Committee members who have been involved in dialogues with States under the standard procedure will attest to the fact that, when there is time pressure, one often starts by reading the lists of issues and then the replies, to get to the heart of the matter, with the initial report itself being consulted subject to the time available.

87. How do the different parties that are involved view the impact of the simplified reporting procedure on the quality of the process? Extracts from the comments obtained from the States that were consulted are as follows:

(a) “The simplified procedure is a more targeted approach to preparing State party reports, identifying relevant issues of interest to the Human Rights Committee”. The simplified reporting procedure “reduces the time required to plan the content of the report and allows for more targeted consultation”. It “gives structure to the dialogue”;

(b) The simplified reporting procedure makes it easier to conduct “consultations and collect data” in a “complex State”. It helps to ensure that “the competent institutions have paid attention to preparing answers to precisely defined questions” and “the trap of a long narrative description” is avoided;

(c) The simplified reporting procedure has the advantage that “the cross-checking of the data provided by the different departments concerned is facilitated”;

(d) “The old procedure could include irrelevant material, while unintentionally omitting relevant material”. The simplified reporting procedure allows better consultation with civil society;

(e) Due to the shorter and more detailed nature of the issues under the simplified reporting procedure, “competent authorities can prepare concrete answers to the matters of interest to the Committee”;

(f) The simplified reporting procedure allows States “to focus the information in the report and address the relevant issues”.

88. According to three States, the dialogue with the Committee is “much more focused and relevant”. According to six States, it is “somewhat more focused and relevant”. None reported less relevance.

89. The national human rights institutions that responded to the questionnaire were in support of the new procedure and said that the simplified reporting procedure “leads to

debates on the most relevant issues”, “makes the process clearer” and has led to more participation and impact from their side.

90. Feedback from NGOs indicated that they welcomed the simplified reporting procedure because it improves the focus and relevance of the reporting process.

X. Comparing the duration of the reporting process under the two systems

91. Linked to the issue of the relevance and targeted nature of the process is the duration of the reporting cycle. A shorter procedure may be a more efficient one, to the extent that it helps to ensure that the issues raised at the outset are still relevant when the different parties engage in the process, and especially at the time of the dialogue. What can be inferred from comparing the duration of the reporting cycle under the two procedures? The first question is: how this should be measured?

92. For the purposes of the current inquiry, the end point when measuring the duration of the reporting cycle should be the dialogue. But what should be regarded as the starting point? One approach is to regard the starting point as the first formal exchange of documents, that is, in the case of the standard procedure, the date of the submission of the State party report, and for the simplified procedure, the date when the lists of issues prior to reporting are issued.

93. The time periods that elapsed between the exchange of the first document and the dialogue for the 24 States that have gone through both processes are presented in annexes III and IV. Under the standard procedure, the average duration was around 23 months. Under the simplified reporting procedure, the average was around 33 months. It should, however, be kept in mind that the process under the standard procedure, in fact, starts much earlier than is reflected above. States parties start preparing their reports long before they are submitted, in some cases, years before. It would not be feasible to measure this additional period with precision, but it seems fair to say that there should not be a significant difference between the duration of the two procedures if this additional time is factored in, as far as the standard procedure is concerned.

94. An alternative approach is for the clock to start ticking on the date of the formulation of the issues that will be discussed in the dialogue by the Committee. In the case of the standard procedure, that will be when the lists of issues are adopted by the Committee, and in the case of the simplified reporting procedure, when the lists of issues prior to reporting are adopted. Under the standard procedure, the average duration was 7 months, while under the simplified reporting procedure, it remained 33 months.

95. How important is the fact that there is such a significant difference, and can and should anything be done about the delay as far as the simplified reporting procedure is concerned? An excessively long period between the formulation of the issues and the dialogue can mean that some of the issues as formulated are no longer as relevant by the time they are discussed. It may thus be useful to see how feasible it is to shorten this period.

96. To some extent, the longer time period is an inevitable consequence of the fact that the sequences under the two systems alternate. Under the simplified reporting procedure, States prepare their reports after the issues have been identified, and thus while the meter is running. Under the standard procedure, they do so before the issues are identified and before the meter starts running. States thus start “cold” when they are given the lists of issues prior to reporting and cannot draw on their own earlier reports, while under the standard procedure they can do so and can prepare their replies much more quickly.

97. There may, however, be ways for OHCHR/the secretariat to speed up the process of scheduling the consideration of the replies under the simplified reporting procedure. Moreover, States regularly exceed the one year granted under the simplified procedure between receipt of the list of issues prior to reporting and the submission of their replies, constituting the periodic report. With planning, one year should be enough time.

98. The importance of the delay between the formulation of the issues and dialogue should also not be exaggerated. It is the Committee's experience that new issues are raised during the dialogue where necessary, helping to keep the process relevant. Likewise, States make new information known during the dialogue. The longer duration of the reporting cycle under the simplified reporting procedure is thus not necessarily a major problem.

XI. Does the simplified reporting procedure lead to a larger number of issues being dealt with during the dialogue?

99. Clearly, the simplified reporting procedure leads to fewer issues being dealt with in the State party reports compared to under the standard procedure, because only some aspects of the Covenant are selected by the Committee to be dealt with further by States. But is there a need to set an explicit limit on the number of issues identified?

100. In its resolution 68/268, the General Assembly called upon the treaty bodies to set a limit on the number of questions posed, focusing on areas seen as priority issues to ensure the ability of States parties to meet the aforementioned word limits.

101. It is, of course, not easy to circumscribe what is meant by an "issue". One issue may, for example, consist of any number of smaller issues. Therefore, too much weight should not be placed on the formal numbering of issues by the Committee when it drafts the lists of issues prior to reporting.

102. How does the number of issues identified under the old and the new procedures compare? To answer this question, the data available on the 24 States that have submitted reports under both procedures were again compared. As shown in annex V, the number of issues in the lists of issues and in the lists of issues prior to reporting is almost identical. The average number of issues in the lists of issues is 25.86, while the average in the lists of issues prior to reporting is 26. The two procedures are thus very close to each other, and to the limit of 25 set by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

103. At the same time, some form of standardization in this regard may help to make the process more manageable. For example, the Committee sets aside a standard time for questions on each issue by its members during the dialogue, which works only if a fairly stable number of issues are raised during dialogues.

104. Should the Committee set a formal limit? There does not appear to be compelling need to do so. The Committee may, however, consider setting a soft target to help standardize the process, and adjust it from time to time based on the circumstances.

XII. Potential interaction of the simplified reporting procedure with other changes in the human rights system

105. The simplified reporting procedure in the Human Rights Committee is one aspect of a larger process of potentially far-reaching change within the broader human rights system in general and the treaty body system in particular. It is important to keep in mind that such changes may have an impact on the simplified reporting procedure, and vice-versa. Some of these changes are highlighted below.

106. Some of the foreseeable changes are inherent in the organic growth of the current system. For example, if more States join the system and adopt the simplified reporting procedure, the workload of OHCHR/the secretariat and the Committee will increase. If more States are considered by the Committee in the absence of a report, more lists of issues prior to reporting will have to be drafted, because the issues formulated in such a situation are in effect a list of issues prior to reporting. Moreover, many of the States that might in the future accept the simplified reporting procedure do not use the Committee's current working languages.

107. There are, however, also a number of systemic changes under consideration. Some examples follow:

(a) The treaty body strengthening process was introduced by the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 68/268. One aim of the reform is greater harmonization or alignment between treaty bodies, both in terms of issues covered and working methods. This may point towards aligning the simplified procedures between the various treaty bodies and simplification in general;

(b) A global review calendar has been proposed.¹⁷ If this far-reaching proposal is accepted by States and implemented, it will mean that the reporting cycle of all States parties to the Covenant might be extended to eight years. This will decrease the frequency with which States have to report to any one Committee and, in that sense, ease the workload. On the other hand, it will significantly increase the number of States to be considered and, as such, the number of lists of issues prior to reporting to be prepared, if the new system entails dialogues with all States, including in the absence of a report;

(c) The Committee has initiated the process of drafting an internal document in which model formulations of the issues that may be raised with States are provided, to be customized according to specific situations. This may significantly facilitate the task of drafting a list of issues prior to reporting (or a list of issues);

(d) It has been proposed that treaty bodies will on occasion meet away from Geneva, especially for reporting by States from the particular region where the meeting takes place.¹⁸ This may also affect the reporting procedures that are followed.

108. The Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as part of the treaty body strengthening process, have decided to explore the possibility of a joint review of one State by the two committees. This initiative should shed some light on the feasibility of developing a system of joint lists of issues prior to reporting to be used on a regular basis.

109. More broadly, it is important to consider the increased demand on the time and attention of States due to the emergence of new reporting obligations, in whole or in part outside the scope of human rights. Developments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which brings its own reporting obligations, also need to be kept in mind. The various reporting procedures can in some ways be complementary, but they can also be in competition, and the treaty body system needs to make sure it retains the confidence of States and other actors involved in the process, inter alia by making sure its procedures are not unnecessarily complicated.

XIII. Conclusions

110. The simplified reporting procedure is widely used today and so deeply entrenched in the Human Rights Committee and in the broader treaty bodies system, and has been endorsed on such a high level, including by the General Assembly, that there is in reality no turning back.

111. Although a relatively small number of States parties to the Covenant have accepted the simplified reporting procedure to date, it seems clear that very soon, a growing majority of reports received by the Committee will have been prepared under this procedure. Simplified reporting is here to stay.

112. There are many good reasons to welcome the simplified reporting procedure. While the standard procedure made sense at the time when it was developed, the environment in which reporting takes place today has changed considerably, and the simplified procedure is a necessary response to these changes.

113. The simplified procedure makes the preparation and exchange of the principal documents more focused, in that it both decreases the overall workload associated with

¹⁷ See, for example, Y. Shany and S. Cleveland, "Treaty body reform 2020: has the time come for adopting a global review calendar?"

¹⁸ C. Heyns and W. Gravett, "Bringing the UN treaty body system closer to the people", Universal Rights Group, 14 August 2017.

reporting and helps improve the quality of the documentation and of the introspection and inspection that take place as part of the process. One way of putting this is to say the simplified procedure helps to ensure that the word count decreases and that every word counts.

114. The overall workload is decreased because the number and length of documents is decreased. The quality of the reporting process is improved because the simplified reporting procedure helps to ensure that those documents, and the consultation process that informs them, are more targeted and relevant as far as the issues to be discussed during the dialogue are concerned. At the same time, it increases the workload of the Committee.

115. The Working Group thus advocates for the acceptance of the reality as well as the desirability of the simplified procedure, for its active promotion, and for a consideration of possible measures that can be taken to improve it further.

116. In the future, it may be appropriate for the Committee to consider requiring that all reports be submitted under the simplified reporting procedure, possibly with the option for States to opt out. However, that point has not yet been reached.

XIV. Recommendations

117. **The Working Group recommends that the Committee formally resolve to adopt the simplified procedure as a permanent option for States, and that the reporting guidelines and other relevant documentation be adjusted accordingly.**

118. **Given the benefits that it offers to States, the Committee should take steps to ensure that as many States parties as possible are encouraged to accept the simplified reporting procedure through an active campaign.**

119. **The simplified reporting procedure should be offered to all States parties, irrespective of whether they have submitted their initial reports, or whether their reports are overdue.**

120. **The following potential adjustments to the simplified procedure as implemented thus far should be considered:**

(a) **It may enhance consistency and brevity to agree on a limit to the number of issues included in the lists of issues prior to reporting. Provided this is in line with what the other committees do, it is proposed that the ideal maximum number of issues to be included in lists of issues prior to reporting be set at 25. This should at most be a soft target. Where necessary, deviations may be allowed;**

(b) **The secretariat should explore ways to ensure that there are no undue delays in scheduling reports that have been submitted under the simplified procedure for dialogue;**

(c) **The new system depends on high levels of expertise on the side of OHCHR/the secretariat and the Committee, because they take the lead. OHCHR needs to retain and assign experienced staff accordingly. Moreover, in terms of staffing decisions, all possible steps should be taken to ensure that institutional memory is retained;**

(d) **States parties should keep the common core documents up to date. When making decisions about funding for the treaty body system, they should also keep in mind that the simplified procedure increases the workload of the secretariat and the treaty bodies, but alleviates the workload of States. It is thus in the interest of States parties to make funding available to the treaty bodies to implement the simplified procedure;**

(e) **Care should be taken to ensure that the way in which the simplified reporting procedure is implemented is consistent between the various treaty bodies. This is part of simplifying the reporting process as a whole.**

121. The Committee should continue to monitor the implementation of the simplified procedure and to accommodate changes to the treaty body reporting system. The question of interest from other committees to conduct a joint assessment of the simplified reporting procedure should be explored, and if they are interested, such an initiative should be favourably considered.

Annex I

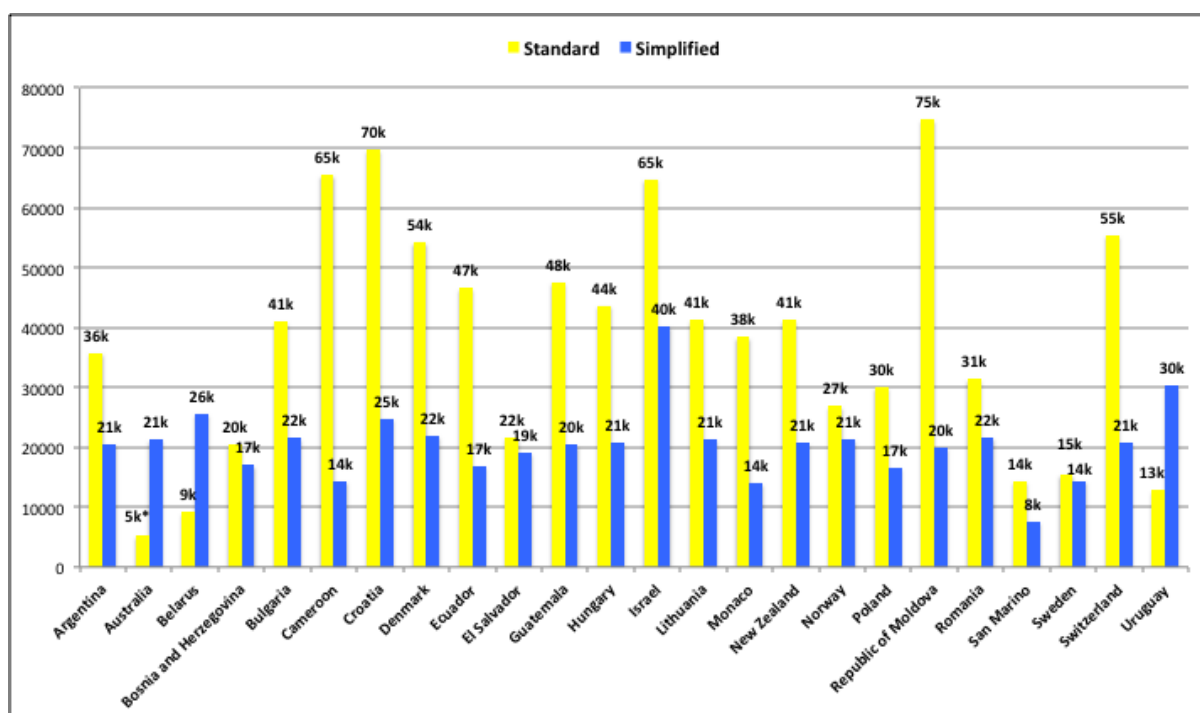
Responses to questionnaires

<i>States</i>	
<i>Not accepted simplified reporting procedure</i>	<i>Reported under both procedures</i>
Austria	Australia
Colombia	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Greece	Croatia
Kenya	Denmark
Kuwait	Ecuador
Liechtenstein	Monaco
Republic of Korea	New Zealand
Senegal	Poland
Slovenia	Sweden
Ukraine	Switzerland
<i>NHRIs</i>	
<i>NGOs</i>	
Mexico	FIACAT, CCPR Centre
Argentina	

Annex II^a

Word count comparison between the standard and the simplified reporting procedures

The number of words in the English version of the principal documentation submitted by the same States under the two procedures, without the annexes, are compared. English was chosen because it is the language in which the various documents are most consistently available. The word counts below are rounded to the nearest 1,000 (k) and take into account title pages and tables of contents. On 1 January 2015, a 21,200-word limit was placed on all United Nations reports.



* Annexes are much longer and contain most of the information in the report of Australia.

^a Annexes II–V compare the data for the 24 States that have submitted reports under both the standard and the simplified procedures (see paras. 41 and 42 of the main report). In each case, the last reports submitted under the standard procedure are compared with the first reports submitted under the simplified procedure.

Annex III

Time period of reporting cycle under the standard procedure

<i>State party</i>	<i>Date report received</i>	<i>Date of LOI</i>	<i>Date replies received</i>	<i>Date of dialogue</i>	<i>Time b/w replies received & dialogue</i>	<i>Time b/w LOI & dialogue</i>	<i>Time b/w report received & dialogue</i>
Argentina	17 Dec 08	25 Aug 09	18 Jan 10	10 Mar 10	~ 2 months	~ 6 months	~ 15 months
Australia	7 Aug 07	24 Nov 08	19 Jan 09	23 Mar 09	~ 2 months	~ 4 months	~ 20 months
Belarus	11 Apr 95	NA	NA	30 Oct 97	NA	NA	~ 31 months
Bosnia & Herzegovina	17 Nov 10	27 Apr 12	9 Aug 12	22 Oct 12	~ 2 months	~ 6 months	~ 23 months
Bulgaria	31 Jul 09	3 Dec 10	31 Mar 11	13 Jul 11	~ 3 months	~ 7 months	~ 23 months
Cameroon	25 Nov 08	2 Nov 09	16 Apr 10	19 Jul 10	~ 3 months	~ 9 months	~ 20 months
Croatia	28 Nov 07	7 May 09	4 Aug 09	14 Oct 09	~ 2 months	~ 5 months	~ 23 months
Denmark	23 Jul 07	7 Aug 08	24 Sep 08	13 Oct 08	~ 1 month	~ 2 months	~ 15 months
Ecuador	22 Dec 07	25 Aug 09	17 Sep 09	19 Oct 09	~ 1 month	~ 2 months	~ 22 months
El Salvador	13 Jan 09	29 Oct 09	21 Sep 10	11 Oct 10	~ 1 month	~ 11 months	~ 21 months
Guatemala	20 Oct 09	28 Dec 10	7 Apr 11	19 Mar 12	~ 11 months	~ 15 months	~ 29 months
Hungary	15 Mar 09	8 Apr 10	June 10	18 Oct 10	~ 5 months	~ 6 months	~ 19 months
Israel	25 Jul 08	17 Nov 09	12 Jul 10	13 Jul 10	~ 0 months	~ 8 months	~ 24 months
Lithuania	3 Sep 10	5 Dec 11	10 Apr 12	10 Jul 12	~ 3 months	~ 7 months	~ 22 months
Monaco	4 Mar 07	7 Aug 08	24 Sep 08	14 Oct 08	~ 1 month	~ 6 months	~ 19 months
New Zealand	24 Dec 07	24 Aug 09	27 Jan 2010	15 Mar 10	~ 2 months	~ 7 months	~ 27 months
Norway	25 Nov 09	19 Apr 11	13 Jul 11	24 Oct 11	~ 3 months	~ 6 months	~ 23 months
Poland	15 Jan 09	15 Apr 10	14 Jul 10	12 Oct 10	~ 3 months	~ 6 months	~ 21 months
Republic of Moldova	5 Oct 07	20 May 09	9 Oct 09	13 Oct 09	~ 0 months	~ 5 months	~ 24 months
Romania	26 Apr 96	NA	NA	20 Jul 99	NA	NA	~ 39 months
San Marino	31 Oct 06	12 Nov 07	9 Jul 08	11 Jul 08	~ 0 months	~ 8 months	~ 20 months
Sweden	20 Jul 07	25 Aug 08	19 Jan 09	25 Mar 09	~ 2 months	~ 7 months	~ 20 months
Switzerland	12 Oct 07	20 May 09	10 Aug 09	12 Oct 10	14 months	~ 17 months	36 months
Uruguay	19 Dec 96	NA	NA	27 Mar 98	NA	NA	~ 15 months
Average					~ 3 months	<u>~ 7 months</u>	<u>~ 23 months</u>

Annex IV

Time period of reporting cycle under the simplified procedure

<i>State party</i>	<i>Date of LOIPR</i>	<i>Date replies received</i>	<i>Date of dialogue</i>	<i>Time period b/w replies received and dialogue</i>	<i>Time period b/w LOIPR & dialogue</i>
Argentina	27 Apr 14	19 May 15	29 Jun 16	~ 13 months	~ 26 months
Australia	9 Nov 12	2 May 16	18 Oct 17	~ 18 months	~ 59 months
Belarus	19 Aug 15	30 Mar 17	8 Oct 18	~ 19 months	~ 38 months
Bosnia & Herzegovina	6 Nov 15	24 Mar 16	14 Mar 17	~ 12 months	~ 16 months
Bulgaria	21 Aug 15	3 Nov 16	16 Oct 18	~ 23 months	~ 38 months
Cameroon	29 Nov 11	11 Oct 16	24 Oct 17	~ 12 months	~ 71 months
Croatia	21 Aug 12	8 Jan 14	23 Mar 15	~ 14 months	~ 31 months
Denmark	29 Nov 11	29 Sep 15	20 Jun 16	~ 9 months	~ 55 months
Ecuador	24 Apr 14	6 Aug 15	27 Jun 16	~ 11 months	~ 26 months
El Salvador	18 Aug 15	22 Nov 16	13 Mar 18	~ 16 months	~ 31 months
Guatemala	30 Nov 15	2 Dec 16	12 Mar 18	~ 15 months	~ 27 months
Hungary	9 Dec 15	18 Jan 17	19 Mar 18	~ 14 months	~ 27 months
Israel	31 Aug 12	14 Oct 13	20 Oct 14	~ 12 months	~ 26 months
Lithuania	16 Aug 16	6 Oct 17	10 Jul 18	~ 9 months	~ 23 months
Monaco	28 Nov 11	8 Apr 14	24 Mar 15	~ 12 months	~ 40 months
New Zealand	15 Apr 14	8 May 15	14 Mar 16	~ 10 months	~ 23 months
Norway	17 Aug 16	7 Jul 17	14 Mar 18	~ 8 months	~ 20 months
Poland	19 Aug 14	26 Oct 15	17 Oct 16	~ 12 months	~ 27 months
Republic of Moldova	28 Nov 11	6 Jan 16	18 Oct 16	~ 9 months	~ 59 months
Romania	25 Apr 14	28 Sep 16	25 Oct 17	~ 13 months	~42 months
San Marino	23 Aug 12	24 Apr 15	19 Oct 15	~ 6 months	~ 26 months
Sweden	24 Apr 14	29 Apr 15	9 Mar 16	~ 10 months	~ 22 months
Switzerland	25 Nov 14	7 Jul 16	3 Jul 17	~ 12 months	~ 31 months
Uruguay	17 Oct 11	21 Dec 12	23 Oct 13	~ 10 months	~ 24 months
Average				~ 12 months	<u>~ 33 months</u>

Annex V

Number of issues under the two procedures

<i>State party</i>	<i>Number of issues in LOI</i>	<i>Number of issues in LOIPR</i>
Argentina	26	26
Australia	24	25
Belarus	NA	33
Bosnia and Herzegovina	28	29
Bulgaria	27	28
Cameroon	29	28
Croatia	26	24
Denmark	26	24
Ecuador	29	28
El Salvador	25	30
Guatemala	25	30
Hungary	25	29
Israel	30	26
Lithuania	25	22
Monaco	23	18
New Zealand	27	27
Norway	21	22
Poland	31	27
Republic of Moldova	24	26
Romania	NA	27
San Marino	21	20
Sweden	29	25
Switzerland	22	26
Uruguay	NA	24
Average	25.86	26.0