Regional consultation for the Americas on enhancing cooperation between UN and regional human rights mechanisms
On prevention of torture and protection of victims of torture, especially persons deprived of their liberty
Washington D.C., United States of America – 29 to 30 November 2011

PROGRAMME

Day 1 (29 November 2011)

Objective: Discussions will aim at identifying concrete means and tools of cooperation between UN and Inter-American human rights mechanisms focused on the fight against torture and will focus on some areas identified as key during the international workshop on cooperation between international and regional human rights mechanisms held in Geneva in 2010 (A/HRC/15/56): sharing of information, possible joint activities, and follow up to recommendations. The role of NPMs and NGOs will also be discussed. These discussions will allow ensuring coherence, avoiding gaps and overlaps, as well as strengthening complementarity and maximizing the impact of both UN and the Inter-American human rights systems’ actions. The consultation will also allow to identifying concrete commitments for short and medium term.

Discussions will be focused on different aspects of the fight against torture, including both prevention and protection. Thematic focus should guide the discussions on ways to reinforce cooperation between UN and Inter-American human rights systems. Seven key thematic focuses have been identified as key in the region:

1. Preventive detention and excessive use of custodial measures
2. Overcrowding
3. Conditions of detention
4. Torture and ill treatment in criminal investigations
5. Excessive use of force by security personnel in detention facilities and intra-prisoner violence
6. Administration of justice: law enforcement, security sector and the judiciary
7. Vulnerable groups in detention: children, women, migrants and persons with disabilities.

08:30 – 9:00  Registration

9:00 – 9:20  Opening session
Ms. Dinah Shelton, Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR)’s President
Mr. Vladlen Stefanov, Chief of National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section (NIRMS), OHCHR
9:20 – 10:00 Reinforcement of cooperation between UN and the Inter-American human rights mechanisms on torture: Recent developments

Panelists: Mr. Mario Coriolano, SPT Vice-President
Ms. Maria Claudia Pulido, Senior Human Rights Specialist, IACHR
Brief presentation on the regional coordination meeting on the human rights mechanisms on torture.
Moderator: Vladlen Stefanov

10:00 – 11:30 How to improve information sharing between UN and Inter-American human rights mechanisms on torture?
Panelist: Mr. Santiago A. Canton, IACHR Executive Secretary
Moderator: Mr. Hernán Vales, OHCHR, Secretariat of SPT

What is the added value of sharing information between mechanisms? Should institutional channels be established in order to exchange information on the areas mentioned above? If yes, what kind? What are the key areas of collaboration which will allow overcoming challenges with regard to information sharing? How to deal with confidentiality? How to better share information on planning of visits, reports, individual cases, methods of work, and good practices?

Issues to be taken into account: Planning of visits; Coming reports; Exchange of information on individual cases; Methods of work and good practices; Role of OHCHR and Secretariats in information sharing (Including information on how the different bodies and secretariats are organized and structured)

11:30 – 11:45 Coffee break

11:45 – 13:00 Promoting joint activities between the UN and Inter-American human rights systems, on fight against torture
Panelist: Santiago A. Canton, Executive Secretary, IACHR
Moderator: Carmen Rosa Villa, Representative of OHCHR Regional Office for Central America

When joint activities could be envisaged and when they would bring an added value? Should institutional channels be established in order to carry out joint activities? Which would be the criteria to decide to plan joint activities? How to identify priority areas in which joint activities could be envisaged? How to make better use of existing resources? How to make better use of OHCHR and the Inter-American secretariat?

Concrete proposals on: joint reports (including both thematic and country reports), in particular a possible joint report on key
challenges in the region in relation with torture and ill treatment; joint visits; joint press releases; joint capacity building activities; joint publications; exchange of staff, coordinated early warning actions and identification of common priorities.

13:00 – 14:30  Lunch break

14:30- 16:00  How to improve complementarity between the UN and Inter-American human rights systems, on fight against torture

Panelist: Mr. Claudio Grossman, President of CAT

Moderator: Mr. Rodrigo Escobar, IACHR’s Rapporteur on detainees’ rights

How to improve complementarity of UN and Inter-American human rights systems to strengthen follow-up? How to better benefit from other mechanisms’ recommendations? How to develop a more strategic approach in the follow up of the recommendations from different mechanisms? How to address confidentiality? Should institutional channels be established for follow-up? Which ones? How to increase coordination between anti-torture mechanisms and other human rights mechanisms (Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, UPR) How to make better use of OHCHR and the Inter-American secretariat?

Concrete proposals on: recommendations following missions, thematic reports, urgent actions, precautionary measures, and the design of a regional strategy in relation to follow up.

16:00 – 16:30  Coffee break

16:30 – 18:00  Conclusions of Day 1:

Cooperation between UN and Inter-American human rights mechanisms on torture, in information sharing, joint activities, complementary follow-up: Crystalizing commitments into concrete actions

Moderators:

Ms. Maria Clara Martin, Chief Americas Section OHCHR

Mr. Santiago Canton, IACHR Executive Secretary
9:00 – 10:30 Role of National Preventive Mechanisms
How NPMs can follow up on UN and Inter-American recommendations and improve exchange of information? How NPM reports can guide UN and Inter-American mechanisms? How UN and Inter-American mechanisms can promote and strengthen NPMs’ establishment and work? How NPMs and UN and Inter-American mechanisms can better exchange experiences regarding methods of work? How to improve the use of NPMs of UN and Inter-American mechanisms to ensure better protection for NPM personnel and detainees (urgent appeals, allegation letters, precautionary measures)? How to improve direct contact of NPMs with regional mechanisms and UN bodies in addition to SPT (Lessons learnt from SPT-NPMs relationship) How NHRIs (NPMs or not) can better interact with the UN and the Inter-American mechanisms on torture?
Panelists: Ms Odalis Najera, NPM Honduras (TBC)
Mr. Mario Coriolano, SPT Vice-President
Moderator: Mr. Amerigo Incalcaterra, Representative of OHCHR Regional Office for South America

10:30 - 10:45 Coffee Break

10:45 - 12:30 Role of NGOs
How NGOs can contribute to the follow up on UN and Inter-American recommendations and improve exchange of information? How address confidentiality? How NGOs can contribute to the design of a regional strategy and identification of priorities in relation to follow up? What role for NGOs monitoring and coordination with NPMs? How NGOs’ efforts in promoting NPMs establishment and strengthening can be maximized? How NGOs can make strategic use of UN and Inter-American mechanisms, in particular regarding individual cases and systematic violations?
Panelists: Ms. Paula Litvachky: CELS
Mr. Juan Mendez, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture
Ms. María José Urgel, Association for the Prevention of Torture
Moderator: Mr. Andrés Pizarro, IACHR

12:30 – 13:00 Conclusions of Day 2: Cooperation between UN and Inter-American human rights mechanisms on torture and the role of NPMs and NGOs: Crystalizing commitments into concrete actions
Moderators: Mr. Vladlen Stefanov, Chief NIRMS, OHCHR
Ms. Maria Claudia Pulido, Senior Human Rights Specialist
IACHR