

5TH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS
AND REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN
RIGHTS
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**PANEL 5: COOPERATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL, INCLUDING FOLLOW UP TO UN
AND RHRMs' RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS.**

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The State of Cameroon has opted for a participatory approach in the implementation and follow up of decisions and recommendations of UN and RHRMs. We shall briefly share the practices, lessons learnt, challenges and also propose new forms of co-operation.

A) PRACTICES

The best practices include the use of National Committees, the involvement of Civil Society and Human Rights Defenders.

1. National Committees

These committees have either englobing mandates or specialized mandates. Examples include:

- a permanent committee coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office charged with the follow up of decisions and recommendations of human rights mechanisms¹. It consists of ministerial departments and other state institutions.
- a Commission on the rights of the child which works to implement the national policy on the protection of children².
- an inter-ministerial committee for the supervision of the prevention and fight against traffic in persons³. A meeting was held on 19 August 2012 to finalize the guidelines for the implementation of the action plan of the committee.
- The supervisory committee for the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of human Rights is in the process of being set up.

¹ Order No 081/CAB/PM du 15 Avril 2011

² Cameroon Tribune of 14 Sept 2016

³ Order No 163/CAB/PM of 2 Nov 2010

2. Involvement of CSOs, HRDs and other stakeholders

The involvement of these has greatly enhanced the follow up of decisions and recommendations. Their actions have included:

- participation in consultations for drafting or improving upon legislation. For example, the Bar Council was consulted for the revision of the Penal Code⁴ adopted on 12 July 2016;
- contributing to State reports sometimes under the coordination of the NCHRF. On January 12, 2016 a consultation meeting was organized in Yaounde by the NCHRF for CSOs on the 5th periodic report to the Committee against Torture.
- producing parallel reports and other documents to treaty bodies. The NCHRF sent contributions to the list of issues to be considered during the pre-session working group of the Committee on the rights of the Child which shall take place on 5 October 2016;
- organizing sensitization activities to build capacities. The United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa organized a workshop in collaboration with the NCHRF on the follow up of the implementation of recommendations and reporting to human rights mechanisms 19-20 August, 2014 in Bamenda. In the same light, a training was organized by the OHCHR and the ICC on the International Human Rights System for NHRIs in Geneva on 5-10 May 2015;

B) LESSONS LEARNT

There are a few lessons to be learnt from cooperation at country level.

1. Shifting government position

The government is now softening its position on recommendations and decisions it had previously stood against. For instance during the UPR 2009, some of the recommendations were rejected but were later on accepted following strong advocacy from the NCHRF and some civil society organisations.

2. Improved understanding of state efforts

CSOs and HRDs understand efforts made by states in the implementation of decisions and recommendations due to dialogue in consultations.

3. A more harmonious approach to societal problems.

⁴ Law No 2016/007 of 12 July 2016

C) CHALLENGES

Some of the challenges faced include the need to preserve sovereignty and public order and insufficient funds.

Though the state is softening its position and also embracing other stakeholders, it still insists on sovereignty and public order and so does not open up to decisions and recommendations which may jeopardize these.

The lack of funding is a big challenge. To carry out wide-reaching sensitization, and advocacy; to undertake research into problematic areas and to evaluate action undertaken in the implementation of decisions and recommendations undertaken by the various stakeholders, funding is necessary.

D) NEW FORMS OF COOPERATION

There is need for cooperation in the area of research and development. These areas which are often neglected, are quite determinant to the enjoyment of human rights.

There is also the need to cooperate more with professional bodies and syndicates because these have the potential of contributing to the development of a culture of human rights.