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## **UN officials stress need to strengthen and harmonize human rights treaty bodies**



UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

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[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today called for increased resources to help strengthen and harmonize the treaty bodies that monitor the implementation of international human rights treaties, describing them as the indispensable link between universal standards and the individuals they are designed to protect.

“Human rights are at the heart of the UN system, and treaty bodies are at the heart of the UN human rights machinery,” [said](#) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “We cannot afford to undermine these critical engines of the human rights protection system. We must strengthen them.”

Mr. Ban was addressing a treaty body strengthening consultations meeting for States parties to international human rights treaties at UN Headquarters in New York.

The treaty bodies are created in accordance with the provisions of the respective human rights treaty they monitor, and the Geneva-based Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) supports their work and assists them in harmonizing their working methods and reporting requirements through their secretariats.

In February, the General Assembly resolved to create an intergovernmental process for strengthening the human rights treaty body system. According to OHCHR, the treaty body strengthening process is necessitated by the enormous growth of the treaty body system, which has doubled over the last decade in areas such as in the number of treaty bodies (from 6 to 10 treaty bodies); the overall number of sessions (from 11 to 24); and in the overall number of weeks in session (from 44 to 73).

“It is important that this process will complement the Geneva-based efforts by financially supporting the expansion of the treaty body system and, at the same time, preserving its independence,” Mr. Ban said in his remarks.

In his remarks to the meeting, the President of the General Assembly, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, said his main objective will be to build unity for the treaty body strengthening process.

“This process will also work to improve the impact of the human rights treaty bodies on rights-holders and duty-bearers at the national level, by strengthening their work, while fully respecting their independence,” he said, adding that “all stakeholders should be bound by the shared interest of making the best decisions for the treaty body system itself.”

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