



Statement by the International Service for Human Rights

Progress reports of the institution-building Working Groups

15 March 2007

The non-papers of the Facilitators of the Council's institution-building work reflect the amount of work that has been done and the distance that is still to be travelled. The sessions of the Working Groups to be held next month will be important, with heavy workloads and grave responsibilities, if the Council is to complete the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly for the Council's first year.

The non-papers also raise a question that only this Council itself can address: how are these various mechanisms of the Council to be made into a cohesive whole?

The three working groups have their distinctive modalities, with six facilitators addressing different issues. Somehow the Council has to put these disparate threads together in a single system that will work cohesively and effectively.

There has been resistance to this concept expressed on several occasions in the working group discussions. It seems that, while the United Nations as a whole is committed to system wide coherence as "One UN", some States would have this Council develop as a fragmented body, with its work isolated in distinct silos with no part interacting with any other part.

The effectiveness of the Council depends on it establishing integrated, comprehensive mechanisms. Special procedures should inform the work of the Universal Periodic Review and should, in turn, shape their own work in response to the UPR's conclusions and recommendations. The complaint procedure, without violating the confidentiality attached to individual complaints, must be able to contribute overviews of complaint patterns to the review of individual States. The system of expert advice should provide highly qualified, independent experts to assist the UPR and to participate in missions established by the Council.

The individual facilitator and working groups should look for ways to advance this integration. The Council as a whole, however, will need to ensure that, in putting the final touches to each piece of the institution-building process, it places each piece in relationship to other pieces to produce a single, composite picture.