



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

**United Nations Human Rights Council Special Procedures
19th Annual Meeting, 11 – 15 June 2012**

**International Commission of Jurists Oral Statement
14 June 2012**

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Distinguished Rapporteurs and members of the Coordination Committee,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Special Procedures in this Annual Meeting. In this statement, the ICJ wishes to outline recent action and correspondence by a coalition of Geneva-based NGOs, and to draw attention to the recently elaborated Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

On 1 June 2012, a group of NGOs committed to supporting and strengthening the work of the Special Procedures sent an open letter to the Coordination Committee. In that letter, we drew attention to a Joint Statement produced last year, aimed at providing constructive and useful recommendations in a single document as something that could be used as the basis for future discussions. The letter welcomed recent positive developments and brought to the Committee's attention further observations and suggestions. Those matters will be elaborated upon in oral statements from other NGOs present at this meeting. As well as seeking responses to those further issues, the signatories would welcome comments from the Special Procedures on improvements over the past 12 months on issues raised in the Joint Statement, as well as areas in respect of which it has not been possible to make progress for external reasons. Rather than elaborating further on these points, I leave the letter and the Joint Statement to speak for themselves.

The ICJ also takes this opportunity to draw attention to the Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, recently adopted by group of leading human rights experts at a meeting in September 2011 convened by Maastricht University and the ICJ. Signatories include current and former members of the treaty bodies, former and current Special Procedure mandate-holders, along with scholars and legal advisers of leading NGOs. The Principles are a guiding instrument to serve as the primary general reference in the area of extraterritorial human rights obligations. They complement two previous initiatives of Maastricht University and the ICJ, which have proved successful in fleshing out the legal contours of economic, social and cultural rights: the 1986 Limburg Principles and the 1997 Maastricht Guidelines. A Commentary to the Maastricht Principles will be published later this year in a forthcoming issue of the *Human Rights Quarterly*. The ICJ encourages the Special Procedures to make use of the Maastricht Principles in their work and reports, and to make reference to them in order to assist in the visibility and acceptance of the Principles.

Madam Chair,

A final matter we wish to bring to your attention concerns the timing of this meeting. It has been requested that exchanges with civil society take place early in the programme of work of the Annual Meeting so that the ideas generated and questions raised by NGOs might carry through to the private discussions on those issues later in the agenda. We hope that

this request can be considered positively when preparing the programme for the 2013 Annual Meeting.

I thank you.

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