

[Landmark decision by UN Working Group opens path for national human rights institutions in New York](#)



The participation of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in UN bodies and processes helps ensure the UN is informed by the human rights situation on the ground and to bridge the implementation gap between international and national law, but until now the ability of NHRIs to participate in UN processes has been very limited.

The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing resolved by consensus to accredit 'A-status' NHRIs - those meeting the standards of independence and effectiveness set by the so-called 'Paris Principles' - to their sessions. Accreditation will provide for direct participation by NHRIs in sessions of the Working Group, for the first time.

Welcoming the outcome, the Chair of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), Dr Beate Rudolf, spoke of the 'milestone decision' as 'a significant recognition of the value that NHRIs can bring to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing.'

The Chair of the Working Group, Argentinian Mr Mateo Estreme, said he looked forward to the 'active and constructive contribution' of NHRIs in future sessions.

Currently, participation of NHRIs within UN mechanisms is limited, with the greatest opportunity at the Human Rights Council in Geneva where 'A-status' NHRIs can submit written statements and make oral statements while the Council is in session.

The Open-Ended Working Group was encouraged to accredit NHRIs by the UN General Assembly which, in its December 2015 resolution, encourages UN mechanisms and processes to further enhance the participation of national human rights institutions in their sessions. Four specific mechanisms and processes - considered as at the forefront of engagement with NHRIs - were named, including the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing.

'We hope the Open-ended Working Group's decision will inspire other mechanisms to follow their lead,' said ISHR's Eleanor Openshaw. 'The Commission on the Status of Women will meet in March and will have the opportunity to put into place measures to open the door to NHRIs'.

Others include the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and processes related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

'UN mechanisms and processes have the opportunity to confirm participation of NHRIs in their sessions ahead

of the GA reconsidering the issue in October 2017,' said Eleanor Openshaw.

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