

Procedural Guidelines for States parties on the examination of reports before the Human Rights Committee

The dialogue takes place over two half-days, or 6 hours of work, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Usually, the session is spread over two days, starting in the afternoon on the first day (3:00-6:00 p.m.) and continuing the next morning (10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m). Thus, it would be advisable to limit the time for presentation, questions, answers, and discussion to ensure that the Committee's schedule is carefully managed.

The meeting will normally begin with an opening statement by the Head of the Delegation of around 10/15 minutes highlighting the latest developments in the State party since the drafting of the report.

The Committee members will then pose questions on the issues raised in the list of issues that arise from the responses from the State party and any extra questions they may have arising from the new information received or developments in the State party. The issues are normally divided in two, with half of the questions (around 12-15) being dealt with in the first meeting and the second half in the second meeting. The Chairperson will indicate to the Head of Delegation at the outset of the meeting which issues he/she would expect to be dealt with in the first part and which in the second.

Time allowing, the Chairperson normally allows a break of around 10/15mins for the delegation to prepare its responses to the questions raised. The Head of the Delegation or colleagues designated by the Head will then be expected to respond to the questions.

Following the Delegation's comments on the first set of issues, members of the Committee may pose supplementary follow-up questions, which will then be answered by the Delegation.

The same procedure will be repeated for the second part of the list of issues.

With a view to covering all the issues adequately and avoiding time pressure towards the end of the day, it will of course be necessary for the Delegation's answers to be as concise as possible. Statistical or lengthy technical material should therefore be distributed to members (preferably in advance) and should not be presented viva voce ("orally"); similarly, constitutional, and legislative texts which are available to members need not be repeated.

Following the completion of questions and answers on both parts, and any further exchange between the Delegation and members of the Committee, the Head of Delegation will normally make brief closing remarks. The Chairperson will then summarize the main points of the dialogue.