CANADA

The Permanent Mission of Canada
to the United Nations
at Geneva

La Mission permanente du Canada
auprès des Nations Unies
à Genève

OEWG on the Review of the Work and Functioning of the Human Rights Council

Item 4: Discussion on the IBP, including the presentation of concrete proposals, Sub-item 1: UPR

Tuesday, 26 October 2010

Intervention by Canada

Mr. President,

Canada considers the UPR as one of the most essential assets of multilateral efforts to promote, protect and ensure respect for human rights around the world. The strength of the UPR lies in its universality and periodic nature: all States must regularly and systematically reflect on their human rights challenges, consider the views of domestic and international partners, and make commitments towards improvements, including with the support of other States and the OHCHR. Canada greatly values the universality of the mechanism, and is proud to have contributed to every review to date, except for those where time constraints and speakers list challenges have prevented our participation. We look forward to the second cycle, where we will seek to help build on progress achieved during the first cycle and make further recommendations on new or continuing challenges.

This review process offers the opportunity to correct what we see as three flaws of the UPR, namely: the restricted speakers' lists, the lack of clear responses by States to all recommendations received, and the inadequate space for NHRI and NGO participation.

In this regard, Canada offers the following proposals:

Proposal 1: To ensure universality of participation:

a) extend time for each review to 4.5 hours:

   - reduce the number of States reviewed at each session to 12, and add one additional UPR session per year;

   - consider possible time efficiencies:
     - start each session promptly;
     - cut microphone on speakers automatically at time limit;
     - continue through lunch period (+2 hours per day);
     - consolidate WG adoption of draft reports into one meeting at the end of each session (+1 hour per day);

b) divide time available by number of speakers in cases where insufficient time for all to speak.

Proposal 2: To enhance NHRI/NGO/stakeholder input into the UPR process:

a) request the High Commissioner for Human Rights to present the UN compilation and stakeholder summary reports at the beginning of each country's review;

b) create dedicated speaking space during the UPR WG for A-Status NHRIs (by video-link if necessary) and NGOs;

c) allow A-Status NHRIs to submit a separate 10 page report as an additional basis for the review;

d) establish guidelines for States to ensure effective consultation with national civil society and other stakeholders.

Proposal 3: To ensure clear responses to all recommendations, and promote effective follow-up:

a) establish templates for States to clearly indicate to the WG whether each recommendation has been accepted or rejected, and to provide a concise rationale;

b) establish templates to serve as a possible guideline for voluntary mid-term reporting by States on progress achieved.

Proposal 4: To enhance efficiency and increase attention to UPR outcome reports:

a) convert the final 2, unused days of each UPR session into HRC sessions for adoption of UPR reports from the past session.

Canada will also be pleased to consider constructive proposals of other delegations to help strengthen the UPR, and looks forward to working with all partners toward this end.

I thank you.