



# Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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## Committee against Torture

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**Organizational and other matters**

## Twelfth annual report of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment\*

### *Summary*

In its twelfth annual report, the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment surveys the work undertaken during 2018.

Following a brief introduction, in section II the Subcommittee provides an update on developments relating to the system of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, including visits, the increase in the number of States parties and in designated national preventive mechanisms, and details concerning the operation of the Special Fund established under the Optional Protocol.

In section III, the Subcommittee highlights its areas of cooperation with other international and regional bodies and civil society, and summarizes the work that they have undertaken together.

In section IV, the Subcommittee provides substantive information concerning developments in its working practices and comments on any issues it has faced when undertaking its work during the year in review.

In sections V and VI, the Subcommittee reflects on future challenges and its plan of work.

\* The present document was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.



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## I. Introduction

1. Reflecting article 16 (3) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and in accordance with rule 33 of its rules of procedure, the Subcommittee “shall prepare an annual report on its activities which shall be a public document”. Pursuant to these provisions, the twelfth annual report addresses the activities of the Subcommittee from 1 January to 31 December 2018. The report was considered and adopted by the Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session, in February 2019.

## II. Year in review

### A. Participation in the Optional Protocol system

2. As at 31 December 2018, 88 States were party to the Optional Protocol and 15 States were signatories. In 2018, the Optional Protocol was acceded to by Afghanistan (17 April 2018) and was signed by Slovakia (14 December 2018).

The pattern of regional participation was as follows:

African States	22
Asia-Pacific States	12
Eastern European States	19
Latin American and Caribbean States	15
Western European and other States	20

The regional breakdown of the 15 signatory States was as follows:

African States	9
Asia-Pacific States	1
Eastern European States	1
Latin American and Caribbean States	1
Western European and other States	3

### B. Organizational and membership issues

3. During the reporting period, the Subcommittee held three one-week sessions in Geneva: the thirty-fourth session (12–16 February), the thirty-fifth session (18–22 June) and the thirty-sixth session (19–23 November).

4. The membership of the Subcommittee changed during 2018.<sup>1</sup> At the thirty-fifth session, Daniel Fink succeeded to the place vacated by the resignation of Hans-Jörg Bannwart. On 25 October 2018, at the seventh meeting of States parties to the Optional Protocol, 13 members were elected to fill the vacancies arising in respect of members whose terms of office were expiring on 31 December 2018. The terms of office of all the newly elected members will commence on 1 January 2019 and are for a period of four years, expiring on 31 December 2022.

5. In the light of the increasing number of States parties to the Optional Protocol, the Subcommittee decided to restructure the membership of its regional teams and to restructure and reorganize the composition of its working groups.

6. The heads of the regional teams were revised as follows: Africa – Abdallah Ounnir, Asia and the Pacific – June Caridad Pagaduan Lopez, Europe – Mari Amos, and Latin

<sup>1</sup> The list of members is available at [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/OPCAT/Pages/Membership.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/OPCAT/Pages/Membership.aspx).

America – Felipe Villavicencio Terreros. The regional teams examine the implementation of the Optional Protocol within their region, reporting to the Subcommittee in plenary, with recommendations as appropriate.

7. The Subcommittee's permanent and ad hoc working groups met as required and as they were able during 2018. Further information on their meetings is provided in section IV below. The Subcommittee considers that meeting in subgroups and working groups facilitates discussion of a broad range of issues in an efficient, focused and participatory fashion.

8. At its thirty-fifth session, the Subcommittee met with representatives of the Association for the Prevention of Torture, the Convention against Torture Initiative and the Omega Research Foundation, and was briefed on the latest developments in the global study on children deprived of liberty. The Omega Research Foundation presented to the Subcommittee its research on monitoring weapons and restraints in places of detention.

9. At its thirty-sixth session, the Subcommittee held an informal meeting with the States parties and signatories to the Optional Protocol; 26 States parties attended the two-hour meeting.

10. At its thirty-sixth session, the Subcommittee, together with the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, met with the Committee against Torture, and, with facilitation and participation by the Association for the Prevention of Torture, discussed proposals for a protocol on non-coercive investigative interviewing.

### **C. Visits conducted during the reporting period**

11. The Subcommittee undertook six official visits in 2018 in accordance with its mandate under articles 11–13 of the Optional Protocol, to Uruguay (4–15 March), Belize (22–28 April), Portugal (1–10 May), Poland (8–19 July), Kyrgyzstan (11–22 September) and Liberia (29 October–2 November). During its thirty-fifth session, in June 2018, the Subcommittee also decided to terminate its visit to Rwanda that had been suspended in October 2017, due to a lack of cooperation from the Government. The fact that the Subcommittee was unable to resume and complete its visit to Rwanda also explains the lower number of visits undertaken during 2018.

12. During the course of its official visits in 2018, the Subcommittee conducted over 1,000 individual or collective interviews, mainly with detainees but also with officials, law enforcement personnel and medical staff. It visited, inter alia, 34 prisons, 53 police stations, 11 juvenile detention centres, 8 psychiatric and health-care institutions and 3 closed migrant centres.

13. Further factual information is available in the press releases issued following each visit and Subcommittee session.

### **D. Dialogue arising from visits, including publication of the Subcommittee's reports by States parties and national preventive mechanisms**

14. The substantive aspects of the dialogue arising from visits are confidential. Reports are made public only with the consent of the recipient. By the end of 2018, the Subcommittee had transmitted a total of 78 visit reports to States parties and national preventive mechanisms, including 10 within the reporting period to Hungary (State party), Mauritania (State party and national preventive mechanism), Mongolia (State party), Portugal (State party and national preventive mechanism), Spain (State party and national preventive mechanism) and Uruguay (State party and national preventive mechanism). A total of 41 visit reports have been made public following requests from States parties or national preventive mechanisms under article 16 (2) of the Optional Protocol, including 7 in 2018, namely the reports addressed to the State party arising from the visits of the Subcommittee to Benin, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Mongolia, and the reports addressed to the national

preventive mechanisms of Hungary, Mauritania, Spain and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. While fully respecting the principle and right of confidentiality provided for in the Optional Protocol, the Subcommittee welcomes the increasing number of visit reports that are being published, believing that this reflects the spirit of transparency on which preventive visiting is based and facilitates better implementation of the respective recommendations. The Subcommittee encourages the recipients of reports to request their publication.

15. In conformity with established practice, the recipients of reports are requested to submit a written reply within six months of their transmission, giving a full account of the action taken and that will be taken to implement the recommendations contained in the reports. During the reporting period, the Subcommittee received such replies from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Hungary, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Panama and Tunisia and from the national preventive mechanisms of Hungary, Spain and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Subcommittee considers the replies from the following States parties to be overdue: Benin, Brazil, Cambodia (two reports), Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia (first visit), Mali, Malta, Mozambique, Nauru, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey. It considers the replies from the national preventive mechanisms of the following States parties to be overdue: Ecuador, Honduras, Mozambique, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

16. During the reporting period, the Subcommittee held advance preparatory meetings with each of the States parties scheduled for a visit and, in accordance with established practice, invited each State party that it visited to meet with it at the subsequent session to discuss how best to advance the post-visit dialogue.

## **E. Developments concerning national preventive mechanisms**

17. The Subcommittee has continued to engage in dialogue with States parties and signatories at its sessions concerning the designation or functioning of their national preventive mechanisms. At its thirty-fourth, thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth sessions, it held meetings or teleconferences with representatives of Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Gabon, Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, Morocco, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the State of Palestine.

18. At the thirty-sixth session, the Subcommittee held an informal meeting with States parties and signatories to the Optional Protocol, during which States parties were updated on the recent activities of the Subcommittee, discussed the working methods of the Subcommittee, its resources and the Special Fund established under the Optional Protocol, and considered the future direction of its work.

19. The Subcommittee established and maintained direct contact with national preventive mechanisms, in accordance with its mandate under article 11 (b) (ii) of the Optional Protocol. During its sessions, the Subcommittee met or held videoconferences with the national preventive mechanisms of Cambodia, Croatia, Czechia, Ecuador, France, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, as well as with the National Commission on Human Rights of Lebanon.

20. The Subcommittee and its members have continued to receive invitations to attend numerous national, regional and international meetings on the designation, establishment and development of national preventive mechanisms in particular and on the Optional Protocol in general. The Subcommittee is grateful to the organizers of those and all other events to which it has been invited. It regrets that its participation must remain conditional on the financial support of others, as it has no budget allocation with which to fund its members' attendance. The Subcommittee also would be grateful if all invitations to official events and discussions were made through the Subcommittee secretariat in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

## **F. Substantial non-compliance with article 17**

21. At its twenty-seventh session, the Subcommittee decided to identify those States parties whose establishment of their national preventive mechanism was substantially overdue and to record them on a list, available on the Subcommittee's website.<sup>2</sup> The list is revised at each session of the Subcommittee, and States parties will be removed from the list once the threshold for such removal is met, namely, that the Subcommittee has received: (a) notification of the official designation of the national preventive mechanism; and (b) copies of the documentation providing for its establishment and effective functioning. As at 31 December 2018, 12 States parties were listed: Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Liberia, Nauru, Nigeria, Panama and the Philippines. This remains a matter of great concern to the Subcommittee, particularly since some of these States parties still appear to be making little, if any, progress towards fulfilling their obligations.

## **G. Special Fund established under the Optional Protocol**

22. Support provided through the Special Fund established under article 26 (1) of the Optional Protocol is directed towards projects aimed at establishing or strengthening national preventive mechanisms, thereby contributing to the implementation of the relevant Subcommittee recommendations made following a visit to a State party. In 2018, grants amounting to \$299,636 were awarded through the Special Fund to support 13 torture prevention projects in 12 States parties during their implementation in 2019. The Subcommittee has assisted in the assessment of project proposals and recommendations for grants.

23. The Subcommittee greatly appreciates the contributions to the Special Fund received in the reporting period from Argentina (\$3,500), Czechia (\$9,164), Denmark (\$152,000), France (\$24,539), Germany (\$120,239) and Norway (\$120,000). Nevertheless, it remains mindful that further contributions will be necessary in order to support projects during the 2019–2020 grant cycle and beyond. The Subcommittee believes that the Special Fund provides an essential tool for supporting and complementing the implementation of Subcommittee recommendations aimed at the prevention of torture and ill-treatment, and urges States to continue to support the Special Fund financially.

# **III. Engagement with other bodies in the field of torture prevention**

## **A. International cooperation**

### **1. Cooperation with other United Nations bodies**

24. The Chair of the Subcommittee discussed the eleventh annual report of the Subcommittee (CAT/C/63/4) with the Committee against Torture in plenary during the latter's sixty-third session.

25. In conformity with General Assembly resolution 70/146, and together with the Chair of the Committee against Torture and the Special Rapporteur on torture, the Chair of the Subcommittee presented the Subcommittee's eleventh annual report to the General Assembly at the latter's seventy-third session.

26. As a member of the meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, the Chair of the Subcommittee participated in the thirtieth meeting of the former, which was held in New York from 29 May to 1 June 2018.

27. On the eve of International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia on 17 May, a statement was issued, to which the Subcommittee was a signatory, jointly with

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/OPCAT/Pages/Article17.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/OPCAT/Pages/Article17.aspx).

special procedures of the Human Rights Council,<sup>3</sup> the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

28. On United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June, a joint statement was issued by the Committee against Torture, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, calling for action marking the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to achieve a torture-free world.

29. The Subcommittee continued to cooperate systematically with other mechanisms, including by transmitting to the Committee against Torture suggestions for it to consider concerning States parties to the Optional Protocol, the reports of which are to be considered at forthcoming sessions of the Committee, and issues for it to consider raising with States parties under the simplified reporting procedure.

30. The Subcommittee continued to cooperate with the treaty body capacity-building programme, and in the framework of the technical assistance programme carried out in situ dialogue in Malta.

31. The Subcommittee continued its cooperation with the regional offices of OHCHR, the United Nations country teams and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, particularly in the context of its field visits.

## **2. Cooperation with other relevant international organizations**

32. The Subcommittee continued its cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, particularly in the context of its field visits.

## **B. Regional cooperation**

33. The Subcommittee continued its cooperation with regional organizations, including the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which included a reciprocal exchange of letters to give effect to article 31 of the Optional Protocol, with a view to reinforcing complementarity and subsidiarity. This important development is considered further in paragraph 47 below. The Subcommittee also participated in a follow-up in situ dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

## **C. Civil society**

34. The Subcommittee continued to benefit from the support of civil society, including the Association for the Prevention of Torture and a number of academic institutions such as the Human Rights Implementation Centre at the University of Bristol and the Omega Research Foundation. It has also benefited from its contact with civil society organizations

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<sup>3</sup> The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston; the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Hilal Elver; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, Leilani Farha; the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Víctor Madrigal-Borloz; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Nils Melzer; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Dainius Pūras; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović; and the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice.

during visits and thanks them all for their work in promoting and supporting the Optional Protocol.

## **IV. Issues of note arising from the work of the Subcommittee during the period under review**

### **A. Development of working practices**

#### **1. Visits**

35. Owing in part to the reduced levels of staff resourcing available to it for much of the year, the Subcommittee was only able to complete six visits in 2018. Only 8 visits were planned, compared to the 10 in previous years. (Two of the eight visits could not in fact be undertaken. The planned visit to Rwanda could not be undertaken for the reasons given in paragraphs 11 and 38 of the present document, and an eighth visit that had been planned to take place also could not be undertaken.) The reduction in staffing at the professional level has also caused a more general slowing of momentum in the work of the Subcommittee, which has direct implications on the effectiveness of its preventive mandate, and, more specifically, of its visiting mandate. Although strengthened at the end of 2018 by the appointment of an additional staff member at the professional level, who is externally supported, the Subcommittee was not able to maintain its visiting programme at the level it had been at in the past and will not be able to properly fulfil its mandate as defined by the Optional Protocol without a strengthening of the core secretariat.

36. The Subcommittee reiterates the point made in its 2017 annual report, that the failure to increase operational capacity in line with the expanding numbers of States parties, if unaddressed, will diminish the preventive impact of the Optional Protocol, and undermine the proactive nature of the system of prevention which it establishes. It is imperative that States parties come forward to strengthen the support base for the Subcommittee if it is to function as it ought.

37. Moreover, the Subcommittee continues to encounter a steady increase in challenges to its Optional Protocol-mandated visits, including but not limited to the dates on which such visits are to be undertaken and the scope of its visiting mandate. It is therefore important to stress that the essence of preventive visiting as an element of torture prevention lies in conducting unannounced visits to places where persons are, or may be, deprived of their liberty, at a time of the Subcommittee's own choosing. This is the essential hallmark of the Optional Protocol system and this is undermined when States parties attempt to dictate when and where the Subcommittee might visit. It must be understood that, by ratifying the Optional Protocol, States parties have committed themselves as a matter of international legal obligation to allow the Subcommittee to determine the times and places of its visits. It is inevitable that the Subcommittee must view with suspicion the motives of any State that seeks to circumvent its freely assumed obligation to cooperate with the Subcommittee in the prevention of torture and ill-treatment, by frustrating its programme of work. The Subcommittee cannot and will not accept the legitimacy of interference in the performance of its Optional Protocol-mandated preventive work.

38. It is against this background that, during the reporting period, the Subcommittee decided to terminate one of its visits – to Rwanda – due to the fact that the Subcommittee could not undertake it, as mentioned in paragraph 11 above. On two previous occasions the Subcommittee had had to pause a visit in order to allow the States in question to address certain problems that were preventing it from conducting its visit properly. In both those previous instances, those problems were resolved and the visits were reactivated and successfully concluded. In the present instance, this did not prove possible. The Subcommittee greatly regrets this, but hopes that it will be able to undertake an effective and Optional Protocol-compliant visit to Rwanda in the near future.



## **2. Subcommittee working groups**

39. One of the biggest challenges for the parallel working groups established by the Subcommittee to expedite its work and to maximize effectiveness and efficiency during 2018 has been the unavailability of sufficient interpretation facilities to allow them to work in an inclusive fashion. In order to ensure that all members have the ability to contribute to their work, it has been necessary to resort to working groups of the whole, held in plenary. Given the shortage of plenary meeting time, this has contributed to the delay in the Subcommittee being able to process essential business. This cannot continue, particularly as the Subcommittee has not been able to take advantage of additional plenary meeting time made available to it due to the failure of the General Assembly to provide additional staffing to OHCHR. The Subcommittee is continuing to seek solutions to this problem – but it is a problem which could easily be solved by the allocation of appropriate levels of support for its work by the General Assembly, the United Nations Office at Geneva and OHCHR.

40. Despite these difficulties, the working group on procedural issues and jurisprudence has provided input to respond to requests for advice and assistance from national preventive mechanisms and has outlined issues related to procedures and operations – before, during and after visits. Most notably, the working group presented to the plenary the revised rules of procedure of the Subcommittee, which were adopted by its plenary at the Subcommittee's thirty-sixth session, in November 2018, this being the first comprehensive reworking of the rules since their adoption. The working group on health aspects of torture prevention has also continued its work as best it can, in spite of these difficulties.

## **3. Regional teams**

41. The regional teams and the respective country rapporteurs have continued to engage extensively with national preventive mechanisms, which has included but not been limited to providing feedback on annual reports, and addressing queries made by national preventive mechanisms and providing them with substantive and practical information in country-specific contexts.

42. In an effort to ensure consistency between regions, the heads of regional teams also met periodically, to ensure that recommendations from the regional teams were consistent and objective.

## **B. Issues of note**

43. The General Assembly agreed to a request to provide an additional week of meeting time for the Subcommittee, recognizing that this was necessary in the light of increased participation in the Optional Protocol system and the need to intensify its visit programme, its post-visit dialogue and its work with national preventive mechanisms. As has been noted, since corresponding additional staffing has not been provided, the Subcommittee regretfully decided it had no practical alternative other than to abandon for now the extra week of meeting time, pending the provision of the human resources necessary to permit it to take place in a purposive and productive way.

44. The Subcommittee did not take this decision lightly, as additional time is most definitely required to discuss and decide matters before it constructively. The reality is that the total workload of the Subcommittee has more than doubled over a period in which the level of staffing available to the Subcommittee has at best remained stable. For the Subcommittee, the additional time granted appears no more than a symbolic recognition of a need, rather than a means of fulfilling that need, and it does nothing to assist the Subcommittee to effectively carry out its work.

45. The Subcommittee is fully committed to the treaty body strengthening process as reflected in General Assembly resolution 68/268. However, just as that resolution failed to effectively engage with the needs of the Subcommittee, discussions concerning the 2020 review once again appear not to be properly taking account of its needs. The Subcommittee will continue to press to have the capacity for it to undertake 10 to 12 visits each year, and to be able to support States parties in the establishment of national preventive mechanisms as

well as to support the mechanisms in their operational activities, as mandated by the Optional Protocol.

46. In addition to its visiting mandate, the Subcommittee also wishes to emphasize the importance it places on offering advice and assistance to States parties, to national preventive mechanisms and, upon request, to signatories and others, including other United Nations agencies and mechanisms, concerning the Optional Protocol and prevention of torture, as mandated by the Optional Protocol.

47. On a more positive note, the Subcommittee welcomes the decision of Ukraine to provide a standing approval and authorization for the publication of Subcommittee visit reports. This is a bold step and a welcome one, and the Subcommittee encourages other States parties to follow the example set by Ukraine and do the same.

48. Furthermore, during the course of 2018, the Subcommittee and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment agreed upon a range of collaborative measures, as called for by article 31 of the Optional Protocol. As outlined in a joint statement by the Chairs of the Subcommittee and the European Committee in July 2018, this seeks to reinforce their complementarity in a manner that respects and reflects the respective strengths and value added of the Subcommittee and the European Committee. It also looks to enhance cooperation with national preventive mechanisms and States parties on the shared goal of enhancing the implementation at the country level of recommendations made by preventive bodies at the national, regional and global levels. The Subcommittee will work with the European Committee in order to implement this understanding, which allows both the Subcommittee and the European Committee to further enhance and strengthen their work in the field of torture prevention.

## V. Looking forward

49. Distressingly, and as foreseen, 2018 saw a decline in the number of visits undertaken by the Subcommittee. This diminution in productivity is not for the want of dedication, but for the lack of human resources provided to the Subcommittee by the United Nations to allow it to undertake its work as mandated by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

50. While the Subcommittee has endeavoured to creatively circumvent the obstacles it has faced in recent years, this has its limits – and in 2018 they were reached and breached. For the avoidance of doubt, the Subcommittee is entirely aware that the real victims of this situation are detainees around the world, many of whom languish in the most inhuman of situations.

51. The Subcommittee will continue – as it has always done – to seek to find ways of fulfilling its mandate to the best of its abilities. But it cannot be complacent in the face of continued attempts of States parties to refuse to honour their Optional Protocol obligations and the reluctance of the international community through the United Nations to properly prioritize at the national and international levels the prevention of torture.

52. The Subcommittee believes that in many parts of the world there appears to be backward movement concerning commitments to the prevention of torture and ill-treatment. This is not only reflected in the reports of various organizations and groups; it is reflected also in the lived reality of the Subcommittee: too many States parties appear to have resiled from their enthusiasm and commitment to torture prevention, by challenging the mandate of the Subcommittee and not establishing and supporting national preventive mechanisms as the Optional Protocol envisages.

53. In its work, the Subcommittee hears much rhetoric that does not reflect reality. The Subcommittee understands this, and why this is so often the case. The Subcommittee is committed to working with States parties to change those realities and close that “reality gap” – in confidence and with understanding and sensitivity. At the same time, the Subcommittee’s overriding priority must be the victims of torture and ill-treatment. The Subcommittee was

not created, or the Optional Protocol adopted, to provide a “dialogical dead end” down which the interests of the most vulnerable and most imperilled of those in detention can be forgotten.

54. The Subcommittee hopes that the international community continues to understand and appreciate the importance of torture prevention to human rights and dignity, and that States find it in them to offer concrete support for the furtherance of the cause.

## **VI. Plan of work**

55. The Subcommittee has already announced visits to Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Ghana, Senegal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for the coming months. In accordance with its established practice, further announcements will be made following its future sessions.

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