SPECIAL PROCEDURES
UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES
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19 May 2025

Dear Members of the Consultative Group,

On behalf of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures, I am writing to you in connection with the selection of new mandate holders, in particular the selection of a member of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at the upcoming session of the Human Rights Council in June. As you have just commenced this important task, I would like to assure you of the full support of the Committee. The Committee very much appreciated the opportunity to meet with you in April to exchange views on good practices for the identification of a broad range of suitable candidates for mandates, and the selection process itself and remains at your disposal in your future work.

The high quality and integrity of mandate holders are crucial to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of the system of special procedures. I recently invited the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to provide information on the skills they consider essential for the new mandate holders to discharge the mandate. I sought their views in line with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, paragraph 51, which says that "the Consultative Group should take into account, as appropriate, the views of stakeholders, including the current or outgoing mandate-holders, in determining the necessary expertise, experience, skills, and other relevant requirements for each mandate".

I am therefore pleased to share with you the contributions received from the Working Group (Annex I).

I trust that you will find these suggestions useful as you undertake the selection process. I am at your disposal to discuss this matter further if you have additional questions or require additional feedback. This letter will also be posted on the public website of special procedures. I wish you success in your deliberations.

Sincerely yours,



Surya Deva
Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures

cc: H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber
President of the Human Rights Council

Annex I

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON ARBITRARY DETENTION

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) considers that the following skills and expertise should be taken into account in the process of selection of the members:

1. The execution of the mandate of the WGAD, especially consideration of cases of deprivation of liberty, involves legal matters requiring expertise in international human rights law. For these reasons, it is essential that the new members of the WGAD are lawyers with extensive relevant expertise in international human rights law.

2. As the members of the WGAD are required to draft opinions with legal arguments based on relevant applicable international human rights instruments in cases assigned to them, the candidates must possess the necessary legal drafting skills. The WGAD adopts up to 90 opinions annually and as such, each member is expected to draft around 22 to 25 opinions each year, and also to engage with and comment on the opinions drafted by other members.

3. The tasks of the WGAD also include two strenuous field missions each year (10 working days and travel time) in possibly difficult conditions, involving visits to prisons and other detention facilities and interviews of the detainees.

4. Carrying out of the duties of the WGAD entails a significant time commitment (at minimum, participation in three sessions per year in Geneva, preparation of opinions, participation in country visits, and contributing to thematic studies). As such, the new members must have sufficient availability and capacity to maintain these commitments.

5. The WGAD works in three official languages of the UN (English, French and Spanish). It would be important to maintain this capacity within the group, as well as knowledge of different legal systems.