

INFORMATION NOTE

OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON A COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Seychelles ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure in June 2021. It came into effect in September 2021 three months after the ratification, in accordance with article 19 of the Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol consists of 24 articles detailing the General provisions of the protocol as well as the communications procedure, the inquiry procedure and the final provisions. The Optional Protocol is annexed to the Policy.

As a state party to the protocol, Seychelles has provided an avenue for complaints to be made directly to the UN committee on the Rights of the child if an individual or group feels their right has been violated and they have exhausted all domestic mechanism in place without recourse. “The Optional Protocol will reinforce and complement any national and regional mechanism, allowing children to submit complaints for violation of their rights set forth in The Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflicts and The Optional Protocol on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

Purpose

The purpose of this Information Note is to make known the relevant information regarding the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure. To ensure procedures and conditions are met before communication is sent to the UN.

National options to address violations of rights of children

There are a number of mechanisms to deal with violations of the rights of a child, most of them stem from the domestic legislative provisions in place and there are also several entities and/ or judicial authorities with the mandate to address such violations. All domestic mechanisms have to be exhausted before a claim of right violation can be brought to the UN through the communication procedure.

Legislative provisions

- Children Act 1982 – gives mandatory duty of care to Social Services to protect children. Ensures that children have a right to be heard in matters concerning their well-being. It also establishes that whenever a court or tribunal determines any question with respect to the

upbringing of a child, the child's wellbeing shall be its primary consideration and same shall apply to the persons for the time being acting in the capacity or performing the functions of head of the Division or Section responsible for children's affairs in the Ministry or Department responsible for children's affairs

- Education Act 2005 – Administrative provision through the Student Welfare Unit to provide psychosocial services to children and address any rights violation
- Health Care Agency Act 2013 – Through established child protection mechanism to report rights violation especially identified forms of abuse.
- Employment Act 1995 – Provisions in place to ensure minors are protected from hazardous work
- National Council for Children Act 1999 – provision for oversight of the general safeguarding measures to ensure the well-being of the child

Entities/Judicial authorities with the power to consider allegations of violations of the rights of the child.

- The Office of the Ombudsman,
- The Seychelles Human Rights Commission
- The Judiciary
- The Constitutional Court.

There are also specific Ministries, Departments and Agencies that has administrative mandate to receive complaints regarding rights violations in children related matters, namely Youth Department, Family Department, Employment Department and specific children related civil society organisations. They are obligated to report complaints of right violations to the Social Services for investigation.

There are also internal mechanisms such as established standard operating procedures in child protection Ministries, Departments and Agencies to ensure that complaints are dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.

Dissemination of the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure

The Social Affairs Department, having the oversight and monitoring role of the implementation of the Protocol, has the obligation to make known the protocol in simple terms to the public.

The following medium will be used:

1. Website – providing information on the various existing mechanisms to report rights violations including the guideline provided by the UN Committee
2. Media programme; Both TV and radio

3. Meeting with stakeholders

Domestication of the Optional Protocol on Communication

The Department notes that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the two other Optional Protocols have not been domesticated in its entirety through specific stand-alone legislations, given that some of the articles related to civic rights are already enshrined in the Constitution, whilst other social rights are covered by various national legislations. This being the case, the Department does not seek to have a stand-alone legislation but rather to have the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the three Optional Protocols referenced in appropriate legislations as may be determined by the office of the Attorney General.

Annex

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution A/RES/66/138 of 19 December 2011

entered into force on 14 April 2014

The States parties to the present Protocol,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, the recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Noting that the States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”) recognize the rights set forth in it to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status,

Reaffirming the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Reaffirming also the status of the child as a subject of rights and as a human being with dignity and with evolving capacities,

Recognizing that children’s special and dependent status may create real difficulties for them in pursuing remedies for violations of their rights,

Considering that the present Protocol will reinforce and complement national and regional mechanisms allowing children to submit complaints for violations of their rights,

Recognizing that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration to be respected in pursuing remedies for violations of the rights of the child, and that such remedies should take into account the need for child-sensitive procedures at all levels,

Encouraging States parties to develop appropriate national mechanisms to enable a child whose rights have been violated to have access to effective remedies at the domestic level,

Recalling the important role that national human rights institutions and other relevant specialized institutions, mandated to promote and protect the rights of the child, can play in this regard,

Considering that, in order to reinforce and complement such national mechanisms and to further enhance the implementation of the Convention and, where applicable, the Optional Protocols thereto on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict, it would be appropriate to enable the Committee on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) to carry out the functions provided for in the present Protocol,

Have agreed as follows:

Part I

General provisions

Article 1

Competence of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

A State party to the present Protocol recognizes the competence of the Committee as provided for by the present Protocol.

The Committee shall not exercise its competence regarding a State party to the present Protocol on matters concerning violations of rights set forth in an instrument to which that State is not a party.

No communication shall be received by the Committee if it concerns a State that is not a party to the present Protocol.

Article 2

General principles guiding the functions of the Committee

In fulfilling the functions conferred on it by the present Protocol, the Committee shall be guided by the principle of the best interests of the child. It shall also have regard for the rights and views of the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Article 3

Rules of procedure

The Committee shall adopt rules of procedure to be followed when exercising the functions conferred on it by the present Protocol. In doing so, it shall have regard, in particular, for article 2 of the present Protocol in order to guarantee child-sensitive procedures.

The Committee shall include in its rules of procedure safeguards to prevent the manipulation of the child by those acting on his or her behalf and may decline to examine any communication that it considers not to be in the child's best interests.

Article 4

Protection measures

A State party shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that individuals under its jurisdiction are not subjected to any human rights violation, ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of communications or cooperation with the Committee pursuant to the present Protocol.

The identity of any individual or group of individuals concerned shall not be revealed publicly without their express consent.

Part II

Communications procedure

Article 5

Individual communications

Communications may be submitted by or on behalf of an individual or group of individuals, within the jurisdiction of a State party, claiming to be victims of a violation by that State party of any of the rights set forth in any of the following instruments to which that State is a party:

The Convention;

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Where a communication is submitted on behalf of an individual or group of individuals, this shall be with their consent unless the author can justify acting on their behalf without such consent.

Article 6

Interim measures

At any time after the receipt of a communication and before a determination on the merits has been reached, the Committee may transmit to the State party concerned for its urgent consideration a request that the State party take such interim measures as may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to avoid possible irreparable damage to the victim or victims of the alleged violations.

Where the Committee exercises its discretion under paragraph 1 of the present article, this does not imply a determination on admissibility or on the merits of the communication.

Article 7 Admissibility

The Committee shall consider a communication inadmissible when:

The communication is anonymous;

The communication is not in writing;

The communication constitutes an abuse of the right of submission of such communications or is incompatible with the provisions of the Convention and/or the Optional Protocols thereto;

The same matter has already been examined by the Committee or has been or is being examined under another procedure of international investigation or settlement;

All available domestic remedies have not been exhausted. This shall not be the rule where the application of the remedies is unreasonably prolonged or unlikely to bring effective relief;

The communication is manifestly ill-founded or not sufficiently substantiated;

The facts that are the subject of the communication occurred prior to the entry into force of the present Protocol for the State party concerned, unless those facts continued after that date;

The communication is not submitted within one year after the exhaustion of domestic remedies, except in cases where the author can demonstrate that it had not been possible to submit the communication within that time limit.

Article 8

Transmission of the communication

Unless the Committee considers a communication inadmissible without reference to the State party concerned, the Committee shall bring any communication submitted to it under the present Protocol confidentially to the attention of the State party concerned as soon as possible.

The State party shall submit to the Committee written explanations or statements clarifying the matter and the remedy, if any, that it may have provided. The State party shall submit its response as soon as possible and within six months.

Article 9

Friendly settlement

The Committee shall make available its good offices to the parties concerned with a view to reaching a friendly settlement of the matter on the basis of respect for the obligations set forth in the Convention and/or the Optional Protocols thereto.

An agreement on a friendly settlement reached under the auspices of the Committee closes consideration of the communication under the present Protocol.

Article 10

Consideration of communications

The Committee shall consider communications received under the present Protocol as quickly as possible, in the light of all documentation submitted to it, provided that this documentation is transmitted to the parties concerned.

The Committee shall hold closed meetings when examining communications received under the present Protocol.

Where the Committee has requested interim measures, it shall expedite the consideration of the communication.

When examining communications alleging violations of economic, social or cultural rights, the Committee shall consider the reasonableness of the steps taken by the State party in accordance with article 4 of the Convention. In doing so, the Committee shall bear in mind that the State party may adopt a range of possible policy measures for the implementation of the economic, social and cultural rights in the Convention.

After examining a communication, the Committee shall, without delay, transmit its views on the communication, together with its recommendations, if any, to the parties concerned.

Article 11 Follow-up

The State party shall give due consideration to the views of the Committee, together with its recommendations, if any, and shall submit to the Committee a written response, including information on any action taken and envisaged in the light of the views and recommendations of the Committee. The State party shall submit its response as soon as possible and within six months.

The Committee may invite the State party to submit further information about any measures the State party has taken in response to its views or recommendations or implementation of a friendly settlement agreement, if any, including as deemed appropriate by the Committee, in the State party's subsequent reports under article 44 of the Convention, article 12 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography or article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict, where applicable.

Article 12

Inter-State communications

A State party to the present Protocol may, at any time, declare that it recognizes the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications in which a State party claims that another State party is not fulfilling its obligations under any of the following instruments to which the State is a party:

The Convention;

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

The Committee shall not receive communications concerning a State party that has not made such a declaration or communications from a State party that has not made such a declaration.

The Committee shall make available its good offices to the States parties concerned with a view to a friendly solution of the matter on the basis of the respect for the obligations set forth in the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto.

A declaration under paragraph 1 of the present article shall be deposited by the States parties with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall transmit copies thereof to the other States parties. A declaration may be withdrawn at any time by notification to the Secretary-General. Such a withdrawal shall not prejudice the consideration of any matter that is the subject of a communication already transmitted under the present article; no further communications by any State party shall be received under the present article after the notification of withdrawal of the declaration has been received by the Secretary-General, unless the State party concerned has made a new declaration.

Part III

Inquiry procedure

Article 13

Inquiry procedure for grave or systematic violations

If the Committee receives reliable information indicating grave or systematic violations by a State party of rights set forth in the Convention or in the Optional Protocols thereto on the sale of children, child

prostitution and child pornography or on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Committee shall invite the State party to cooperate in the examination of the information and, to this end, to submit observations without delay with regard to the information concerned.

Taking into account any observations that may have been submitted by the State party concerned, as well as any other reliable information available to it, the Committee may designate one or more of its members to conduct an inquiry and to report urgently to the Committee. Where warranted and with the consent of the State party, the inquiry may include a visit to its territory.

Such an inquiry shall be conducted confidentially, and the cooperation of the State party shall be sought at all stages of the proceedings.

After examining the findings of such an inquiry, the Committee shall transmit without delay these findings to the State party concerned, together with any comments and recommendations.

The State party concerned shall, as soon as possible and within six months of receiving the findings, comments and recommendations transmitted by the Committee, submit its observations to the Committee.

After such proceedings have been completed with regard to an inquiry made in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article, the Committee may, after consultation with the State party concerned, decide to include a summary account of the results of the proceedings in its report provided for in article 16 of the present Protocol.

Each State party may, at the time of signature or ratification of the present Protocol or accession thereto, declare that it does not recognize the competence of the Committee provided for in the present article in respect of the rights set forth in some or all of the instruments listed in paragraph 1.

Any State party having made a declaration in accordance with paragraph 7 of the present article may, at any time, withdraw this declaration by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 14

Follow-up to the inquiry procedure

The Committee may, if necessary, after the end of the period of six months referred to in article 13, paragraph 5, invite the State party concerned to inform it of the measures taken and envisaged in response to an inquiry conducted under article 13 of the present Protocol.

The Committee may invite the State party to submit further information about any measures that the State party has taken in response to an inquiry conducted under article 13, including as deemed appropriate by the Committee, in the State party's subsequent reports under article 44 of the Convention, article 12 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography or article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict, where applicable.

Part IV

Final provisions

Article 15

International assistance and cooperation

The Committee may transmit, with the consent of the State party concerned, to United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes and other competent bodies its views or recommendations concerning communications and inquiries that indicate a need for technical advice or assistance, together with the State party's observations and suggestions, if any, on these views or recommendations.

The Committee may also bring to the attention of such bodies, with the consent of the State party concerned, any matter arising out of communications considered under the present Protocol that may assist them in deciding, each within its field of competence, on the advisability of international measures likely to contribute to assisting States parties in achieving progress in the implementation of the rights recognized in the Convention and/or the Optional Protocols thereto.

Article 16

Report to the General Assembly

The Committee shall include in its report submitted every two years to the General Assembly in accordance with article 44, paragraph 5, of the Convention a summary of its activities under the present Protocol.

Article 17

Dissemination of and information on the Optional Protocol

Each State party undertakes to make widely known and to disseminate the present Protocol and to facilitate access to information about the views and recommendations of the Committee, in particular with regard to matters involving the State party, by appropriate and active means and in accessible formats to adults and children alike, including those with disabilities.

Article 18

Signature, ratification and accession

The present Protocol is open for signature to any State that has signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention or either of the first two Optional Protocols thereto.

The present Protocol is subject to ratification by any State that has ratified or acceded to the Convention or either of the first two Optional Protocols thereto. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The present Protocol shall be open to accession by any State that has ratified or acceded to the Convention or either of the first two Optional Protocols thereto.

Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General.

Article 19 Entry into force

The present Protocol shall enter into force three months after the deposit of the tenth instrument of ratification or accession.

For each State ratifying the present Protocol or acceding to it after the deposit of the tenth instrument of ratification or instrument of accession, the present Protocol shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 20

Violations occurring after the entry into force

The Committee shall have competence solely in respect of violations by the State party of any of the rights set forth in the Convention and/or the first two Optional Protocols thereto occurring after the entry into force of the present Protocol.

If a State becomes a party to the present Protocol after its entry into force, the obligations of that State vis-à-vis the Committee shall relate only to violations of the rights set forth in the Convention and/or the first two Optional Protocols thereto occurring after the entry into force of the present Protocol for the State concerned.

Article 21 Amendments

Any State party may propose an amendment to the present Protocol and submit it to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall communicate any proposed amendments to States parties with a request to be notified whether they favour a meeting of States parties for the purpose of considering and deciding upon the proposals. In the event that, within four months of the date of such communication, at least one third of the States parties favour such a meeting, the Secretary-General shall convene the meeting under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of two thirds of the States parties present and voting shall be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly for approval and, thereafter, to all States parties for acceptance.

An amendment adopted and approved in accordance with paragraph 1 of the present article shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the number of instruments of acceptance deposited reaches two thirds of the number of States parties at the date of adoption of the amendment. Thereafter, the amendment shall enter into force for any State party on the thirtieth day following the deposit of its own instrument of acceptance. An amendment shall be binding only on those States parties that have accepted it.

Article 22 Denunciation

Any State party may denounce the present Protocol at any time by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The denunciation shall take effect one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

Denunciation shall be without prejudice to the continued application of the provisions of the present Protocol to any communication submitted under articles 5 or 12 or any inquiry initiated under article 13 before the effective date of denunciation.

Article 23

Depositary and notification by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall be the depositary of the present Protocol.

The Secretary-General shall inform all States of:

Document prepared by Social Affairs Department

Signatures, ratifications and accessions under the present Protocol;

The date of entry into force of the present Protocol and of any amendment thereto under article 21;

Any denunciation under article 22 of the present Protocol.

Article 24 Languages

The present Protocol, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit certified copies of the present Protocol to all States.

GUIDANCE FOR SUBMITTING AN INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION TO THE UN TREATY BODIES

1. Committees that can receive individual communications

Please identify **only one Treaty Body** (“Committee”) to which you are submitting your communication. Treaty Bodies that can receive individual communications are: the Human Rights Committee (CCPR), the Committee against Torture (CAT), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED).

2. State party concerned

Please make sure that the State party in question has recognized the competence of the Committee to receive individual communications by ratifying the relevant Optional Protocol to a human rights treaty or making a declaration under the relevant treaty article establishing the individual communications procedures. To check whether a State has made such a recognition, please see <https://treaties.un.org/Pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4&subid=A&lang=en>.

Please make sure that the events that are at the origin of the alleged violation occurred after the State party’s recognition of the Committee’s competence to receive individual communications (after the State’s ratification of the relevant Optional Protocol or declaration), or that such violation continued beyond that date.

3-7. Complainant and victim

The complainant is the person submitting the communication to the Committee, usually alleging a violation of his/her own rights. In such cases, the complainant is at the same time the victim. The complainant is referred by most Committees as “author” in their final decisions. A complainant may also be acting on behalf of another person who cannot submit the complaint for justified reasons (for eg. for being dead, disappeared or held in incommunicado detention), as long as the complainant is a family member of the victim or can otherwise justify a legitimate interest.

8-9. Representative

The complainant may be represented, either legally (counsel) or non-legally (human rights organization, for eg.). It is not necessary to have a lawyer prepare the case, though legal advice may improve the quality of the submissions. Complainants must be aware that the United Nations does not provide legal aid under these procedures.

10. Anonymization of a complainant’s/victim’s name

The communication must not be anonymous. The identity of the complainant and the victim and their contact information need to be provided to the Committees and are generally necessary in order for the State party to be able to respond to the allegations. Anonymous communications will

not be accepted. However, the victim(s) and/or the author may request that their identity is not disclosed in the Committee's final decision. Final decisions adopted by the Committees are made public. Therefore, if complainants do not wish their identity to be disclosed in final decisions, they should indicate this at the earliest opportunity. Owing to the level of publicity that the decisions usually receive (including dissemination via the Internet, which makes it virtually impossible to correct and/or delete data), it may not be possible for the United Nations to satisfy requests for anonymity submitted after the publication of final decisions.

11. Use of other international mechanisms

If the same case has been submitted to another Treaty Body or to a regional mechanism, such as the European Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, or the African Commission or Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the majority of Committees cannot examine the communication. The Human Rights Committee, however, may consider such case as long as it is no longer pending consideration before the other instance of international settlement and the concerned State party has not opposed this at the time of ratification or accession.

This rule does not apply to individual communications submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

12. Interim and protection measures

Interim or provisional measures may be adopted in urgent cases to request that the State in question adopt measures to prevent irreparable harm to the alleged victim while the case is still pending consideration by the Committee. "Irreparable harm" refers to a harm which, due to its nature, cannot be susceptible to reparation. The author requesting interim measures must demonstrate the risk is real and that, should it materialize, the damage would be irreparable. He/she must also demonstrate that the risk is personal (and not merely based on a general context). Typical interim measures include, for example, the suspension of the execution of a death sentence or of the deportation to a country where the author faces a risk of torture or ill treatment.

The complainant may ask the Committee to request interim measures at any time before the adoption of a final decision or 'Views'. Any such request should reach the Secretariat as early as possible before the action that the complainant is seeking to prevent could materialize.

A complainant may also, at any stage of the process, request the adoption of **protection measures** to protect individuals involved in the communication from reprisals, including lawyers, witnesses and family members. The risk must relate to the filing of the communication. This request may even be submitted in the context of the procedure of follow up to views (after the adoption of a decision finding a violation).

13. Facts, including exhaustion of domestic remedies

Complainants should present the main facts of the case in a chronological order, including the remedies sought at the domestic level and the decisions adopted by domestic authorities. Complainants must have first exhausted all relevant remedies that are available in the State party

before bringing a claim to a Committee. This usually includes pursuing the claim through the national court system until the highest instance, unless complainants can justify that such remedies are unduly prolonged or otherwise ineffective, or that they are unavailable to the complainant. Detailed reasons must be provided as to why the complainant considers that the general rule should not apply. Mere doubts about the effectiveness of a remedy do not dispense with the obligation to exhaust it. Please do not include your claims in this part as this should be included in paragraph 14 below.

It is important to submit the communication as soon as possible after domestic remedies have been exhausted. Delays in doing so may make it difficult for the State party to respond properly and for the Committee to evaluate the facts thoroughly. In some cases, submission after a protracted period may result in the case being considered an abuse of the right to petition and therefore inadmissible.

Time limits to submit a communication from the moment of exhaustion of domestic remedies vary depending on the Committee:

CERD: 6 months;

CESCR, CRC: 1 year;

CCPR: 5 years

There is no fixed time limit for submitting a communication to other Committees.

14. Claim

Complainants should state why they consider that the facts described constitute a violation of their rights under the treaty in question. Complainants are encouraged to cite specific treaty articles, in particular if they are legally represented. Complainants are required to specify the rights set out in the treaty that have allegedly been violated and how the State party, through the facts described, has violated them. It is also advisable to indicate the specific remedies that the author would like to obtain from the State party, should the Committee conclude that the facts before it disclose a violation.

Lack of sufficient substantiation of facts and allegations may result in the rejection of the registration of a communication.

15 – 17. Submission of communications

The communication should be in writing, legible, preferably typed, and signed. Communications sent electronically should have an electronic signature or be signed manually, scanned and attached to an email addressed to the OHCHR Petitions and Urgent Actions Section (PUAS) (petitions@ohchr.org). An unsigned word version should also be submitted. **No paper communications will be processed unless it is justified that it would be impossible to submit the communication electronically.**

Only communications presented in one of the Secretariat's working languages (**English, French, Russian and Spanish**) can be accepted. If annexes are not in one of these languages, an

unofficial translation summary should be provided. **Only copies should be submitted, not originals. No documents will be returned.**

Annexes should include any decision adopted at the national or international level, as well as other relevant official documents, such as medical reports.

If the description of facts or claims is unclear or lacks essential information to be processed under the individual communications procedures, the PUAS may contact the complainant with a request for additional details or resubmission. Authors should be diligent in their correspondence with the PUAS and the information requested should be sent as soon as possible. If the information is not received within two years from the date of the request, the file will be closed.