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English only

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**Implementation Review Group****Resumed Second session**

Vienna, 7-9 September 2011

**Note on average time required for country reviews conducted in year 1 of the current cycle of the Review Mechanism- Update**

The present note updates the outline of the actual timelines made available at the second session of the Implementation Review Group<sup>1</sup> for the reviews of year 1 of the first cycle of the Review Mechanism and provides initial information on the reviews of year 2.

To be able to provide the Group with a realistic time frame for the reviews, the below averages are based on those 24 reviews conducted in year 1 where the self assessment checklists were received prior to or in April 2011, thus within a maximum of 8 months from the drawing of lots. In the case of one review the checklist was received partially in June 2011 with some parts still outstanding, and in another case the self assessment checklist has not yet been received and the secretariat is in the process of assisting that country in completing it. Including these would distort the average duration of year 1 reviews.

Taking into account starting dates of 5 and 23 August 2010 for year 1, the below table illustrates, in italics, the average time that the various steps of the review process took in practice vis-à-vis the indicative timelines contained in the terms of reference of the Review Mechanism and the guidelines for governmental experts and the secretariat in the conduct of country reviews.



## **A. Year 1 of the review cycle**

1. On average, focal points were appointed within the foreseen three weeks. It was not always possible to hold introductory teleconferences or meetings within the one month period foreseen, including due to delays in communication of the contact details of reviewing experts to the secretariat. Two months were therefore required on average to conduct these introductions.
2. With regard to the submission of the self-assessment checklist, countries took on average 4 months to submit their complete responses, i.e. more than doubling the time originally allocated for this step. The time frame varied from countries staying within the allocated two months to others submitting their checklists only in April 2011, over 8 months after the drawing of lots. As mentioned above, the country which submitted its response only in June 2011 and the country that is still completing the checklist have not been taken into account in determining the average time frame.
3. The time allocated for the circulation of the responses to the reviewing experts remained on average within the time frame foreseen. However, this varied on a case by case basis depending on translation requirements. On average, the reviewing States parties submitted the outcome of the desk review within 1 ½ months. An additional period of 1 ½ months, which had not been foreseen in the guidelines was needed for the secretariat to translate comments, and to consolidate the outcome of the desk review in the blue print format for country review reports.
4. The two months time frame envisaged in the terms of reference for the active dialogue resulted in practice in an average of three months, mainly also due to the need to translate comments and responses received. By the resumed second session of the IRG, four country reviews had been completed. In view of the possibility to organize trilateral meetings during the resumed second session of the IRG it is expected that by the fourth session of the Conference of the States Parties, sixteen country reviews will be completed. Nevertheless, based on current experience, it is estimated that the final steps of the country review, i.e. the agreement on the executive summary and the final country report including translation requirements prior to finding agreement on those, require on average 3 months, thus extending the overall time for the country review to fourteen months on average.

## **B. Year 2 of the review cycle**

5. During year 2 of the review cycle, the average time required for the appointment of focal points and governmental experts amounted to five and a half weeks, hence almost twice as long as the time frame initially foreseen for this step (three weeks), as compared to year 1 during which focal points were on average appointed within these three weeks. As of 1 September 2011, 85

per cent of the countries involved in year 2 of the review cycle, representing almost two thirds of the country review pairings, appointed focal points and governmental experts. A majority thereof already conducted introductory telephone conferences or meetings or had scheduled direct dialogue opportunities during the resumed second session of the Implementation Review Group. It therefore appears at this stage that the estimated period required for the introductory teleconferences will not exceed the time required for this step during year 1 of the review cycle.

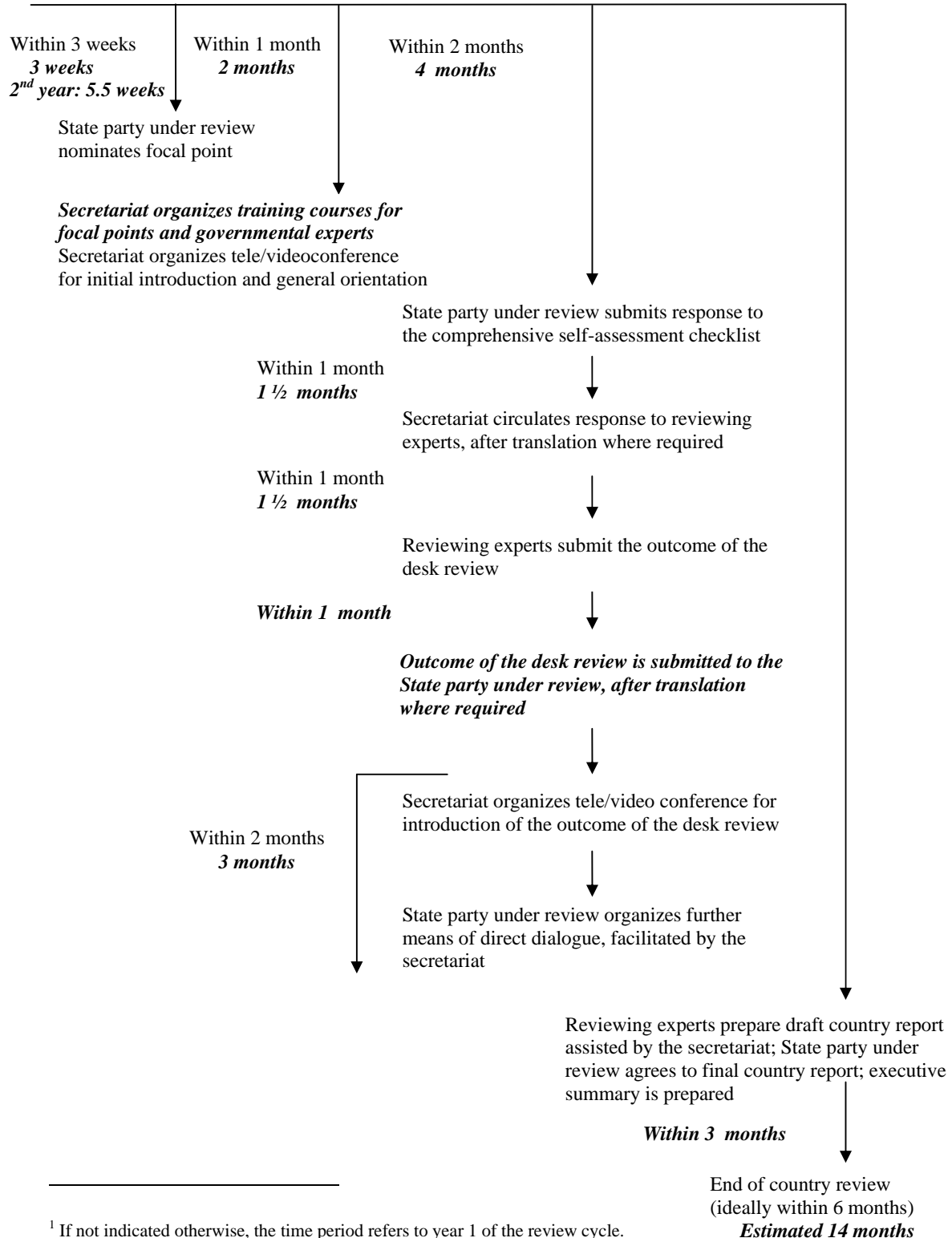
6. By the time of the resumed second session of the IRG, five training workshops for governmental experts participating in year 2 of the review cycle had been held gathering more than 130 participants from over 70 reviewing countries and countries under review. One further workshop is scheduled at the end of September 2011 for experts from 10 remaining countries that did not partake in any of the previous training courses.
7. As of 1 September, one State party under review had submitted the completed self assessment checklist and one other had submitted a partial response.

### **C. Recommendation**

8. The Implementation Review Group and the Conference of the States Parties may wish to appeal to States parties to exert every possible effort to conclude reviews if not within the foreseen time frame of six months, at least within 9-10 months of the start of the review. A longer average time frame in years 2 and 3 would cause a backlog which would cause problems in years 4 and 5 of the current review cycle.

Drawing of Lots

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Secretariat notifies within one month the State party under review and the reviewing States parties of the beginning of the conduct of the country review<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> If not indicated otherwise, the time period refers to year 1 of the review cycle.