

Law and what it's good for

Alternative or 'shadow' reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

A network of child rights NGOs consulted nearly a thousand children in order to compile a shadow report as an alternative to Uganda's first periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2005. The process of preparing the report gave these organizations a better understanding of the reporting process, and of how to effect change and use information to promote child well-being. They found it to be a way of influencing policy and holding decision-makers accountable. Shadow reports submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child are available at: www.crin.org ■

Ugandan Child Rights NGO Network report 'shadowing' Uganda's First Periodic Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 40th Session, September 2005.

states' reports every five years, and issues concluding observations and general comments. It will also receive complaints of specific violations (communications) once ten states parties allow it.

In contrast with these seven committees – known collectively as 'treaty-based bodies' because they are established by their associated treaty – is a Charter-based body (established by the 1945 UN Charter), which ranks alongside the Security Council, namely the Human Rights Council (not to be confused with the Commission on Human Rights, which it replaced in 2006, or the Human Rights Committee, described above). Of the UN's 191 member states, 47 sit on this Council, elected by simple majority of the General Assembly in a secret ballot. Geographically diverse, they serve a maximum of six years and may have their membership suspended for gross human rights violations. The Geneva-based Council meets at least three times a year, in addition to special sessions convened to respond to urgent situations. Like the Commission on Human Rights before it, the Council has independent experts (rapporteurs) who receive communications (complaints), undertake fact-finding missions

Some bits of the UN
A partial diagram as at 2006 – note that the 2005 World Summit replaced the Commission on Human Rights with the Human Rights Council, approved the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission to support post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and added a standing police force to UN peacekeeping.

