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# Acronyms

<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organisations
<b>HRA</b>	Human Rights Adviser
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organisation
<b>LGBTIQ</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NHRI</b>	National human rights institution
<b>NMRF</b>	National mechanism for reporting and follow-up
<b>NPM</b>	National Preventive Mechanism
<b>OHCHR</b>	United Nations Office for Human Rights
<b>RC</b>	Resident Coordinator
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator Office
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCTs</b>	United Nations country teams
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNSCDF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review

# Foreword

As the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review process draws to a close – maintaining 100% participation by States in the reviews, with the involvement of all branches of the Government at the highest level - we see great merit in launching this Repository of **UN good practices on how the Universal Periodic Review process supports sustainable development**.

As a living document, the Repository captures how the UPR has been able to advance the promotion and protection of human rights and to secure greater compliance, in law and in practice, with international human rights norms or with commitments made by States in UN and regional human rights mechanisms, in all regions of the world.

Captured from over 60 experiences shared from across the UN system, key findings show that UNCTs and UN entities in all regions are supporting governments to engage throughout the UPR process and integrating the UPR into UN programming and planning in line with their specific mandates.

UPR recommendations are increasingly integrated and aligned in UN efforts at achieving the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and the UPR has been essential to support dialogues and advocacy efforts by UNCTs and UN entities, as a practical problem-solving tool to address sensitive and priority development challenges, leading to concrete results.

The predictability of the UPR, with the calendar set well in advance, over a period of 4.5 years, the sovereign decisions made by States in front of their peers, the information provided by the UN and other stakeholders for the reviews and the tools developed as a result of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights – especially the **UPR Practical Guidance**, [العربية | 中文 | English | Français | Русский | Español] have encouraged greater coordination, implementation and follow-up action within the structures of the State. They have also increasingly engendered the pro-active participation of local and regional governments, national human rights institutions and civil society, before, during, and after the reviews.

With the fourth cycle of the UPR commencing in November 2022, and with a focus on enhanced implementation of recommendations received and accepted by the State, the role of Resident Coordinators and the entire UN System becomes even more relevant in maximizing the use of this human rights mechanism as an entry point for national policies and action on human rights. We encourage colleagues across the UN system to take inspiration from this initial set of concrete, positive, national experiences.



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# Introduction

**Bringing tangible changes to the lives of individuals, communities and countries is the ultimate goal of the United Nations. Three interlinked pillars shape the UN's priorities: peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights. In 2015, all UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and grounded on human rights<sup>1</sup>.**



**Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** — a unique process informed by observations and recommendations made by human rights treaty bodies, special procedures mandate holders, the UN in-country system as well as regional mechanisms, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and civil society organisations (CSOs).

Within the UN system, multiple mechanisms are available to support governments, state entities, civil society, business, and other actors in their efforts to bring lasting peace, reduce inequalities, promote, and protect human rights, build greener economies, and ensure sustainable development. These mechanisms assist countries as they progress in fulfilling their international obligations and commitments to people, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

One such mechanism is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) – a unique process, established in 2006 as a state-to-state peer review, taking place every five years. It is informed by observations and recommendations made by human rights treaty bodies, special procedures mandate holders, the UN in-country system as well as regional mechanisms, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and civil society organisations (CSOs). The UPR provides an opportunity for all states to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situation in their countries. As of 2021, the UPR is in its third cycle and there is now 100% participation by member states<sup>2</sup>.

On average each state receives over two hundred recommendations covering all human rights including specific issues relating to women and children, health, education, labour, the environment, climate, migration, displacement and, where relevant, international humanitarian law.

Those UPR recommendations accepted by the state, in front of all its peers and other stakeholders, present important entry points for positive engagement and advocacy in areas within the mandate of UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and peace missions, even in the most difficult human rights environments. With participation at the highest level of the various branches of the government, recommendations from the UPR have delivered real change including stronger national protection systems, more independent and effective institutions, as well as laws and practices more consistent with international human rights standards.

In 2020, the Secretary-General issued *Maximizing the use of the Universal Periodic Review at country level – Practical Guidance*<sup>3</sup> (hereinafter UN Practical Guidance) which was prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in coordination with other UN entities.

**The Secretary-General stated in his 2021 annual Report on the Work of the Organisation to the General Assembly that “substantial efforts have been made, including under my call to action, to advance the integration of human rights into development interventions at the country level. New guidance allows United Nations field presences to better align their work with recommendations of the universal periodic reviews...”<sup>4</sup>**

The UN Practical Guidance outlines steps that the Resident Coordinator (RC) and UNCTs can undertake before, during and after the review supported by tools made available online<sup>5</sup>.

The purpose of this publication is to collect, in one place, examples of how UNCTs and individual entities have used and engaged with the UPR as an effective tool for action and advocacy and a source of information for technical cooperation and to inform programmes to fully integrate the advancement of human rights with efforts to achieve the SDGs, often in close partnership and cooperation with states and other stakeholders. This publication builds on the UN Practical Guidance to highlight trends and provide recommendations on how the UN can utilise the UPR to support progress by member states on human rights and the achievement of the SDGs as well as conflict and violence prevention, and sustaining peace initiatives. It also presents an analysis of how the UPR can be and has already been used to respond to challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eighteen examples curated in this publication present a diverse selection of good practices of UN engagement in the UPR process. This compilation, as well as a wider repository, is a living recording of good practice and will be further developed over time as practice continues to grow and as there are more trends and themes to explore.



## 18 examples

present a selection of good practices of UN engagement in the UPR process

1 The 17 Goals for Sustainable Development : <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

2 Cycles of the Universal Periodic Review <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CyclesUPR.aspx>; <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CyclesUPR.aspx>

3 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR\\_Practical\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_Practical_Guidance.pdf)

4 General Assembly Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organisation, 2021, pg 82. <https://www.un.org/annualreport/files/2021/09/2109745-E-ARWO21-WEB.pdf>

5 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>



# Methodology

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To collect good practices of UN engagement in the UPR process, a questionnaire was designed and disseminated to UNCTs and individual UN entities. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions about the potential positive impact of engaging with the UPR in advancing sustainable development, peace and security and human rights at country level. Questions were both process-oriented, seeking examples of the form of positive engagement with national authorities and results-oriented where examples of good practice demonstrably contributed to a positive impact in improving people's lives.

**Sixty good practice responses were submitted from across the UN, and curated examples included in this publication were selected based on the below criteria:**

- A clear nexus between the UN engagement in the UPR process and tangible improvements in the country (for example, legislative or policy change, better representation of and improved services for vulnerable groups, participation of civil society and national human rights institutions, etc.)
- Sustainability of impact
- Geographical balance
- Representation of different UN entities, with priority given to joint submissions
- Diversity of experience described in a submission, presenting original tools, methods, and practical approaches to UPR engagement.



Those submissions not selected for this publication, will be included in the repository of UPR good practices.



# Key trends

## UN engagement in the UPR process

Based on the responses received from over sixty UNCTs and UN entities, it is possible to identify the following key trends in the UN engagement with the UPR to achieve positive development results.

### 1

#### **UPR recommendations are increasingly being aligned to national plans to achieve the 2030 Agenda.**

**UNCTs are increasingly aligning UPR recommendations with the commitments and plans made by governments towards the 2030 Agenda. UNCTs are also applying and adapting practical tools to support implementation of the UPR recommendations in national contexts.**

The international human rights framework explicitly underpins the 2030 Agenda, and over 90% of the SDG targets align with human rights standards. The implementation of UPR recommendations supports the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and vice versa. Significantly, UPR and treaty body reporting processes are strengthening the commitments of governments to achieve the SDGs. In addition, UPR and treaty body recommendations make a significant contribution to the operationalisation of human rights integration in the development agenda.

For example, Armenia has developed a Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2022 based on UPR recommendations and aligned with 2030 Agenda commitments. In Malaysia, the Government has developed a matrix of UPR recommendations with a tracking tool linking it to the Sustainable Development Goals. In the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea, the UN-DPRK Strategic Framework for Cooperation includes UPR recommendations and SDGs (in particular, SDGs 2, 3 and 4).

Both in Malaysia and in Kenya, the UPR provided a framework for promoting the 2030 Agenda and the pledge to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first. For example, vulnerable groups in Malaysia, including undocumented migrants, were included in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, supported by the UN's prior engagement with the UPR which had highlighted marginalized and excluded groups in society. When COVID-19 response and recovery efforts were underway, the UN was able to prioritize support to these groups. Following the UPR recommendations and UN advocacy, the Government in Kenya expanded the population census, introducing the third gender and the data on indigenous people and persons with disabilities. In Bolivia and Honduras, the UN assisted the governments in systematizing UPR recommendations and linking them to the SDG national implementation plans.

**The international human rights framework** explicitly underpins the 2030 Agenda, and over 90% of the SDG targets align with human rights standards.



# 2

## UNCTs and UN entities can use the UPR process as a practical problem-solving tool to address sensitive issues and priority challenges such as climate change and the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic.



**COVID-19 recommendations** have been made in relation to the rights to health and education, civic and political rights, and non-discrimination

All member states participate in the UPR process and every government is subject to the same process of review. This demonstrates a political willingness to engage in the UPR process which, coupled with the governments accepting recommendations they will act upon, creates political space for the UN to raise, discuss and support governments as they grapple with a wide range of human rights issues, some of which can be politically or otherwise sensitive.

For example, the UPR process for Bangladesh brought attention to the sensitive Digital Security Act of 2018. The UPR recommendations on this law enabled the UN to strengthen its advocacy with the Government and to secure the revision process of this Act, which as of 2021, remained in progress. In Kenya, following UPR recommendations and UN advocacy, the Government adopted legislation to ensure police accountability for brutality and extra-judicial killings. In Indonesia, the UNCT, used the UPR process as an additional tool to push for the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM).

Due to the recommendations made during the UPR process, the UN, in cooperation with other stakeholders, successfully advocated for essential legislative changes in Armenia, Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Pakistan, Rwanda and Tajikistan, with a specific focus on the rights of women including prevention of sexual, domestic and gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination.

There has been an emerging practice in some of the responses to such contemporary challenges as climate action and the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, Albania embedded UPR recommendations on gender-based violence in its pandemic response, while Bangladesh and Nepal integrated UPR recommendations in their Immediate Socio-Economic Response Plans for COVID-19.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the UPR process, in particular the reviews that took place in 2020-2021, has begun to produce a number of recommendations related directly to these issues. In relation to COVID-19, recommendations have been made in relation to the rights to health and education, civic and political rights, and non-discrimination. As of November 2021, there have been approximately 250 recommendations made in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle on climate change. Further development of this trend in the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle is likely to lead to the increased engagement by UNCTs and UN entities around these matters.

At the same time, the above examples of Albania, Bangladesh and Nepal demonstrate that it is possible to apply pre-existing UPR recommendations to the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is increasingly clear that UNCTs, UN entities and governments need to urgently address these challenges, and the UPR process and the 2030 Agenda provide guidance and opportunities to do so.



## 250 recommendations

As of November 2021, there have been approximately 250 recommendations made in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle on climate change

# 3

## UNCTs and UN entities across all regions are supporting governments to engage with all stages of the UPR process and integrating the UPR into UN programming and planning.



**UNCTs and UN entities are increasingly integrating UPR recommendations** into their Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

**The UN engagement with the UPR in its third cycle has gained traction and good practice is appearing across all regions and during all stages of the UPR: reporting, peer review, implementation of the recommendations and tracking progress.**

For example, in Bolivia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and many other countries, the UN encouraged inclusive approaches to preparation of the government’s national report, submitted their own reports for the review, supported implementation and tracking progress of the recommendations. These activities have created opportunities to engage widely within countries and particularly with CSOs and NHRIs.

Colombia, Mozambique, Nepal and Ukraine are of specific interest as the use of the UPR includes its application to a conflict or crisis-affected context. Notably, both in Colombia and in Ukraine, increased

budget allocations in areas linked to UPR recommendations, led to some progress including improvements related to gender equality in Colombia and environmental rights in Ukraine, and strengthened the sustainability of impact.

UNCTs and UN entities are increasingly integrating UPR recommendations into their Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. This is a key practice since the UNSDCF (and the CCAs that prepare them) are “the most important planning and implementation instrument for UN development activities within countries” *to achieve transformative results that countries and the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development now demand*, including its Leaving No One Behind core promise”. (In brief: UNSDCF. Making the most of the UN Development System in countries).<sup>6</sup>

# 4

## UNCTs and UN entities are adopting a whole-of-society approach towards embedding the UPR process at country level through engaging not only with governments but also national parliaments, CSOs and NHRIs.

**UN engagement with governments is clearly critical. There is considerable evidence of good practice including the promotion by UNCTs and adoption by governments of tools such as NMRF and National Human Rights Action Plans.**

The ongoing development of good practice includes increasing engagement with national parliaments, CSOs and NHRIs as part of broadening public participation at all stages of the UPR process.

For example, the UN in Serbia supported the national parliament to hold a public hearing on the UPR national report and outcomes as well as parliamentary representatives to participate in the NMRF. In Pakistan, the UN supported the capacity-building of

parliamentarians on their role within the UPR process.

The Secretary-General’s Call to Action on Human Rights recognises that “the UN depends on the active engagement of civil society actors” and that “where civil society actors form an indispensable part of the landscape of collective action, we must design and implement our programmes with broad participation in mind”<sup>7</sup>

Multiple examples from all the regions present a variety of modalities of UN engagement with and support to civil society at all stages of the UPR process.



**In crisis- or conflict-affected contexts,** the UN conducted capacity-building activities for CSOs to help them engage with the UPR process.

The UN in Albania, Kenya, Liberia, Samoa, Serbia, Sierra Leone and Vietnam has supported the establishment of coalitions, platforms and networks of CSOs to enable civil society to draft shadow or alternative reports and engage in a long-term dialogue with a government and NHRIs.

In crisis- or conflict-affected contexts, the UN conducted capacity-building activities for CSOs to help them engage with the UPR process. In Iraq and Libya, the UN convened civil society and the international community including embassy presences of states, to discuss the situation in the country. This analysis and feedback was shared with respective ministries to ensure that views of civil society and other stakeholders are known and considered in UPR recommendations being considered by states.

In Vietnam, over 70 CSOs participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle review, a significant increase than in previous cycles. In Zambia, the UN provided technical support to CSOs and other stakeholders engaged in reviewing state laws and policies prior to the review.

The UPR process also created the space for bringing forward the voices of marginalised or vulnerable groups. In Thailand, in 2015, the UN supported participation of HIV-affected women in the UPR process, and in Nepal conflict victims received technical support to finalize their first-ever UPR submission. Almost 40 victims' organizations made a submission on the transitional justice process that resulted in recommendations from member states at the UPR hearing followed by the support of those recommendations by the Government.

Globally, the UPR process enables UNCTs and UN entities to reinforce their engagement with and support to NHRIs. Such cooperation is important at all stages of the UPR process, both in preparing accurate submissions, systematising the recommendations, including them into national human rights strategies and action plans, advocating with state institutions

for their implementation and mobilising public participation. The UN provides continuous support to NHRIs across all the regions including in examples shared from Albania, Serbia, Ukraine, Bolivia and Colombia, Malawi and Sierra Leone.

One of the most significant outcomes of UN engagement in the UPR process is the establishment or the progress towards the establishment of an NHRI in countries where it had not existed before. The establishment of an NHRI, compliant with Paris Principles, is an indicator under SDG 16 of the 2030 Agenda<sup>8</sup>.

Following its 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle in 2018, and a discussion on implementing its recommendations, the UAE Prime Minister decreed the establishment of the country's first NHRI in line with the Paris Principles and due to be operational by the UAE's 4<sup>th</sup> cycle, tentatively planned for 2023.

Three UPR cycles, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle in 2019, served as a strong push to establish an NHRI in Cambodia, where this work is positively progressing.

In Lesotho, where there is no NHRI, the UN provided extensive training on shadow reporting to CSOs and sensitized the government about the process and the need for alternative reports. Currently, CSOs are involved in the follow-up process and some of them have taken the co-lead role in certain thematic areas.



The UPR process also created the space for bringing forward the voices of marginalised or vulnerable groups.

# 5

## Across all regions and all stages of the UPR process, the use of tools has supported the work of UNCTs and UN entities.

This has included support in planning the UN activities in the country, systemising and tracking UPR recommendations, aligning them with the SDGs and recommendations from other human rights mechanisms. Additionally, an increasing number of countries, including Armenia, Malaysia and Kenya, have developed or are developing national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up (NMRFs) or nationally adapted tracking databases.

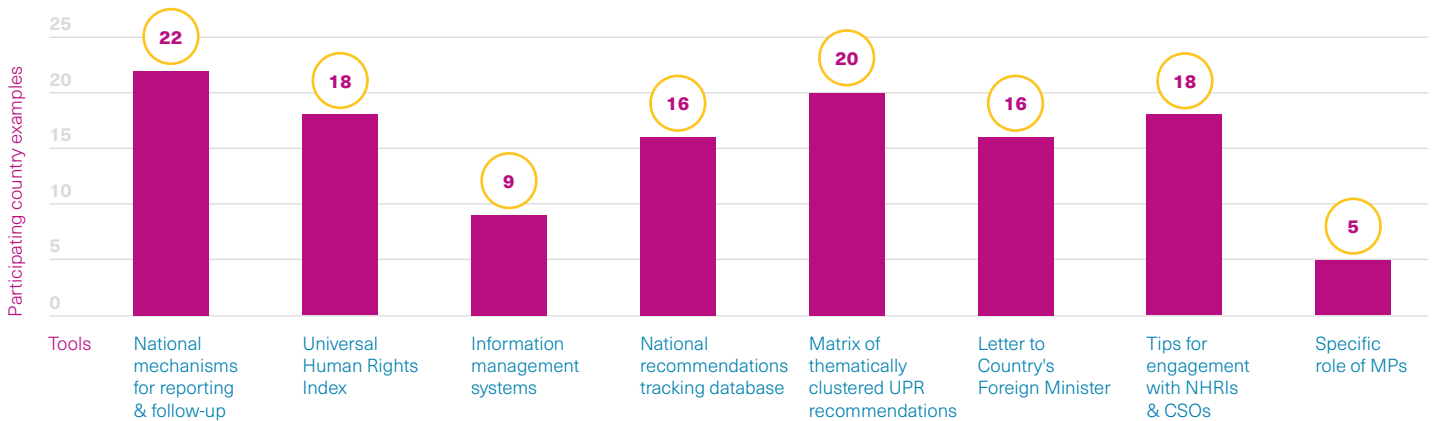
Apart from NMRFs and national databases for tracking the implementation of recommendations, these tools include: the Universal Human Rights Index<sup>9</sup> (UHRI, a web-based database designed to facilitate access to human rights recommendations issued by the treaty bodies, the special procedures, and the UPR, linking them to SDGs), information management systems, and a letter addressed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Foreign Minister following UPR review. Such a letter, with specific advice on areas requiring particular attention and offering support of

the UN system under the leadership of the RC, can help raise sensitive issues with governments.

One of the most useful tools, according to the survey results, is a matrix<sup>10</sup> of thematically clustered recommendations identifying recommending states, the position of the state reviewed (i.e. whether recommendations were accepted or noted) and the SDGs to which they are linked. The UPR Branch of the OHCHR produces such a matrix for each state following its review providing a clear blueprint for actions that can be undertaken by the UN RCO, UNCTs or individual UN entities. In addition, OHCHR has produced two guidance notes: (1) UPR: Tips for engagement at country level for National Human Rights Institutions and civil society<sup>11</sup>; (2) UPR: The specific role of members of Parliament before-during-and after the review<sup>12</sup>.

The chart below demonstrates which of the available UPR tools are most used by the UNCTs and individual UN agencies which took part in the survey conducted to produce this publication.

### Tools to help countries track and implement recommendations and link them to SDGs



6 In brief: UNSDCF. Making the most of the UN Development System in countries) <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/In-Brief-UN-Sustainable-Development-Cooperation.pdf>

7 Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights <https://www.un.org/en/content/action-for-human-rights/index.shtml>

8 See SDG 16, Target 16.a

9 <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/>

10 The matrix of recommendations is available here, country by country <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>

11 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Tips\\_21Sept2020.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Tips_21Sept2020.pdf)

12 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/TIPS\\_Members\\_Parliament.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/TIPS_Members_Parliament.pdf)

# Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR process

Albania

Pakistan

Armenia

Rwanda

Bangladesh

Serbia

Colombia

Sierra Leone

Jordan

Tanzania

Kenya

Thailand

Malaysia

United Arab

Mongolia

Emirates

Mozambique

Ukraine

Nepal





**Albania**

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# Albania

## Information provided by

UNCT with specific contributions from UN Women and UNFPA.

## Themes

Gender equality, GBV prevention.

## Summary

Albania has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2009, 2014 and 2019. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle in 2014 resulted in long-term UN collaboration with national authorities, institutions, and CSOs to ensure gender quality and counter gender-based violence (GBV) with issues raised most often in the UPR recommendations, linked to concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2016 and Group of Independent Experts in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence First Assessment Report on Albania in 2017.<sup>13</sup>

UN joint efforts to link the recommendations from various human rights mechanisms, to engage with, capacitate and bring together key government agencies and civil society contributed to positive legislative changes to counter GBV, practical steps to end impunity for gender-based crimes, improved protection measures and services for survivors, as well as awareness raising of GBV in Albanian society.

## Key results

→ The Gender Equality Strategy of Albania (2021-2030) reflects key UPR recommendations including measures to address harmful practices, sexism, and all forms of gender-based violence; establishment of special services; addressing intersecting forms of discrimination against disadvantaged groups as root causes of GBV; capacity building of law enforcement agencies; provision of free legal aid and psychological counseling for survivors of violence.

→ Legislation adopted in Albania to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic was based on international human rights standards and recommendations from international human rights mechanisms, including the UPR. During the pandemic, UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA used gender-related UPR recommendations from previous cycles as a tool for planning and analysis to support the drafting of a set of bylaws and protocols to counter domestic violence and address intersectional dimensions of inequalities, tailoring COVID-19 response and recovery efforts to the needs of women facing multiple discrimination, including women with disabilities, women in remote rural areas and Roma women.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations

- ✦ In 2016, UN Women and UNFPA supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to develop a Plan of Implementation of UPR recommendations and CEDAW concluding observations. The Plan (developed in English and translated into Albanian) was transferred to an online tracking mechanism<sup>14</sup> administered by the MFA.

### Engagement with the Parliament

- ✦ In 2017, a sub-parliamentary commission on Gender Equality and EVAW (End Violence Against Women) was established in the Albanian Parliament. UN Women provides continuous technical support to the commission in its role to monitor, promote and implement the recommendations of human rights mechanisms, including the UPR, on gender equality and GBV.

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accredited with A Status)

- ✦ Capacity building activities conducted jointly by UN Women, the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, UNFPA and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Albania provided an impetus for the Ombudsperson's Office to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Albanian National Statistics Office (INSTAT) with a view to strengthen data collection, disaggregation, dissemination and analysis, in light of human rights considerations, including those outlined in the UPR recommendations and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Moreover, As the result of the collaboration between INSTAT and the Ombudsperson, the 2020 edition of “Men and women in Albania”<sup>15</sup> – an annual publication of NSO which collects, analyses and presents gender-disaggregated data and statistics across all sectors, introduced a chapter dedicated to human rights statistics including individual complaints submitted to the Ombudsperson, disaggregated by gender.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ In 2017, UN Women brought together over 50 CSOs and supported the establishment of a Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence<sup>16</sup>. Due to specific guidance tools and trainings on monitoring and preparing shadow/alternative reports to human rights mechanisms, the network produced a joint stakeholder's submission for the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle in 2019, focusing on GBV,<sup>17</sup> and participated in the UPR session in Geneva<sup>18</sup>. The 38 recommendations that Albania received in this area largely reflected the issues raised in the CSOs' submission.<sup>19</sup> The Monitoring Network against GBV continues to play an active role in monitoring the implementation of UPR recommendations issued in 2019.

### Technical support to the Government to draft and present its national report

- ✦ In 2019, UN Women, UNFPA and OHCHR organized an awareness-raising event for a governmental working group in charge of drafting the national report, as well as for civil society and youth. The event included a simulation session to prepare the working group for the upcoming review.
  - In 2019, a side event on the UPR was held in Geneva at Palais des Nations, in the pre-session of the UPR review.
  - Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ The UPR recommendations of 2019 and 2014, along with the concluding observations of treaty bodies, have informed the Albanian Country Common Analysis (CCA) in 2020 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework<sup>20</sup> (UNSDCF) for 2022-2030. The recommendations assisted with a fuller analysis in the CCA of groups and people who have been left behind or who are at risk to be left behind. For the first time the UNSDCF contained an outcome dedicated to gender. This is expected to improve the state response with regards to provision of accessible services for GBV and trafficking survivors as well as for other groups facing discrimination. In addition, the CCA contains an analysis of risks of poverty, inequality and discrimination with a direct reference to the respective findings of various human rights mechanisms. Along with the UPR recommendations, the observations made by CEDAW, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination helped the UN identify intersecting forms of discrimination of certain groups and their root causes.
- ✦ In 2019, the UNCT submitted its joint report to the UPR, paving the way for subsequent collaboration among UN agencies for the UNCT to provide inputs to submissions on CEDAW (2019), on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2019) and on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2020) and will be submitting joint reports to CEDAW (2022) and CESCR (2022)



## Needs of women facing multiple discrimination

UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA used gender-related UPR recommendations as a tool to support the drafting of a set of bylaws and protocols tailoring COVID-19 response to the needs of women facing multiple discrimination, including women with disabilities, women in remote rural areas and Roma women.

13 Group of Independent Experts in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/grevio>

14 [http://tedrejtatenjeriut.punetejashme.gov.al/WD220AWP/WD220Awp.exe/CONNECT/UN\\_System](http://tedrejtatenjeriut.punetejashme.gov.al/WD220AWP/WD220Awp.exe/CONNECT/UN_System)

15 <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/7376/burra-dhe-gra-2020.pdf>

16 <http://rrjetikunderdhunesgjimore-monitorime.al/en/>

17 <https://bit.ly/3pkylrB>

18 [http://rrjetikunderdhunesgjimore-monitorime.al/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/3.\\_monitoring\\_network\\_against\\_gender-based\\_violence\\_stmt.pdf](http://rrjetikunderdhunesgjimore-monitorime.al/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/3._monitoring_network_against_gender-based_violence_stmt.pdf)

19 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/043/08/PDF/G1904308.pdf?OpenElement>

20 <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-guidance>



Armenia

→ Human Rights Action Plan Discussion.

# Armenia

## Information provided by

 UNDP.

## Themes

 Torture prevention; countering violence against women.

## Summary

□ Armenia has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2010, 2015 and 2020. The outcomes of the periodic reviews and tailored support to various stakeholders helped the Government of Armenia address the UPR recommendations and adopt legislation on torture prevention and GBV prevention and investigation.

## Key results

- Legislation was amended to prevent torture, including through improved investigation techniques, in response to UPR recommendations<sup>21</sup>. UNDP supported the preparation and the enforcement of the amendments enabling audio-visual recording of police interviews in ten pilot police stations. Subsequently, training for police officers was provided and standard operating procedures were developed.
- The recommendations made to Armenia during the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR cycle in 2015 shaped the priorities of the UN to provide comprehensive support for the adoption and effective implementation of the Law on Prevention of Violence in Family, Protection of Persons Subjected to Family Violence and the Restoration of Solidarity in the Family which was adopted in 2017. In 2019-2020, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in developing secondary legislation and amendments to the law.
- In 2018, Armenia signed the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). Since 2019, UNFPA has supported the Human Rights Defender's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the development and implementation of a large-scale national public campaign on countering gender-based and domestic violence.
- A new National Human Rights Strategy and National Human Rights Action Plan for 2020-2022 were developed, with a stronger monitoring and evaluation framework. These strategic documents were elaborated in close consultation with civil society and the Human Rights Defender's Office, and with full consideration of Armenia's international commitments, including the UPR recommendations.
- Based on international commitments including UPR recommendations, UNDP provided tailored support to the government in its efforts to adopt a law on anti-discrimination. As of 2021, the adoption of the law was still pending.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations

- ✦ A Human Rights Platform was developed to track the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan and applicable international commitments<sup>22</sup>. All provisions of the Plan were linked to respective SDGs. The development of the Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan in 2019 was based on the UPR recommendations and other human rights commitments of Armenia. The Strategy and the Action Plan were developed by the Ministry of Justice with UNDP support, through the EU-funded project “Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Armenia”.

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accredited with A Status)

- ✦ In 2019, ahead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle for Armenia, the UN, in partnership with the Human Rights Defender’s Office, organised a workshop on UPR implementation for state institutions, members of parliament, representatives of civil society and international organisations. This enabled the Human Rights Defender’s Office to prepare a stronger submission for the UPR covering views and recommendations from different national and international stakeholders, and to apply best practices and institutionalised mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the UPR recommendations relevant for the work of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM).

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ Through 2018-2019, UNDP organised a number of workshops and discussions to raise awareness of civil society on the UPR process and boost its engagement at all stages in the process. In 2020, civil society organizations provided ten submissions for the review, representing an increase compared to the previous cycle.



A **Human Rights Platform** was developed to track the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan and applicable international commitments.

21 For the listed legislative achievements, UN support was provided through the EU funded project “Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Armenia”, implemented jointly by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

22 <http://www.e-rights.am>



Bangladesh

→ COVID-19 emergency response activities, food distribution.




# Bangladesh


## Information provided by

 UNCT.

## Themes

 **Non-discrimination, countering violence against women and human trafficking, rights of persons with disabilities, freedom of expression and socioeconomic response to Covid-19.**

## Summary

 Bangladesh has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2009, 2013 and 2018. The UN engagement in the UPR process – advocacy and technical support prior, during and after the review – contributed to advancing key pieces of legislation in the sphere of non-discrimination, countering violence against women, including sexual harassment, prevention of human trafficking, support to refugees and freedom of expression.

## Key results

- An anti-discrimination law was under consideration by the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs as of September 2021, expected to be passed into law in 2022. UNDP led the provision of technical assistance and advocacy for the adoption of this law based on a UPR recommendation accepted by the government of Bangladesh in 2018.
- In 2020, the Government agreed to review a controversial Digital Security Act adopted in 2018 and criticized as a tool for suppressing freedom of expression. There has been increased openness to review the law following a relevant UPR recommendation. Thus, the UPR became an advocacy tool and an entry point which created space for OHCHR to discuss the law with the Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. In 2021, the Minister established a joint committee to review the law involving representatives of the UN and relevant ministries.
- To address several UPR recommendations, the Ministry of Women and Children committed to reviewing the law on prevention of violence against women. In 2021, UNFPA took the lead in providing UN technical assistance to the Ministry to support amendments of the law in conformity with international human rights standards. As of 2021, the law was still being under consideration. The Ministry has also taken the initiative to review the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women following international human rights recommendations including UPR.
- In 2019, Bangladesh ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention for the suspension of human trafficking, in line with UPR recommendations. Following this, in March 2020, the Government of Bangladesh established seven Anti-human Trafficking Offence Tribunals in seven divisional districts.
- In 2020, UPR recommendations to address socio-economic inequalities and poverty contributed to preparing the basis of the Immediate Socio-Economic Response Plan for COVID-19 including several recommendations on social security.
- Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR cycle in 2013, the Government adopted a National Strategy on Myanmar Refugees and Undocumented Myanmar Nationals recognizing for the first time their presence in Bangladesh and humanitarian needs of the Rohingya refugees.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Engagement with national authorities/integrating the UPR recommendations in national planning processes

- ✦ During the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle, UNDP provided technical support to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate inter-ministry consultations and dialogue with civil society organizations and other stakeholders to prepare a national report. After the review, UNDP provided training to strengthen capacities of relevant ministries to implement the recommendations which were thematically clustered and distributed to line ministries enhancing greater ownership and understanding among officials.

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accredited with B Status)

- ✦ Prior to the review, the National Human Rights Commission organised, with UNDP support, a mock UPR exercise featuring a questions and answers between stakeholders and the Government representatives to respond. UNDP supported the participation of the NHRI in the UPR-Info's pre-session giving space for its advocacy with state delegations ahead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle. In addition, representatives of the NHRI attended all three UPR working group sessions as an observer benefiting from this first-hand opportunity to learn about the UPR process.

### The link between UPR recommendations and recommendations from other human rights mechanisms

- ✦ After the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle, UNDP supported the National Human Rights Commission in consolidating various recommendations received from different UN human rights mechanisms, including the UPR and treaty bodies, and aligning them with the SDGs according to thematic human rights issues. This analysis provided an effective advocacy tool. To enhance capacities, UNDP provided training on UPR reporting, monitoring, implementation, and the follow-up process for the National Human Rights Commission as well as for the human rights focal points in ministries and CSOs.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ With OHCHR support, the UN RCO organized a 'Human Rights Forum Bangladesh', a coalition of 22 human rights NGOs, and co-hosted a training session on UN human rights mechanisms and the UPR towards developing the first ever National Action Plan on the implementation of the UPR recommendations in June 2019.
- ✦ During 2017 and 2018, UNDP consulted and worked with grassroots level CSOs to ensure the concerns of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups were brought to the attention of the Government and considered during the UPR process.
- ✦ An ILO-facilitated coordination between the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, led to an agreement to engage representatives during the Labour Force Survey of 2020 to ensure accurate collection of disability data.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ The CCA for 2020 and UNSDCF (signed in 2021) have UPR recommendations interwoven throughout the analysis. The UNSDCF has a strong emphasis on inclusivity which is an overarching UPR recommendation.
- ✦ Two joint UN programmes have drawn from various UPR recommendations. One, implemented by four UN agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO and UN Women) under the joint SDG Fund, is to empower the most vulnerable tea garden workers and enhance social protection, especially for female workers, and the second is the inception phase of accelerating implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and disability inclusive SDGs. ILO is the lead agency for this inception phase, with overall coordination by the UN RCO and with UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN WOMEN as the contributing agencies.




Colombia


→ Communities in Baudó, participation in workshop on Human Rights, education, health, decent life.

# Colombia


## Information provided by

 OHCHR and UN Women.

## Themes

 **Gender equality, non-discrimination, redress for victims of violence, economic, social and cultural rights.**

## Summary

 Colombia has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2008, 2013 and 2018. The majority of the recommendations the country received and accepted during the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle were on economic, social and cultural rights, and the rights of marginalized groups, including women, **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) communities**, girls and boys, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, and persons with disabilities.

UPR recommendations enabled the Colombian government to increase and make sustainable budget allocations for institutional support to gender equality and women's rights. Preparations for the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle opened space for broad consultations between the government and civil society. As a result, civil society's assessment of the human rights situation in Colombia was reflected in the national report for the 2018 UPR review. In addition, UPR recommendations on inclusion, equal rights and social protection for marginalized and vulnerable groups helped shape the CCA of the UNCT.

## Key results

→ Colombia introduced an indicator to track progress on women's equality in the framework of the National Development Plan 2018-2022. Two state institutions integrated this indicator in their operations: the Ministry of the Treasury and Public Credit and the National Planning Department. Both generated a report on the results obtained and resources available to advance women's equality.

→ According to the first report 'Budget Tracking for Women's Equality', the equivalent of 263 million USD was allocated for 2019, and the equivalent of 421 million USD was allocated for 2020. In total, the goal for the four-year period is to allocate the equivalent of 1,4 billion USD for women's equality.



## Budget Tracking for Women's Equality

The goal for the four-year period is to allocate the equivalent of 1,4 billion USD for women's equality.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Actions to promote the UPR and its recommendations as an advocacy tool

✦ In 2018, the UNCT and the Human Rights Working Group organized an advocacy meeting with the representatives of 11 embassies and the EU Delegation to present key recommendations from the UNCT joint submission for the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, calling on the international community to speak with one voice and assist the government in advancing human rights.

In 2018, OHCHR, together with civil society, organized a discussion and a simultaneous live broadcast of the UPR of Colombia in Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, Barranquilla and Barrancabermeja.

### Engagement with the Parliament

✦ To encourage the Parliament to adopt or amend legislation to implement UPR recommendations, UN Women monitors legislative developments and analyses parliamentary initiatives in the framework of its human rights agenda. A bulletin is produced of legislative alerts regarding initiatives that may impact the rights of women in the country.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

✦ In 2017, OHCHR supported the Office of the Presidential Advisor for Human Rights in holding four civil society regional fora and one forum in Bogota to consult with and hear their vision of Colombian civil society on the human rights situation in the country based on the recommendations from previous UPR cycles. The fora covered topics such as peacebuilding and redress for victims, support to vulnerable groups, human rights education, access to justice, torture prevention, and the situation of paramilitary groups. The conclusions that resulted from this constructive dialogue were presented in an annex (II) to the national UPR report “Dialogue with civil society in Colombia, third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review”<sup>23</sup>.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

✦ The UNCT submitted a joint contribution for the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR review of Colombia in 2018 focusing on key human rights issues such as the peace agreement, rights to liberty and security of the person; human rights defenders; right to life (extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances); rights of migrants and individuals in need of international protection, and stateless persons; women’s rights, rights of indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples; and rights of persons with disabilities.

✦ The UPR recommendations, in particular, those focused on vulnerable and marginalized groups, indigenous peoples and non-discrimination, are now integrated into the CCA in Colombia.

23 [http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session30/CO/A\\_HRC\\_WG.6\\_30\\_COL\\_1\\_Colombia\\_Annexes\\_S.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session30/CO/A_HRC_WG.6_30_COL_1_Colombia_Annexes_S.pdf)



Jordan

→ Vocational Training Centre in Jarash, Jordan.

## Information provided by

UN RCO, with contributions from IOM and drawing on UNCT annual reporting.

## Themes

Human trafficking; non-discrimination, LNOB, socioeconomic response to COVID-19.

## Summary

Jordan has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2009, 2013 and 2018. Some of the most significant achievements of the UN engagement in the UPR have been the revision of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law No.9 and the evidence-based support to vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Jordan UNSDCF 2017-2022 included commitments to follow up on the UPR and rights issues related to women, children and persons with disabilities.

## Key results

→ UPR recommendations issued during all three cycles helped the UNCT identify and support the most marginalized and vulnerable individuals in Jordan and tailor support. The UNCT has produced policy papers and provided targeted assistance for groups facing inequalities and exclusion: refugees, migrant workers, vulnerable children, women and girls, and individuals who depend on the informal sector for their livelihoods. As a result, during the COVID-19 crisis, the UN found itself well-positioned to generate rapid data on emerging risks and vulnerabilities and to work with the Government to alleviate the worst effects of the pandemic on the most vulnerable individuals<sup>24</sup>. Consistency in addressing vulnerabilities and inequalities is in line with the 2030 Agenda and the commitment to leave no one behind.

→ In 2021, a new Anti-Human Trafficking Law No. 10 was adopted replacing the Law No.9 adopted in Jordan in 2009. This is the outcome of a UN-led advocacy campaign (initiated by the Senior Human Rights Adviser in cooperation with IOM, UNHCR, UNODC and ILO) designed on the basis of the recommendations provided through the UPR, the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, treaty bodies<sup>25</sup> and Jordan civil society. The UPR recommendations calling for the amendment of the law, stressed the need to ensure better protection of victims, compatibility between the revised Law and the National Counter-Trafficking Strategy 2019-2022, a competent judiciary system, public awareness-raising campaigns and sensitization of prosecutors. While the newly adopted Anti-Human Trafficking Law has taken into consideration the recommendations on victims' protection and their access to services, others have remained unaddressed demonstrating the need for further joint advocacy. The advocacy will continue, in particular through the National Migration Working Group, co-chaired by IOM and ILO and comprised of UN agencies, including the Senior Human Rights Adviser, civil society, research institutions and private sector and established in Jordan with the aim to support implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

- ✦ While the National Human Rights Action Plan of 2016-2025 does not make explicit reference to UPR recommendations, as of 2021, the Government was assessing the implementation of the Action Plan and in doing so has mapped the plan against UPR recommendations and the SDGs.
- ✦ In June 2021, the UNCT published a background paper on Jordan's engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms outlining past and forthcoming opportunities for engagement by all stakeholders to foster implementation of the recommendations issued by human rights mechanisms, including the UPR.<sup>26</sup> On Human Rights Day 2021, the UNCT launched an infographic encouraging implementation of recommendations addressed to Jordan by the Universal Periodic Review, the Special Procedures mandate holders and the Treaty Bodies prior to the pandemic, which the United Nations in Jordan assesses as relevant for building forward better and for realizing a human rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

### Engagement with national authorities:

- ✦ As a part of joint advocacy efforts to amend the Anti-Human Trafficking Law, IOM along with other Counter-Trafficking actors in Jordan including local NGOs had regular meetings with the Technical Anti-Trafficking Committee chaired by the Ministry of Justice to provide comments to the revised draft. Furthermore, IOM held National Consultations under the auspices of the Minister of Justice to provide a platform for the exchange of information and opinions, and to ensure that the amended law was compatible with international standards and with the Palermo Protocol<sup>27</sup>.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ The preparation and the follow-up to the UPR process of 2018 served as an entry point for the UN RCO Senior Human Rights Advisor to engage civil society and the international community in Jordan on human rights issues. The SHRA participated in preparatory meetings of civil society and organized in-country pre-sessions, in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Jordan and the NGO UPR-Info. As a result, the National Center for Human Rights – the Jordanian NHRI and more than 30 civil society organizations prepared individual and ten joint submissions for the UPR 3rd cycle in 2018. Building on this cooperation, the SHRA provided thematic notes and strategic advice to civil society and international partners in the context of legislative and policy development, in joint planning processes, and in project development and implementation.

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accredited with an A Status)

- ✦ In 2021-22, UNDP strengthened the work of the Jordanian NHRI supporting implementation of numerous recommendations of the UPR and other human rights mechanisms, aiming to refine and strengthen the complaints mechanism of the institution; and support the NHRI engagement in the 2022 Jordan Voluntary National Review (VNR) process



## Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ Both the COVID Socio-Economic Response Plan 2020 and the CCA 2021 explicitly mention a range of human rights concerns raised during the 2018 UPR and by different treaty bodies.
- ✦ In 2021, the recommendations from human rights mechanisms, including the UPR, informed the preparation of the UNCT's three Action Plans: (1) Building Forward Better with a focus on inclusive, diverse, resilient and sustainable economic recovery and growth; (2) Climate action, to address water scarcity and food insecurity; and (3) Strengthened accountable institutions with human rights at the core of their operations. The latter aims to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination on human rights and the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process.
- ✦ In 2021, the UN in Jordan adopted a Prevention Strategy with a specific action point that *All UNCT members commit to identify recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures*, which are particularly relevant to ensure implementation of the three Action Plans.



## Targeted assistance

The UNCT has produced policy papers and provided targeted assistance for groups facing inequalities and exclusion: refugees, migrant workers, vulnerable children, women and girls, and individuals who depend on the informal sector for their livelihoods.

24 2020 UN Country Annual Results Report [https://jordan.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2020\\_Results%20Report\\_Final%20version%20%281%29-compressed.pdf](https://jordan.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2020_Results%20Report_Final%20version%20%281%29-compressed.pdf)

25 Some 80 recommendations from eight human rights mechanisms including 17 recommendations from the UPR.

26 <https://jordan.un.org/index.php/en/134049-united-nations-human-rights-mechanisms-jordans-engagement>

27 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>



Kenya


→ Students of Kanzi Primary School present a Maasai traditional dance to the audience at the Chyulu Conservation Research Centre.

# Kenya

## Information provided by

 OHCHR and the UN RCO.

## Themes

 **Police accountability, statelessness, non-discrimination, minority rights.**

## Summary

 Kenya has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2010, 2015 and 2020. Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle and stemming from an OHCHR-led dialogue with the Government, an NMRF was established to integrate human rights issues in overarching state policy.

Based on UPR recommendations and concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies, Kenya has passed laws, introduced policies and taken initiatives to address police brutality, extra-judicial killings, statelessness and the lack of disaggregated data.

The UPR process in Kenya has enhanced the principle of public participation, which is one of the national values and principles of governance set out in Article 10 of the Kenyan Constitution. It provided an important opportunity for a constructive dialogue between the Government, the NHRI (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, KNCHR) and civil society.

## Key results

→ Laws and policies identified in the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle implementation matrix were adopted, including on police reform and accountability (Prevention of Torture Act and Coroners Act); judicial reforms to make justice more accessible (alternative dispute resolution police and the establishment of small claims court); and the right to privacy (Data Protection Act). Collaboration is ongoing between the Government, the KNCHR and civil society on the implementation of laws and policies, including the development of guidelines to operationalise the Prevention of Torture Act. Further, to advance accountability, OHCHR has strengthened cooperation between criminal justice actors on the investigation and prosecution of serious human rights violations.

→ Addressing UPR recommendations regarding statelessness, the Government accorded citizenship to stateless persons from the Shona and Makonde communities, and to stateless persons of Rwandan and Asian descent. An initiative is underway to recognize the members of the Pemba community as Kenyan citizens.

→ The human rights-based approach to data was introduced. The lack of data in Government reporting was raised during the UPR process, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle implementation matrix identified the need to ensure data is available for reporting to human rights mechanisms and on the SDGs.

a) To assist the Government in planning its policies and advancing SDG implementation based on a human rights-based approach to data collection and analysis, OHCHR facilitated the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and the KNCHR– the Kenyan NHRI, in 2017.

b) As part of the 2019 Kenya Population and Household Census, KNBS and KNCHR identified 28 groups subjected to long-term discrimination who had been left behind with respect to data collection and Government programming. With the support of the UN, the census questionnaire was designed to collect disaggregated data on these groups left behind. For the first time in Kenya, the third gender was included in the census, and intersex persons were counted based on self-identification. Data on indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and persons with albinism were also disaggregated in the census.

c) Pursuant to their Memorandum of Understanding, the KNCHR and the KNBS are currently collaborating to develop methodologies to report on specific indicators under SDG 16, including guidelines on the collection of citizen-generated data.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations

- ✦ Following the UPR 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, an NMRF was established in 2019 chaired by the Attorney-General. The NMRF supports government bodies mandated to ensure that Kenya complies with its human rights obligations to (1) integrate the recommendations of human rights mechanisms into their sector plans; and (2) cooperate with the SDG implementation secretariat to reinforce the nexus between the human rights agenda and the country's development strategy.
- ✦ Following the UPR 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, Kenya developed an implementation plan to guide and monitor the progress of implementation of the UPR recommendations. An implementation matrix outlined the recommendations which were clustered into broad thematic areas; the specific government actions required for the implementation; human rights indicators to monitor the progress made; responsible actors, including CSOs and development partners; and timelines within which the implementation should be completed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle implementation matrix has also been developed, in collaboration with KNCHR and civil society, and with the support of OHCHR. In developing the implementation matrix for both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles, the Government drew upon the implementation plan developed by civil society Kenya UPR Stakeholders' Coalition and integrated many of the proposed actions for the implementation of recommendations.

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accredited with an A Status)

- ✦ KNCHR has been actively engaged in all three UPR cycles, prior, during and in follow up to the reviews. KNCHR has been instrumental in advancing the implementation of key recommendations, including in relation to the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, the Prevention of Torture Act and Coroners Act, statelessness, and persons with disabilities.
- ✦ Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle review in 2020, OHCHR and KNCHR are providing technical support to the Government to align the implementation matrix for the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle recommendations with SDG implementation as well as with the implementation of other recommendations and concluding observations from both international and regional human rights mechanisms.

### Engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs)

- ✦ With OHCHR and KNCHR support, the Kenya UPR Stakeholders' Coalition was established after the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, comprising over 100 NGOs and led by a steering committee with technical support from KNCHR and OHCHR. For the UPR 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle in 2020, the coalition developed one consolidated civil society submission comprising 25 cluster reports. In addition, 13 individual reports were submitted by civil society organisations, including the first report from a grassroots network of human rights defenders, the Social Justice Centres Working Group.
- ✦ Ahead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle review, a national dialogue meeting was held between the Government and CSOs to discuss certain contentious issues that the Government had not addressed in its report, to assess the progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the two previous cycles, and to discuss voluntary commitments and possible recommendations that may be made during the review. As a result, the Government committed to an ongoing dialogue with CSOs and KNCHR for the implementation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle recommendations.
- ✦ The Kenya UPR Stakeholders' Coalition has developed score cards on each of the thematic issues from the UPR recommendations. The scorecards are used to measure achievements and progress that the Government has made from the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle review in 2010 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle review in 2020. CSOs plan to use the scorecards to engage the Government and set the tone in having issues-based discussions as Kenya heads towards general elections in 2022.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ In the current UN Development Assistance Framework for 2018-2022, the UPR is one of the key features of strategic results area one on transformative governance. The CCA has reflected recommendations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle which will serve also to influence the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.



Malaysia

→ Meeting on the UPR in Malaysia.

# Malaysia

## Information provided by

UNCT for Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam.

## Themes

Minority rights, refugee rights, elimination of racial discrimination.

## Summary

Malaysia has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2009, 2013 and 2018. The UPR process has become a powerful tool to unite various stakeholders around the human rights agenda linking it to the Sustainable Development Goals and pledge to leave no one behind. The UPR framework was a crucial resource in preparing Malaysia's second VNR to the High-Level Political Forum that entailed an extensive consultation process, including with civil society, a diverse parliamentary group, academia, business, and the National Human Rights Commission. In contrast with Malaysia's 2017 VNR, the 2021 review demonstrated a much more significant reference to human rights and the necessity to ensure no one is left behind.

## Key results

→ The UPR contributed to raising awareness about inclusiveness as a key manifestation of human rights. For example, UN advocacy and engagement with the Government and civil society on the rights of migrants and refugees contributed to the inclusion of these groups, including undocumented persons, in the national vaccination programme against COVID-19.

→ While the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has not yet been ratified, the UN engagement in and follow-up to the UPR process has significantly sensitized a wider group of stakeholders. The UNCT also worked with a local academic institution to develop and launch a booklet titled "Understanding the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the wider context of the Federal Constitution, Human Rights and Malaysian Society"<sup>28</sup> to address misperceptions about the Convention in the society.



### Vaccination programme

UN advocacy and engagement with the Government and civil society on the rights of migrants and refugees contributed to the inclusion of these groups, including undocumented persons, in the national vaccination programme against COVID-19.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

- ✦ Following the 2018 UPR the UNCT supported Malaysia's development of a monitoring mechanism for implementation of the UPR recommendations that has led to a more consultative and inclusive cooperation between the Government and multiple stakeholders. It has also resulted in embedding the human rights-based approach to development by mapping the UPR recommendations against the SDGs, other human rights mechanisms and the National Human Rights Action Plan. Malaysia's pledges and commitments for its candidacy to the Human Rights Council reflect this.<sup>29</sup>
- ✦ The UPR recommendations prompted Malaysia to become one of the first countries that has committed to piloting OHCHR's National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD). This is expected to raise the level of commitment across Government ministries and agencies to take Malaysia's human rights commitments forward.
- ✦ A dedicated department at the MFA coordinates and monitors the implementation of the recommendations by relevant ministries and state agencies. In addition, the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Office is involved in monitoring the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan.

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accredited with A Status)

- ✦ In 2021, the UN RCO and the National Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to foster mutual collaboration on the UPR and other human rights mechanisms.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ The UN-established civil society platform called "Human Rights 365 Group" continues to engage CSOs in the UPR process and other pertinent human rights issues. Malaysia has witnessed almost a 50 percent increase in civil society involvement in its 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle compared to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle in terms of the number of reports CSOs submitted jointly or individually.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ The outcome and recommendations that emerged from the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle formed a key foundational basis for the development of the CCA and of the first UNSDCF for 2021-2025 in Malaysia. The UNSDCF, vetted by over 80 Government ministries and agencies, has the human rights-based approach to development at its core.

28 <https://malaysia.un.org/index.php/en/137518-understanding-icerd-wider-context-federal-constitution-human-rights-and-malaysian-society>

29 [https://www.kln.gov.my/web/usa\\_un-new-york/news-from-mission/-/blogs/malaysia-s-candidature-to-the-human-rights-council-term-2022-2024-voluntary-commitments-and-pledges](https://www.kln.gov.my/web/usa_un-new-york/news-from-mission/-/blogs/malaysia-s-candidature-to-the-human-rights-council-term-2022-2024-voluntary-commitments-and-pledges)



Mongolia

→ Students' role-play exercise at the Summer School for Human Rights, to raise public awareness of UPR mechanism.



# Mongolia

## Information provided by

📁 OHCHR and the UN RCO.

## Themes

🚩 Human rights defenders, torture prevention, GBV prevention.

## Summary

📌 Mongolia has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2010, 2015 and 2020. Due to the OHCHR UPR follow-up support project, in close coordination with special procedures and within the UNCT, Mongolia became the first country in the Asia Pacific region to enact the law aimed at protecting the rights of human rights defenders and increasing civic space. Additionally, UN engagement in the UPR process, resulted in the establishment of an independent national preventive mechanism for torture prevention (NPM), which has been supported by Treaty Bodies, in particular the Sub-Committee against Torture.

## Key results

- The Law on Human Rights Defenders was adopted in 2021 marking an essential achievement of the Government of Mongolia with regards to implementing UPR recommendations. To adopt this law, the Government collaborated with the UNCT through the framework of technical cooperation funded by the Voluntary Fund on UPR Implementation with OHCHR, the UNCT, the UN RCO, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, the Mongolian NHRI – the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia, international and local civil society collaboration was another crucial factor for the elaboration and the adoption of the law.
- In 2020, an NPM to combat and prevent torture was established within the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia with OHCHR support. The establishment of the NPM was driven by UPR recommendations as well as by the Mongolian obligation under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to which Mongolia is a state party. The treaty body, the UN Sub-Committee against Torture, has also significantly contributed to this achievement. In the framework of its UPR follow-up support project for Mongolia, OHCHR continues providing support to the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia to ensure that the NPM effectively functions and enjoys operational and budgetary independence.
- In 2016, the Law on Promotion of Gender Equality and the Law to Combat Domestic Violence were revised to include provisions for the protection of survivors and accountability for perpetrators in cases of GBV and violence against children, as well as human trafficking. These revisions made domestic violence a criminal offence for the first time in the country's history.
- A significant increase in state and local budget allocations on GBV issues: totalling the equivalent of approximately 2.2 million USD from 2017 to 2020. As a result, 3,799 GBV survivors received care at One Stop Service Centers and shelters across the country in 2020.
- UNFPA provided technical guidance and financial support to the Government in conducting major national surveys, such as the first National Survey on Gender-Based Violence in 2018.
- UNFPA established a GBV Training Programme at the National Center for Gender Equality and the Training and Research Center of the Family, Child and Youth Development Agency, as well as the extensive training of duty-bearers on the identification of and service provision to victims of trafficking.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Engagement with national authorities

- ✦ In 2019, to support the adoption of the Law on Human Rights Defenders, OHCHR, in collaboration with the UNCT, organized a consultation workshop led by the then Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders. The main Government counterpart was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main initiator of the Human Rights Defender Bill.
- ✦ On the NPM, OHCHR organized a broad consultation process that involved representatives from the parliament, relevant ministries, the Police Academy, prisons, civil society and academia. In 2018, a consultation workshop was organized with expert support from the Sub-Committee against Torture. As a result of this process, the most suitable model for the establishment of a NPM was identified. The Government of Mongolia decided to amend the Law on the National Human Rights Commission to establish an NPM therein with the full substantive and budgetary independence from the general functions of the NHRI to meet Mongolia's international obligations under the OP-CAT treaty.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ To ensure that the law on human rights defenders was drafted in an inclusive manner and reflected views of its main beneficiaries, OHCHR supported civil society representatives to participate in the Working Group which was drafting the Law on Human Rights Defenders.

### Engagement with a National Human Rights Institution

- ✦ The National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia has been a key partner for OHCHR in supporting the adoption of the Law on Human Rights Defenders. The NHRCM was the main drafter of the text of the law in the framework of the Working Group which was responsible for drafting.



## 3,799 GBV survivors received care

A significant increase in state and local budget allocations on GBV issues: totalling the equivalent of approximately 2.2 million USD from 2017 to 2020. As a result, 3,799 GBV survivors received care at One Stop Service Centers and shelters across the country.



**Mozambique**

→ Portrait of young girl during a counseling/mentoring session.

# Mozambique

## Information provided by

 UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO and UN Women.<sup>30</sup>

## Themes

 **Child marriage, women's rights.**

## Summary

📌 Mozambique has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2011, 2016 and 2021. Recommendations made to Mozambique during its 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle highlighted the need to address deeply embedded social and gender inequalities, and to eliminate the practice of child marriage. Implementation of these recommendations became high on the agenda of the Government and UN activities in Mozambique. In 2019, when the UPR mid-term report was submitted, the parliament approved the Child Marriage Act, developed in close cooperation with civil society.

The experience of Mozambique has demonstrated that strong support to civil society platforms and coalitions can pave the way for an inclusive reform process ensuring the decisions are made based on the human rights-based approach and on the specific needs of right-holders.

## Key results

→ At the beginning of the UPR 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, UNFPA and UNICEF, through the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, supported the Government and civil society in developing the Child Marriage Act. CSOs' shadow report, drafted with UN technical and financial support, had the first-ever recommendations to the Government on Mozambique related to child marriage, including the Child Marriage Act.

→ A taskforce established in 2017 drafted a Bill to Prevent and Combat Premature Unions. The document criminalized customary unions and envisaged accountability for associated acts, providing integrated protection against child marriage. The bill was approved by the Parliament in 2019 as the 'Prevention and Combat of Premature Unions Act'. Notably, the need to protect adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive rights was one of the central pillars of the four-year UPR Action Plan in Mozambique validated in 2018.

→ Through the UPR process, UNFPA and UNICEF led effective consultations between government institutions including the Ministry of Justice and civil society working on youth and women's rights. As a result, the Council of Ministers committed to implementing recommendations originating from the stakeholders report.



**Strong support to civil society platforms and coalitions** can pave the way for an inclusive reform process ensuring the decisions are made based on the human rights-based approach.



## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Engagement with national authorities

- ✦ Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR cycle, the UN supported the inclusive process of validation of the UPR Action Plan<sup>31</sup>. In 2017, the Action Plan was validated by the Government and civil society in 2018 following the process that involved participation of adolescent and youth representatives of 18 national youth platforms and 24 justice officials and focal points on human rights. This activity was part of UNICEF & UNFPA collaboration on Child Marriage with the UN framework.
- ✦ UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA and UN Women, under the Rapariga Bizz Flagship Program, have provided technical and financial support to CIADAJ<sup>32</sup>, to ensure implementation of the UPR 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle recommendations, particularly on approval, implementation of the Child Marriage Law and advocacy on revoking Despacho 39<sup>33</sup>.
- ✦ The 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the UPR in Mozambique offered a unique opportunity to link and strengthen the commitments from the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development<sup>34</sup> made by the Mozambican government, CSOs and youth organizations. All ICPD+25 commitments were systematized and translated into recommendations that the UNFPA Geneva Liaison Office used for advocacy with the permanent missions of member states. Through the UPR process, the recommendations on sexual and reproductive health rights are going to be fully aligned with the main government policies, particularly the Government Five-Year Plan.
- ✦ As follow-up on implementation of 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle UPR recommendations related with education sector reforms for greater access for people with disabilities to the contents of comprehensive sexual education, UNESCO has worked with the Ministry of Education to produce an action plan targeting changes on the curriculum. This activity was made in partnership with the Education for All Movement (MEPT). As a result of this joint work, Teacher Training Institutes from Nampula and Zambézia provinces were certified on CSE themes and started teaching CSE classes for pre-service teachers. A teacher's manual for CSE was also developed to be used around all the Teachers Training Centers throughout the country.

### Engagement with the Parliament

- ✦ The UN provided support to a Coalition for the Elimination of Premature Marriages in their engagement with the Parliament for approval of the Child Marriage Act. This included joint UN advocacy with the parliament through the Coalition, and delivering training of specific Commissions of the Parliament, such as the Parliamentarian Women Office, on the Child Marriage Act.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ Since the UPR 1st cycle in 2011, UNFPA has provided financial and technical support to adolescent and youth organizations, linked to different youth platforms, enabling them to defend the rights of adolescents and young people in relation to early marriage and sexual abuse including the Coalition for the Elimination of Premature Marriages and the Civil Society Forum for the Rights of the Child. UNICEF continues to support adolescent engagement and participation in the production and broadcasting of radio and TV programmes on child marriage, violence against children, advocate for quality and child-friendly health and protection services, gender-based violence through its partnerships with Radio Mozambique, Institute of Social Communication, FORCOM (Community Radio Network) and TVM (national TV station).
- ✦ In 2020, UNFPA facilitated cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and Youth Advocators, both from community and national levels, organizing broad consultations using mobile apps and holding a national conference. As a result, the Ministry presented a joint work plan to follow-up on the recommendations proposed by youth to improve the the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health rights. Such cooperation continues, including in the northern part of Mozambique affected by the conflict.

30 The agencies cooperate within the Rapariga Biz flagship ASRH-programme, a One-UN programme involving UNFPA as a lead, UNICEF, UNESCO and UN Women.

31 This was done through the Rapariga Biz flagship ASRH-programme (a One-UN programme involving UNFPA as a lead, UNICEF, UNESCO and UN Women).

32 CIADAJ is the Inter Ministerial Committee on Youth's and Adolescents Development. This government coordination mechanism is led by the Prime Minister and participates in key Ministres on youth and adolescents issues. This is replicated at province and district levels.

33 Ministerial Order forcing pregnant girls to attend school night shifts. It was revoked in December 2018.

34 These commitments were made at the Nairobi summit in 2019 where governments, CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders confirmed their interest for the pursuit of sexual and reproductive health rights.




**Nepal**

→ Deputy Superintendent of Police in Nepal.

# Nepal

## Information provided by

 UNDP and the UN RCO.

## Themes

 **Transitional justice; rights of migrant workers.**

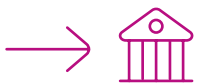
## Summary

□ In Nepal, which has undergone three UPR cycles – in 2011, 2015 and 2021 – the review process served as an entry point for human rights advocacy with the Government, including on such sensitive matters such as transitional justice, concerns regarding non-compliance of the NHRI with the Paris Principles, rights of migrant workers, and the persisting cycle of impunity. Where the recommendations from treaty bodies, Special Procedures mandate holders and UPR process coincide, the UPR serves as the entry point for advocacy, especially for the recommendations accepted by the Government. With regards to noted recommendations, the references to treaty body recommendations are prioritized while the UN continues to establish the links between them and the UPR recommendations.

In 2021, the renewed commitment of the Government to advance human rights opened space for a new advocacy cycle, including on human rights issues that emerged from the pandemic and, more broadly, on the 2030 Agenda, and SDG 16+ in particular.

## Key results

→ In response to the UPR recommendations on transitional justice, in August 2021, the Government announced its Common Minimum Program and reiterated its commitment to amend the legislation on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons to support conclusion of peace process.



## Entry point for human rights advocacy

The review process served as an entry point for human rights advocacy with the Government, including on such sensitive matters such as transitional justice, concerns regarding non-compliance of the NHRI with the Paris Principles, rights of migrant workers, and the persisting cycle of impunity.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools and actions to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

- ✦ The UN RCO initiated broad consultations with the Prime Minister, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to analyse the trends from the previous UPR cycles and to plan for the implementation of the recommendations.
- ✦ The UN RCO held consultations with and briefed the diplomatic missions and the International Development Partner Group in the run up to and following the review. As a result, a number of diplomatic missions expressed interest to continually engage in a dialogue on the implementation of the UPR recommendations.
- ✦ UNDP supported the Prime Minister's Office to organize an interaction with secretary of all the Ministries to share on the UPR recommendations and strengthen coordination for the effective implementation of UPR implementation.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ Conflict victims received technical support to finalize their first-ever UPR submission. Almost 40 conflict victims' organizations made a submission on the transitional justice process in Nepal that resulted in recommendations from member states at the UPR Working Group. The recommendations were supported by the government.
- ✦ The UN consulted and consolidated the views of civil society organizations (representing minority communities, human rights defenders, women and girls, etc.) before finalizing the UNCT joint UPR submission.

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accreditation pending)

- ✦ UN submissions for the UPR review drew much information from the reports and publications of the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal.
- ✦ UNDP supported the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) including with few other thematic commissions namely National Women's Commission, National Dalit Commission and National Muslim Commission in Nepal in its efforts to monitor the human rights situation and prepare a report.
- ✦ UNDP provided support to the NHRC to develop post UPR implementation strategy in coordination with concerned stakeholders including Prime Minister's Office in Nepal. The strategy aims to guide the effective implementation of the UPR recommendations.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ The UPR has proven to be a crucial entry point for UN entities to discuss human rights issues. The Human Rights and Governance Working Groups continues to serve as a sustainable platform for the UNCT to discuss human rights situation, programming and priorities. Other working groups such as Legal Identity Working Group, LNOB working Groups continue to use the UPR recommendations to set the priorities and programming.
- ✦ The UPR recommendations as well as the recommendations from other human rights mechanisms informed the UN Country Common Analysis and UNSDCF for 2023-2027. It helped identify the progress made by Nepal, the root causes of human rights concerns and ways to address them.





Pakistan

→ Rule of Law and Justice project in Malakan Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.


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# Pakistan

## Information provided by

 UNDP.

## Themes

 Gender justice, freedom of expression.

## Summary

📌 Pakistan has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2008, 2012 and 2017. Following the 3rd cycle, a historical Transgender Persons' Protection of Rights Act (2018) was passed, an achievement driven, among other factors, by the consolidated efforts of the Government, the UNCT and civil society towards the implementation of the UPR deliberations and recommendations.

In 2019, UNDP in Pakistan supported the UPR mid-term review and ensured it was evidence-based to accurately measure the progress of the Government in achieving its human rights goals. The review and its outcomes became a bridge between human rights, sustainable development and sustainable peace.

## Key results

→ UNDP's consistent advocacy with the Government based on the UPR recommendations led Pakistan to adopt its historic Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act in 2018, bringing crucial improvements in the legal status of transgender people in Pakistan. While a committee for the implementation of the Act has been formed, a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track the enforcement of the Act is yet to be established.

→ UNDP's and the broader UNCT's engagement in the UPR process and the mid-term review in 2019 resulted in the revision of the National Action Plan on Human Rights in 2021. It was initially adopted in 2016 and was reviewed in 2021 with the inclusion of an NMRF.

→ UNDP's engagement on the UPR at provincial level has led to the adoption of Provincial human rights policies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, and the ongoing development of such policies in Sindh and Balochistan.



UPR recommendations led Pakistan to adopt its historic **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act** in 2018, bringing crucial improvements in the legal status of transgender people.



## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

- ✦ UNDP's capacity building support to the Federal Ministry of Human Rights, the NHRI, provincial human rights stakeholders and civil society led to the development of the National Human Rights Indicators and Human Rights Information Management System, a digital platform for collection, monitoring and reporting on human rights data, at provincial and federal levels. The Ministry of Human Rights adopted and operationalised the Human Rights Information Management System (HRIMS) in 2019-2020, after its successful piloting in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018. In 2021, HRIMS was adopted by provinces of Sindh and Balochistan. In 2018-2019, National Human Rights Indicators in three thematic areas (health, education, social protection, with a subsection on ending violence against women and girls) were developed by the Ministry of Human Rights and Provincial Governments. The National Human Rights Indicators form the foundation for the NMRF development led by the Ministry of Human Rights through provincial and inter-ministerial consultation, with UNDP support.
- ✦ In 2019, the UNCT in Pakistan encouraged and supported the Government in undergoing the UPR mid-term review. UNDP took the lead in the process of impact assessment of the UPR in addressing the most sensitive human rights concerns such as protection of religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities and gender-based discrimination. Such assessment within the mid-term review process was evidence-based with UNDP collecting qualitative and quantitative data from UN agencies, CSOs, human rights defenders and collating relevant information from state bodies. As a result, the UNCT drafted recommendations for the Government to further address the root causes of vulnerability and exclusion.
- ✦ In 2019, in parallel with the UPR mid-term review, the UNCT initiated a mid-term review of Pakistan's Voluntary Pledges made when Pakistan joined the Human Rights Council in 2017. This dual process of the two mid-term reviews helped the UNCT identify and develop mechanisms for sustained advocacy, coordination and communication with the Government to ensure it upholds its UPR commitments.

### Engagement with the Parliament

- ✦ In 2019-2020, to emphasize the role of parliament in the implementation of the UPR recommendations and in the achievement of SDGs, UNDP and OHCHR organized capacity building activities for parliamentarians and senior secretariat staff of provincial and national assemblies. As a result, parliamentarians, the federal government and provincial governments contributed to the promulgation of significant legislation including the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act of 2021.
- ✦ Provincial pieces of legislation were adopted following the UNDP-OHCHR-facilitated workshops for regional assemblies, including the Balochistan Rights to Information Act; the Balochistan Employment of Children (Prohibition and Regulation), the Balochistan Minimum Wages Act, the Sindh Protection of Parents Ordinance.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ The UPR process was a driving factor to establish the UN Human Rights Task Force, an inter-agency human rights thematic group led by the UN RCO. The group engages with government counterparts, international development partners including donors, and civil society to monitor and encourage the implementation of UPR recommendations.
- ✦ The UPR mid-term review has guided and fed into the UN interagency Human Rights Task Force's development of thematic Standing Groups on key human rights and their respective Action plans.



Rwanda

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# Rwanda

## Information provided by

UN RCO, the SHRA's Unit (OHCHR) and Rwanda ONE UN Human Rights Task Force.

## Themes

Torture prevention, children's rights, women's right to work.

## Summary

Rwanda has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2011, 2015 and 2021. The UPR has had a positive impact on the efforts of the Government to engage in human right protection and intensify efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in the country. The 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle has contributed to Rwanda's progress in the ratification of human rights conventions and in the submission of the required reports to human rights mechanisms: six reports between 2016 and 2021.

## Key results

- In 2018, to comply with the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT), the Law on the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) was adopted giving Rwanda's NHRI – the National Commission for Human Rights, the mandate to carry out regular visits to all places where people may be deprived of their liberty, as well as to give recommendations to relevant authorities to improve detention conditions and prevent torture.
- The Law on persons and family was adopted in 2016 following the 2nd UPR cycle. The law guarantees equal property rights for men and women and establishes a simplified civil registration process that includes the extension of the term for registering a new-born from 15 to 30 days and allows the registration of a child by a single parent.
- The Law on the protection of the rights of the child was adopted in 2018 in response to UPR recommendations on preventing violence, abuse, and exploitation of children. The law has laid a foundation for a strong national framework for child protection.
- The UPR process contributed to and stimulated the adoption of the Law relating to prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others in 2018. In line with the new legislative provisions, the Government established special units within the Rwanda Investigation Bureau and the National Public Prosecution Authority to ensure better cooperation in fighting against human trafficking.
- The law regulating labour in Rwanda was adopted in 2018 promoting the right to decent working conditions and providing for non-discrimination and equality at workplace, equal remuneration for work of equal value, maternity leave and occupational health and safety for pregnant or breastfeeding women – addressing recommendations from the UPR process. The law envisages a mandate for labour inspectors to identify discrimination, including sexual harassment.
- The National Human Rights Action Plan was adopted in 2017 and was sent for the review to integrate new UPR recommendations issued during the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle review in 2021.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR process

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

- ✦ Through UNDP, the UN in Rwanda supported the Government's automated platform. Established in 2021 under the Ministry of Justice, it will be used to report progress and track contributions from various institutions towards the implementation of the UPR recommendations. This initiative is implemented within the framework of promoting e-governance and the use of information and communication technology in the justice sector.
- ✦ To facilitate concerted support to the Government in the implementation of UPR recommendations, the UNCT has adopted a One UN Human Rights Strategy (2018 – 2023) as part of the UN Development Plan II (2018-2023) followed by the establishment in 2020 of the One UN Rwanda Human Rights Task Force.
- ✦ The One UN Rwanda Human Rights Task Force has been entrusted to elaborate a roadmap for the UNCT's support to the implementation of the 160 UPR recommendations the Government accepted in 2021. The roadmap will be a valuable advocacy and resource mobilization tool for the government and partners.

### Engagement with national authorities

- ✦ In 2021, the UN in Rwanda, through the Senior Human Rights Adviser to the UNCT and UNDP, conducted capacity-building workshops to support government representatives, especially at the National Treaty Body Reporting Task Force, in drafting a national report for the UPR, presenting it during the review and then drafting a roadmap for its implementation.
- ✦ The UN facilitated the engagement of various stakeholders in implementing the UPR roadmap, including a mock exercise on UPR presentation
- ✦ In various settings, including during the UPR, the RC made statements to highlight Rwandan international commitments and encourage the Government to implement not only the accepted recommendations but also the ones that were noted, and to consider jointly reviewing the UPR and the Voluntary national review of the SDGs.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ Prior to the review of 2021, the UN RCO organized a series of capacity building workshops on international human rights mechanisms bringing together human rights NGOs. This resulted in an increase in the number of submissions from Rwandan CSOs. In 2021, 21 NGOs sent their submissions for the review, compared with ten inputs from civil society during the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle in 2011. This progress confirms an improved understanding and bigger interest of civil society in the UPR.
- ✦ The UN in Rwanda facilitated the interaction between civil society and the Minister of Justice on a roadmap for the implementation of 160 UPR recommendations accepted by the Government in 2021. Several NGO requested the authorities to reconsider their position on some recommendations that had been noted or deferred, namely on the ratification of conventions, amendments to the laws on freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of the press, the work of human rights defenders. The government committed to improving its cooperation with CSOs and to reviewing legislation related to civic space.



**Serbia**


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# Serbia


## Information provided by

 UNCT and the RCO Human Rights Adviser.

## Themes

 Civic space, anti-discrimination.

## Summary

 Serbia has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2008, 2013 and 2018. The UN engagement in the UPR process has enabled a direct dialogue between CSOs and the Government, through the NMRF and line Ministries. The UPR remains a constant entry-point for the UN, civil society and other actors for direct political, technical and substantive engagement with the Government. It has also contributed to strengthening evidence-based reporting by civil society, especially their submissions to treaty bodies and special procedures. Serbia has benefited from the UPR Trust Fund support in previous years.

## Key results

- UPR recommendations provided a framework for a continuous dialogue and cooperation on human rights between civil society and the Government, with facilitation or support from the UN, as well as for follow-up between the UN and the Government.
- As the UPR outcomes have an extensive thematic scope, they have provided clustered areas in which policy intervention, targeted advocacy and monitoring have taken place from different actors. At the same time, UPR recommendations not accepted by the Government have created a space for civil society and the NHRI to hold the Government accountable for its performance against the UPR indicators, as higher political commitments to human rights.
- The implementation of the UPR recommendations led to the improvement of the anti-discrimination framework, introduction of policies related to specific groups and promoting gender equality, such as amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Law (2021), adoption of a new Gender Equality Law (2021), the Disability Rights Strategy and Action Plan (2020 and 2021), as well as draft Roma Strategy, draft Anti-Discrimination Strategy and draft Same Sex Unions Law.

- UPR outcomes supported partnerships between the civil society and Government entities, such as a joint campaign of CSOs and the Ministry for Human Rights towards the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2021.



### Civil society

UPR recommendations not accepted by the Government have created a space for civil society and the NHRI to hold the Government accountable for its performance against the UPR indicators





## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations

- ✦ UPR recommendations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle have been linked to the concluding observations of treaty bodies and the outcomes of other human rights mechanisms. They were also aligned with goals, targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda, through the Government NMRF's action plan and tracking database, civil society platform's internal monitoring tools, and within the UNCT analysis and programming tools. Such a holistic approach offers an in-depth awareness of the critical points, policy and practice gaps and challenges, providing stakeholders with sufficient tools and rationale for increased advocacy, targeted support or action.
- ✦ The HRA supported the Government, the UNCT and the civil society platform in developing their reports for the first ever UPR mid-term review after the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle.

### Engagement with national authorities

- ✦ The UNCT in Serbia supported the NMRF in preparing the national report for the review in 2018, in holding a public presentation of the outcomes of the review at a parliamentary session, and in developing a follow-up action plan and indicators, with wide participation from civil society and other stakeholders. It has resulted in the established practice of public outreach in reporting and follow-up by the Government and in higher interest from civil society to discuss human rights commitments and achievements with government institutions.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ Ahead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle, the HRA in Serbia facilitated extensive information sharing within civil society and capacity building for UPR engagement, including at the local level. This has resulted in record high reporting from CSOs in Serbia -, individual and joint. As a result, the recommendations to Serbia from member states reflected key concerns brought up by the civil society reports, widening the independent monitoring space for CSOs.
- ✦ The HRA supported the development of the platform of CSOs for cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms. The platform tracks the implementation of the recommendations of the UPR and other human rights mechanisms, nationally and locally, including through participation in NMRF sessions and work, presenting indicators, advocacy, outreach and policy intervention. This has had a positive impact on the dialogue between the Government and civil society and has resulted in greater involvement in the UPR follow-up processes.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ The HRA in Serbia has mainstreamed the outcomes of the UPR review into the CCA<sup>35</sup>, planning and programming of the UNCT in the previous UN Development Assistance Framework and the new UNSCDF (2021-2025), also by developing tools that cross reference the recommendations for the UPR and other human rights mechanisms, the EU accession chapters, and SDGs.
- ✦ The UPR as a process and its outcomes have been actively used by the RC, on behalf of the UNCT, in public outreach, advocacy and interaction with decision-makers and the international community.

35 [https://serbia.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Common%20Country%20Analysis\\_Final%20ENG\\_0.pdf](https://serbia.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Common%20Country%20Analysis_Final%20ENG_0.pdf)



Sierra Leone

© UN Photo / Albert Gonzalez Farran

# Sierra Leone

## Information provided by

UNDP.

## Themes

Right to life; freedom of expression; women's rights.

## Summary

Sierra Leone has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2011, 2016 and 2021. This process has guided UNDP's engagement with the NHRI – the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), the Government and civil society. UNDP's support to the implementation of the UPR recommendations has contributed to Sierra Leone's progress in legal reforms and the development agenda. For instance, the death penalty was abolished; laws to expand civic space and prevent sexual and gender-based violence were adopted or amended. Furthermore, the UPR was instrumental in ensuring progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, in particular, Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Empowerment and Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

## Key results

- Abolishing the death penalty in Sierra Leone was one of the essential recommendations emanating from the UPR process. The HRCSL had advocating for the abolition even before the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of the review, starting in 2008. In 2019, following another round of UNDP-supported advocacy and a massive public awareness campaign jointly orchestrated by the HRCSL and civil society, the Deputy Attorney-General and the Minister of Justice made an official public statement affirming the commitment of the Government to maintain the moratorium on the death penalty and to resume the constitutional review process. In July 2021, following the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle, the parliament of Sierra Leone unanimously enacted a law to abolish the death penalty. On 8 October, the law was signed by the President. In 2021, the law was awaiting the President's assent.
- In July 2020, the Sierra Leone Parliament unanimously repealed Part V of the 1965 Public Order Act, which criminalized libel, opening perspectives for media freedom and the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution.
- The HRCSL supported the process leading to the amendment of the Sexual Offences Act of 2012. With support from UNDP, HRCSL initiated regional and national consultations, prepared a position paper and supported the legislative review process. The Sexual Offences (Amended) Act of 2019 increased penalties for sexual offences and reinforced access to free medical services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.
- In response to UPR recommendations, the HRCSL was involved in extensive consultations and presented a position paper in support of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy. UNDP and UN Women provided technical support to elaborate the policy. A Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill was developed and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2021. Efforts are underway to table the bill in Parliament for its subsequent enactment into a law.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### Engagement with the National Human Rights Institution (accredited with A Status)

- ✦ UNDP provides support to the HRCSL in implementing its three strategic plans, all covering UPR-related activities. This support has enabled the HRCSL to provide technical advice to the Government of Sierra Leone on the implementation of the UPR recommendations, to organise national consultations and public advocacy forums, and to conduct capacity building of civil society organisations on the UPR.
- ✦ Most of the 2nd cycle recommendations called on the Government to continue its efforts to address violence against women, sexual violence and female genital mutilations. Following the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act in 2012 and Sexual Offences (Amended) Act in 2019, the HRCSL has been engaging in raising awareness of communities on the SGBV. This certainly focused on encouraging behavioural change with regards to violence against women and girls, thereby contributing to enhancing their safety in rural communities. To enable the HRCL to reach out to rural communities and target marginalized or vulnerable persons including women and persons with disabilities, UNDP provided support to human rights mobile clinics. During the last quarter of 2020, the HRCSL engaged with a total of 2,500 people in local communities in six districts.

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

- ✦ Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the review and the receipt of the 208 recommendations, the HRCSL developed a matrix and clustered all the recommendations under specific thematic areas. In 2017, it disseminated all 208 recommendations during a one-week event in Kenema City, which mobilised stakeholders from various sectors including representatives from the ministries, departments and agencies, local councils, parliamentarians, media and academia.
- ✦ The joint OHCHR-UNDP project ‘Strengthening Capacity of National Institutions for Strategic engagement on the UPR to achieve the SDGs’ aims to support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in developing a national implementation plan of the recommendations of the UPR and other human rights mechanisms. A policy paper is in progress to demonstrate UPR linkages with the mid-term national development plan and the SDGs.

### Engagement with national authorities:

- ✦ In 2020, the HRCSL organised three regional consultations on the UPR in Freetown, Makeni and Bo. The information generated from the consultations informed the preparation of the HRCSL’s report for the UPR in 2021. The consultations involved CSOs, local authorities, law enforcement agents, and academia. In addition, these meetings served as a platform to assess progress made towards the implementation of the 177 recommendations accepted by Sierra Leone during the 2<sup>nd</sup> review process in 2016.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ UNDP supported civil society through the HRCSL. In 2020, the HRCL provided training for 70 representatives of the relevant ministries, departments and agencies and CSOs on the UPR process and reporting on the SDGs, as well as on the Agenda 2063<sup>36</sup>. As a result, civil society contributed to the preparation of the HRCSL report, and two NGOs – the UPR Working Group and the National Center for Human Rights and Development submitted two reports for Sierra Leone’s 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle. Following the review, the HRCSL continued its collaboration with civil society. The UPR Working Group and the National Center for Human Rights and Development and the decentralised District Human Rights Committees joined the awareness raising campaigns on UPR recommendations engaging stakeholders at community level.



Tanzania


→ Orange the World Campaign in Tanzania.

# Tanzania


## Information provided by

 UN Women.

## Themes

 Gender equality; women's empowerment.

## Summary

 Tanzania has undergone three UPR cycles in 2011, 2016 and 2021. The UPR has had a significant impact on gender equality and women's rights and gave an opportunity for better alignment, coordination and implementation of recommendations from Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures.

## Key results

→ The Reviewed National Gender and Development Policy (2020) is a landmark achievement, the first comprehensive National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment policy review in Tanzania Mainland since 2000. The Implementation Strategy (2020-2030) is at the point of finalisation (as of October 2021). The policy was aligned with national priorities and the UPR recommendations which are part and parcel of the Beijing Platform for Action+25<sup>37</sup>. It provides guidance and a mechanism for coordination of mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in all sectors. The Implementation Strategy, once approved, will provide stronger coordination, reporting and better tracking of UPR recommendations. As a member of the National Task Team for the Reviewed Gender Policy, UN Women provided a significant contribution in the review and ensured its alignment with the UPR recommendations.

→ UN Women's consistent engagement with the Parliament has led to the commitment, through action plans, to review a discriminatory Law on Marriage.



The **Reviewed National Gender and Development Policy (2020)** is a landmark achievement. It provides guidance and a mechanism for coordination of mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in all sectors



### **The link between UPR recommendations and recommendations from other human rights mechanisms**

- ✦ The UPR process provided strong links and opportunities to use its recommendations to enhance implementation of recommendations from other human rights mechanisms. UN Women provided technical support to the two gender ministries in Mainland and Zanzibar to ensure that they continue leading the process of developing and finalizing Tanzania's 9<sup>th</sup> periodic CEDAW report. Since the preparations of the UPR and CEDAW national reports were taking place simultaneously, during the above discussions the CEDAW recommendations were thematically linked to gender related UPR recommendations to ensure consolidated data collection and discussions, and to encourage synergies, taking advantage of the UPR mechanism as a key entry point for engagement and advocacy.

### **Engagement with the Parliament**

- ✦ UN Women has strategically engaged with the Parliament through the Parliamentary Committees, the Women's Caucus and selected male members of parliament who are gender equality and women's empowerment champions including through strategic presentations on gender related UPR recommendations through the Tanzania Women Parliamentary Group. The aim was to raise awareness and discuss the role of Parliament and women Members of Parliament in ensuring implementation of UPR and CEDAW recommendations as well as monitoring progress and holding the respective government institutions accountable.
- ✦ In 2020, to reinforce UN support to the authorities of Tanzania in its efforts to address UPR recommendations on banning child marriage, UN Women facilitated a learning visit for Tanzanian high-level stakeholders, including Members of Parliament, to the United Arab Emirates. The visit provided space to learn about international good practices to inform the reform in the Law on Marriage in Tanzania, especially in relation to the age of marriage. As a result of the visit, the commitment of members of Parliament to review the conformity of this law with international human rights standards was reinforced.

### **Impact on UN programming and operations in the country**

- ✦ UN Women was part of the UN UPR task team that coordinated the preparation and drafting of the UPR UNCT Report submitted in March 2021. The development of the report coincided with the last year of UN Development Assistance Framework implementation and planning of the UNSCDF for 2022-2027. The purpose was to coordinate UNCT engagement in and contribution to the UPR process and ensure its alignment with and integration into the UNSCDF. The document includes 62 recommendations to the Government and has a strong gender focus compared to previous submissions due to UN Women's effective participation in the process and technical inputs highly relevant to gender equality and women's empowerment provided to the drafting team. A roadmap (2021-2022) is currently in place coordinated by the UN UPR Task Team for engagement with various stakeholders to carry forward the recommendations from the UPR UNCT Report.

37 The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (Beijing Platform for Action) is the most visionary agenda for the empowerment of women and girls, everywhere <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/01/beijing-declaration>



**Thailand**

→ Workshops on Promoting the Implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights organized by UNDP Thailand and the RLPD in 10 provinces.



# Thailand

## Information provided by

IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNEP/UNCT, UNFPA.

## Themes

Criminalizing torture and enforced disappearance; business and human rights; migrant workers; gender equality, persons with disabilities.

## Summary

As of October 2021, Thailand has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2011, 2016; and 2021. The recommendations Thailand received during the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the review added to OHCHR advocacy for the adoption of the historic Law on Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance, which is now at second reading stage in Thai Parliament in 2022, and for UNDP to support the adoption of its first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, as a follow-up to the recommendations it received in 2016.

In 2019-2020, numerous decrees issued and enforced the military government after the coup in 2014 were revoked and in response to UPR recommendations concerning vulnerable groups, including migrants, IOM undertook measures that have enabled migrants' access to safe employment, education and social protection.

## Key results

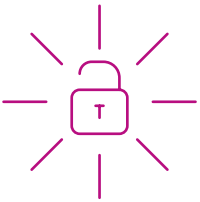
→ In September 2021, the Thai parliament approved in principle (first reading) a draft law on Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance. This major step was preceded prolonged advocacy, with significant contribution from OHCHR, including highlighting the UPR recommendations that the Thai Government accepted in 2016. The draft law was first submitted to the previous Parliament in 2019, following a ten-year long drafting process. The law is expected to bring justice to the victims of torture and enforced disappearance in the country, and to encourage the Thai Government to ratify the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance which it signed in 2012.

→ In 2019-2020, OHCHR successfully advocated to revoke certain orders issued by the National Council for Peace and Order<sup>38</sup> established after the 2014 military coup. For example, an order allowing forced evictions of poor and indigenous people was repealed. Moreover, UPR recommendations served as one of the reasoning for abolishing the practice of trying civilians in military courts. As a result, thousands of civil cases, mostly related to fundamental freedoms, were transferred to civil courts.

→ In 2019, the Government adopted the first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights for 2019-2022. This significant achievement reflected a UPR recommendation to develop, enact, and implement a National Action Plan on business and human rights made to Thailand by Sweden in 2016. Before it was adopted, UNDP supported the Rights and Liberties Protection Department of the Ministry of Justice to organize a series of consultations with different groups of stakeholders to have their inputs for the NAP development process. Since then, in cooperation with the Rights and Liberties Protection Department of the Ministry of Justice, UNDP has organized workshops on Promoting the Implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2019 – 2022) in ten provinces.

- The UPR recommendations of 2016 urged the Thai government to ensure protection for human rights defenders. This message was echoed by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights during its visit to the country in 2018. To assist the Government in addressing these recommendations and upon a request from the Ministry of Justice, UNDP is undertaking two studies to analyse the situation of human rights defenders in Thailand and to advise how to prevent the misuse of the judicial system through the practice of the Anti-Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation.
- UPR recommendations encouraged Thailand to strengthen measures to eradicate forced labour, especially to prevent either child or enforced labour in the specific sectors of fishing and canning companies, as well as to ensure that employers violating labour rights are duly prosecuted. In 2021, the Government endorsed IOM translation of the migrant fishers' employment contract template. As a result, newly recruited migrant fishers coming to work in Thailand in the upcoming year will be able to access standardized employment contracts in a language they understand, and thus better understand employment terms and conditions and available legal protection. Moreover, as part of broader counter trafficking efforts, IOM is working with the Government to support the development of a national referral mechanism and strengthening the case management and referral system with neighbouring countries (Cambodia).

- To advance a UPR recommendation on the need to improve access to health, education and social welfare for marginalized or vulnerable groups, including for those in rural areas, ethnic minorities, women, migrants and refugees, IOM supported the Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute (TPQI), under the Government, to pilot the first certification programme for migrant workers in Thailand. Between July 2020 and July 2021, a hundred women migrant workers from Myanmar had their professional cleaning skills assessed and officially certified by TPQI. Furthermore, IOM has supported bilateral dialogues between Thailand and the countries of origin for government agencies including the Ministry of Labour and the Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute to explore opportunities for improving transferability of skills and qualifications for migrant workers throughout the migration cycle. IOM is also supporting government in promoting alternatives to detention, especially for migrant children by enhancing the government awareness on alternative to detention, as well as providing tailored assistance including health, education, psychosocial programmes at the mother and children centre in Bang Khen.



## Alternatives to detention

IOM is also supporting government in promoting alternatives to detention, especially for migrant children by enhancing the government awareness on alternative to detention, as well as providing tailored assistance including health, education, psychosocial programmes.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR proces

### The link between UPR recommendations and recommendations from other human rights mechanisms

- ✦ Ahead of Thailand's 3rd cycle of the UPR in November 2021, OHCHR prepared a list of recommendations the country received following the treaty bodies' reviews linking them with the key themes relevant for the upcoming UPR. The list was shared with diplomatic missions to help develop recommendations.

### Engagement with national authorities:

- ✦ Due to UPR recommendations calling for the effective implementation of the Gender Equality Act of 2015, UNDP established a strong partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to support Thailand's effort in monitoring and implementing the Gender Equality Act. This included capacity building activities, assessment of the implementation, awareness raising campaigns for government agencies, private sector, and the public.
- ✦ In response to UPR recommendations related to persons with disabilities, UNDP partnered with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities to improve the disability accessibility of the Department's website. This contributed to the increased accessibility of information related to COVID-19, rights, entitlements, and government services available to persons with disabilities.
- ✦ To support the implementation of the UPR recommendation on social protection with no discrimination, IOM, within a joint programme with ILO, UNICEF and UN Women, works to provide an evidence-base and a roadmap for the Government to ensure equal access to social protection for migrants. IOM produced a background study on social protection with policy recommendations to the Government. The study, along with the ongoing inclusive consultations, will feed a comprehensive Social Protection Diagnostic Review of Thailand.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ OHCHR played an important role in facilitating a dialogue on the human rights situation between CSOs and state authorities in the drafting process of the national report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle in November 2021.

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ As part of UNEP's mandate to strengthen the environmental dimension of UN system programming on the environment, UNEP leads training sessions on the environmental dimensions of the human rights-based approach at training workshops for UNCTs preparing their CCAs and UNSCDFs. UPR recommendations related to the environment and climate change have been used to inform this training in Maldives and Thailand to strengthen the contribution of UNSCDFs to the UPR implementation process.
- ✦ UNFPA has incorporated UPR recommendations on the right to health and the rights of specific groups, especially young people, women, persons with disabilities, throughout its programmes in Thailand. The specific recommendations are used to leverage government attentions and/or dialogue to jointly identify solutions.



United Arab Emirates

→ Foreign workers cut steel on a construction site.

# United Arab Emirates

## Information provided by

 UNCT.

## Themes

 NHRI establishment, right to work of migrant workers.

## Summary


- UAE has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2008, 2013 and 2018. The review has become an entry point for UN agencies to engage with the UAE government on its international human rights commitments. The key achievements are the launch of the process to establish an NHRI and improved employment conditions for migrant workers.

## Key results

- Following its 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR in 2018, the UNCT facilitated discussions on implementing certain recommendations in the areas of gender equality, women's rights and children's rights. The emphasis was on strengthening women's equality before the law, in particular, in matters of equal pay and in relation to domestic violence against women and children.
- In parallel, to address a UPR recommendation on the establishment of an NHRI, the UAE established the country's first National Human Rights Institution, modelled to adhere with the Paris Principles<sup>39</sup>. The NHRI structures are being formed and it is expected to be operational by the UAE's 4<sup>th</sup> UPR tentatively planned for 2023.
- The recommendations from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the UPR review in 2011 enabled ILO, IOM and other entities to work with national counterparts at the UAE Ministry of Human Resources in relation to labour rights and the welfare of migrant workers. This cooperation and advocacy have resulted in a range of legislative reforms and policies. For example, parts of the sponsorship system have been changed to allow more flexibility for migrant workers to change employers, renew their residency permits, terminate their contracts, and leave the country without requiring permission from an employer.

## Good practices of UN engagement in the UPR process

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

-  In 2021, the UN RCO developed a matrix to track the reporting cycles for various human rights instruments and other international commitments. The purpose of this mechanism is to enable the UNCT to engage with partners and stakeholders as reporting timelines approach.



# Ukraine

## Information provided by

UNDP and UNCT.

## Themes

🚩 Civic space; stateless persons; access to services during the armed conflict; access to legal aid.

## Summary

📄 Ukraine has undergone three UPR cycles: in 2008, 2012 and 2017. UN engagement in the process and support to civil society led to sustainable changes in legislation and policies benefiting individuals affected by the armed conflict, stateless persons, women, and persons deprived of liberty, and reinforcing the focus on environmental rights.

## Key results

- UPR recommendations have formed the basis of the National Human Rights Strategy, including on climate action. Following a relevant UPR recommendation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle in 2017, in 2021, UNDP, UNHCR, OHCHR and UN Women led the UNCT to develop the strategy and submitted proposals to the Government to integrate the UPR recommendations. As a result, for the first time in Ukraine, the strategic goals for ensuring environmental rights were highlighted in the National Human Rights Strategy, approved by a Presidential Decree<sup>40</sup>.
- Recommendations made in the UNCT joint submission for the UPR accompanied by UNDP's ongoing advocacy for stronger state support to the NPM, contributed to a significant increase in the 2021 state budget allocation for the functioning of the Ombudsperson's Office: twice more than in 2020. In addition, from 2019, the state budget envisages a separate financial programme, with a steady increase in allocations, for the implementation of the NPM's mandate.
- In 2020, two recommendations were implemented from a 2017 UPR submission of a Ukrainian NGO: (1) a law was adopted to introduce a statelessness determination procedure in Ukraine; (2) the definition of a 'stateless person', under Ukrainian legislation, became fully consistent with international standards.
- UPR recommendations encouraged UNDP, OHCHR and other UN agencies to support CSOs in their advocacy campaigns to achieve policy changes during 2019-2021 enabling residents of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation<sup>41</sup>, and

of armed-group-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine to access services and exercise rights in the government-controlled territory. In 2019, Ukraine has also revised its approach towards the transportation of goods across the contact line in the conflict zone lifting disproportionate restrictions for civilians.

- In 2017, UPR recommendations and the systematic support UNDP and other UN agencies provided to civil society urged the Government of Ukraine to revoke amendments to a Law On Prevention of Corruption, which compelled members of anti-corruption non-governmental organizations to release financial declarations. In 2019, the Constitutional Court cancelled the requirement for CSOs to submit electronic asset declarations.
- Following advocacy and awareness raising campaigns led by CSOs with UNCT support in 2018, a Law On Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence entered into force in response to the UPR recommendations.
- The UPR recommendations and the subsequent UNCT-supported campaigns and advocacy led to a positive change made by Ukraine in relation to free legal aid, which became available to foreigners and stateless persons from the early stages of the expulsion procedure. Since 2013, detained foreigners have access to pro bono legal aid provided by the local Free Legal Aid Centres from the moment of their detention and during court consideration. However, it is still difficult for foreigners to have access to interpretation services during the expulsion procedure due to limited financing available to the national courts for reimbursing the interpretation services.

### Tools to monitor and promote the implementation of recommendations:

- ✦ In 2020, UNDP supported the analysis conducted by leading Ukrainian human rights CSOs on evaluating the status of the implementation of the UPR recommendations.<sup>42</sup> In the analysis, the recommendations were thematically clustered and relevant state bodies were explicitly urged to undertake actions. This was done under the framework of the midterm UPR report compiled by civil society.
- ✦ OHCHR, in collaboration with members of the UNCT's human rights working group, is elaborating and updating a table which lists all the recommendations made to Ukraine by human rights mechanisms including the UPR and recommendations from the OHCHR public reports based on the work of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. In the table, all overlapping or similar recommendations are merged. The recommendations can be clustered, inter-alia, by the duty-bearers and by SDGs. The main goal is to measure the implementation of recommendations. The wider use of the table will allow the UNCT to adjust its advocacy and technical cooperation vis-à-vis the government. The tool will also facilitate UNCT reporting to UPR and other UN human rights mechanisms.

### Engagement with the Parliament

- ✦ In 2020, a study on the Role of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine in Implementing International Treaties on Human Rights<sup>43</sup> and guidance for parliamentarians was developed with UNDP support and presented to a relevant parliamentary committee. As a result, an inter-committee working group on parliamentary oversight of Ukraine's implementation of international human rights treaties and commitments was established. The main task of the working group is related to the timeliness and quality of submitted national reports on the implementation of international human rights treaties.

### Engagement with civil society organizations

- ✦ In 2017, in coordination with OHCHR, UNDP supported CSOs' engagement in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the UPR process. UNDP facilitated a joint meeting with 65 CSOs, five line ministries, and the NHRI to coordinate submission of stakeholders' reports to the UPR. Later, in partnership with the Geneva-based Human Rights House Foundation, 48 subnational CSOs received training on how to effectively use UPR instruments for human rights advocacy.
- ✦ In 2013, UNDP developed guidance material on 30 steps effectiveness in using the UPR mechanism to protect and promote human rights<sup>44</sup> and widely disseminated it among CSOs to promote their participation in the UPR process.<sup>44</sup>
- ✦ In 2020, with UNDP support, CSOs submitted their midterm evaluation of the implementation of the UPR recommendations (2017-2020).

### Impact on UN programming and operations in the country

- ✦ UNDP Country Programme Document for Ukraine 2018-2022 and UN Partnership Framework (UNPF) 2018-2022 include a dedicated output-level indicator for tracking UPR recommendations implementation. The progress towards the targets is reported by the country office with the indicator mentioned above serving as a starting point to assess the current status and develop a qualitative analysis of progress being made, the role that UNDP contributions are playing or failing to play, and the ongoing suitability and relevance of UNDP's engagement. In view of absence of a specific indicator to monitor UPR recommendations in UN Partnership Framework, UNDP submits UPR-relevant updates on key actions through annual reporting on the joint work plans in UN INFO, namely in the context of strengthening capacities of human rights actors to promote and defend human rights in Ukraine and use international human rights instruments and advocacy for relevant changes in the human rights agenda of Ukraine.

40 Ukraine's government approves action plan for new National Human Rights Strategy <https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/presscenter/articles/2021/ukraines-government-approves-action-plan-for-new-national-human-rights-strategy.html>

41 General Assembly resolution 73/263, Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, A/RES/73/263 (22 December 2018), para. 11.

42 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/NGOsMidTermReports/Report\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/NGOsMidTermReports/Report_Eng.pdf)

43 [https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/library/democratic\\_governance/role-of-the-verkhovna-rada-of-ukraine-in-implementation-of-inter.html](https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/library/democratic_governance/role-of-the-verkhovna-rada-of-ukraine-in-implementation-of-inter.html)

44 <https://zmina.ua/en/?s=30+steps+on+the+way+to+effectiveness>



# Main challenges for the effective use of the UPR

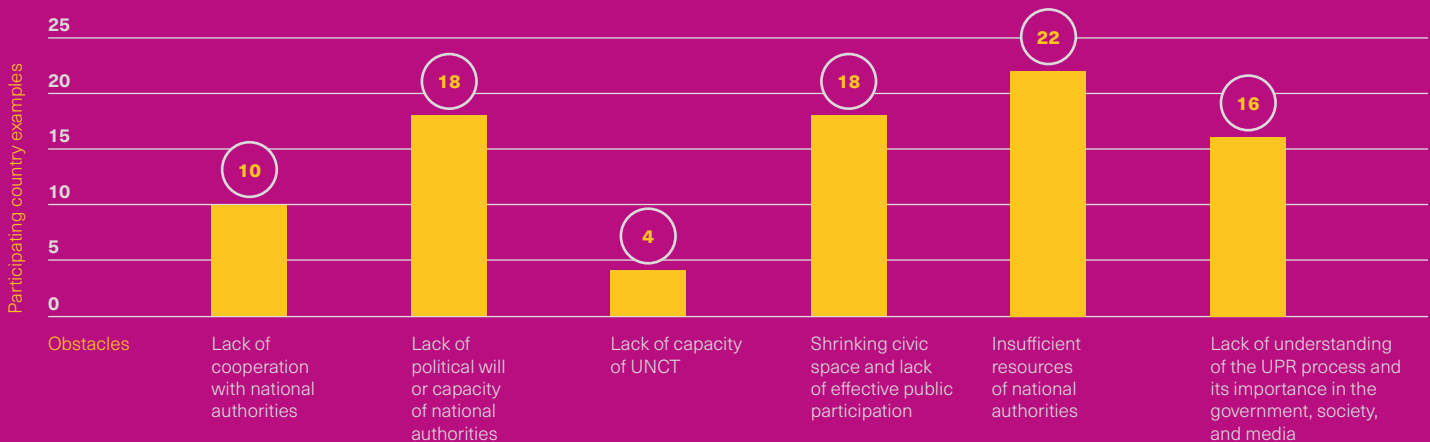
An analysis of the responses demonstrates that there are a number of key challenges in relation to the engagement of the UN system with the UPR process, as illustrated below.



**They include insufficient national resources, shrinking civic space, lack of political will, lack of awareness and understanding, and lack of cooperation with national authorities as well as lack of capacity of UNCTs.**

Accordingly, they help inform the following conclusion and recommendations.

## Main obstacles for the effective use of UPR



# Conclusions and recommendations

From the analysis of the responses from over sixty UNCTs and UN entities from across the globe, it is possible to conclude that UN engagement and good practices maximizing the use of the UPR for development impact have significantly developed since the establishment of the UPR in 2006. However, the analysis of the responses also demonstrate that more can and needs to be done to build on good practices.

## 1

### **The increasing use of the UPR process as an analytical and problem-solving tool needs to spur a momentum for action among all UNCTs and UN entities.**

The UN system has started to successfully uses the UPR process as an analytical and problem-solving tool.

UNCTs and UN entities advocate with governments, promote rights-based approaches to implementation of the SDGs, integration of the UPR follow up and SDG planning and reporting processes, and provide support to government efforts to meet their human rights obligations including in relation to sensitive issues and emerging challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, they broaden public participation and engage with national parliaments, empower civil society and strengthen or establish NHRIs.

Some UNCTs have made a good use of UPR recommendations for analysis and programming priorities, using them as a good entry point to include sensitive issues or neglected issues in their countries' CCA and then UNSDCF

The primary goal of all of those actions is to bring real change into the lives of people and communities who need it the most. This collection of good practices in the use of the UPR by the UN aims to encourage an increased focus by UNCTs and individual UN entities on the evaluation of actual outcomes in everyday lives, support of the sustainability of use of the UPR at country level and adoption of a broader and more whole of society approach to human rights capacity building.



### **Problem-solving tool**

The UN system has started to successfully use the UPR process as an analytical and problem-solving tool.

## 2

### **UNCTs and UN entities could further develop indicators and tracking mechanisms and processes that include the independent verification of outcomes from CSOs and NHRIs and the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data.**

UPR good practice in realisation of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights and for implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a process of continuous development.

To move forward in learning from peer exchange of practices and approaches in addressing shared challenges, it is essential to better evaluate the actual outcomes of the implementation of UPR recommendations in everyday lives and its overall development impact.

Certain examples of good practice in this publication refer to databases and matrixes to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the implementation of UPR recommendations and demonstrate that an increasing number of countries are seeing the benefits of integrated approaches to UPR follow-up, SDG planning and policy making.

However, as emphasized by the UN Practical Guidance, such mechanisms and processes need to be a means and not an end in themselves. Otherwise, they risk becoming state-centric and vulnerable to changing and competing political priorities and resource demands.

Accordingly, the further development of good practice in evaluation of outcomes could include increased roles for CSOs and NHRIs to provide independent verification of the impact and use of such tools.

Regular outcome evaluation of implementation efforts are key to fine tune interventions that are required, including legal reform, prioritisation of budget lines, targeted strategies, etc.

## 3

### **UNCTs and UN entities should increase their efforts to further protect democratic space and view the level of engagement of CSOs and NHRIs in the UPR process as an indicator of the human rights situation and an early warning indicator with an additional preventive value.**

The increased participation of CSOs and NHRIs is particularly important in the context of leaving no one behind.

This compilation of good practices also presents a unique collection of data that helps explore how the use of the UPR process at country level can broaden democratic space and encourage public participation to support the realisation of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Moreover, little or decreased activity of CSOs and NHRIs in follow-up actions to implement the UPR

recommendations could signal the shrinking of democratic space which, in its turn, can frequently be a prelude to the general deterioration of the human rights situation.

In providing data for this publication, many UNCTs and UN entities identified shrinking democratic space and lack of effective public participation as one of the key challenges to the sustainable use of the UPR (*see the chart above*).



### **Fine tune**

Regular outcome evaluation of implementation efforts are key to fine tune interventions that are required.

# 4

## **UNCTs and UN agencies, as well as CSOs and NHRIs, should further develop broad public information and education campaigns when engaging in the UPR process.**

The analysis made for this publication has also highlighted the need to raise awareness of the UPR process and its importance. According to the information provided, there is still a lack of understanding of the UPR among state officials, media, academia, youth and the general population and this knowledge

sharing of UPR good practice provides creative ideas for awareness raising campaigns that work successfully across different regions.

# 5

## **UNCTs and UN entities could use relevant pre-existing UPR recommendations to support their efforts to address emerging challenges such as climate change and the response to, and recovery from, the Covid 19 pandemic.**

This publication has provided a pioneering analysis on how the UPR process can help efforts to “build back better” and address new challenges, such as climate change and the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of emerging practice has shown that UNCTs and UN entities need not wait for the next cycle and new UPR

recommendations but can use relevant pre-existing UPR recommendations to support urgent efforts at country level. For example, this could apply in the context of pre-existing recommendations relating to prioritisation of marginalised groups in society aligned with the 2030 agenda principle of leaving no-one behind.

# 6

## **UNCTs and UN entities could do all they can to assess and support the UPR capacity – building and resource needs of governments.**

As reflected in the chart, the most significant obstacle to the use of the UPR process lies in the lack of capacity and resources of many governments.

This compilation of good practices has shown that whilst capacity-building of NHRIs and CSOs can play a valuable role to help build the UPR related capacity of governments, more needs to be done.

Whilst acknowledging the resource limitations UNCTs and UN entities, they should do their best to assess and support the UPR capacity - building and resource needs of these governments.



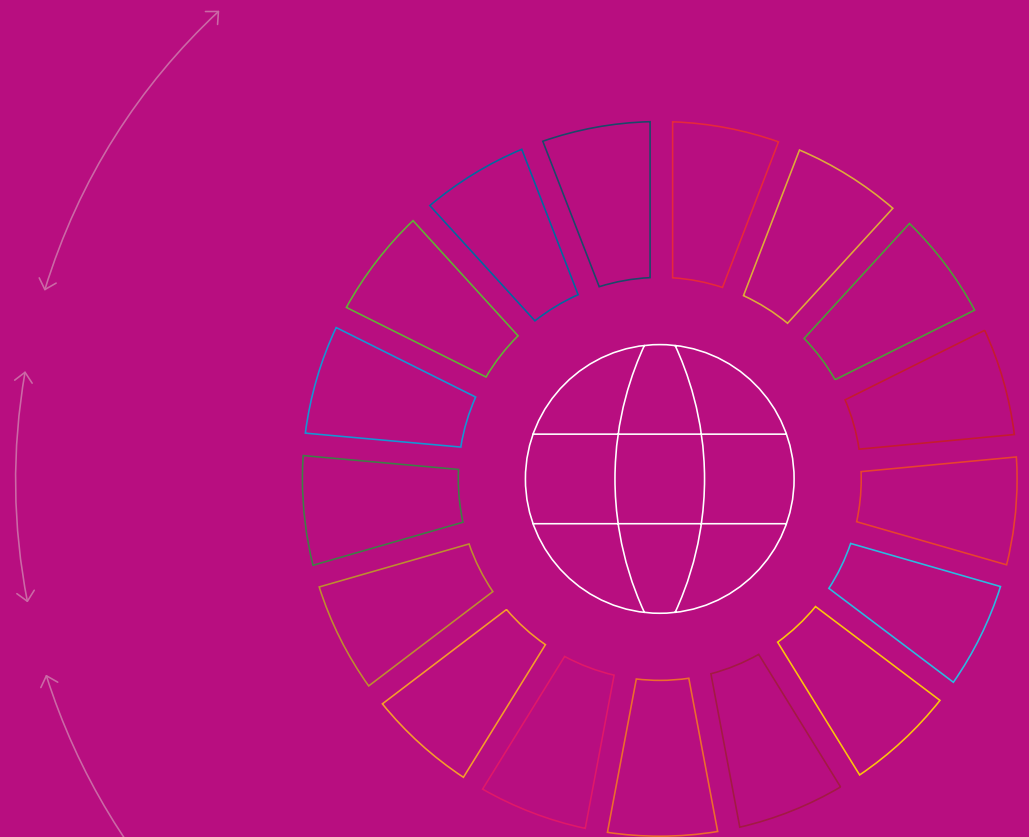
## **Knowledge sharing**

The knowledge sharing of UPR good practice provides creative ideas for awareness raising campaigns that work successfully across different regions.

**In conclusion, it is evident that the UNCTs and UN entities broadly engage with the UPR process and utilise UPR recommendations in their work to support the 2030 agenda.**

The UPR Practical Guidance emphasises however that “engaging with the UPR is a means and not an end in itself”. The primary purpose of the UPR is to make a positive impact in everyday lives through meeting the challenges, opportunities and needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and implementation of the 2030 agenda.

The ongoing development and sharing of UPR good practice supports UNCTs and UN entities to play their full part in realising this highest aspiration.





**Bhutan**

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# Resources

## Basic facts about the UPR

- 🔍 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/basicfacts.aspx>

## Some existing resources on the UPR include

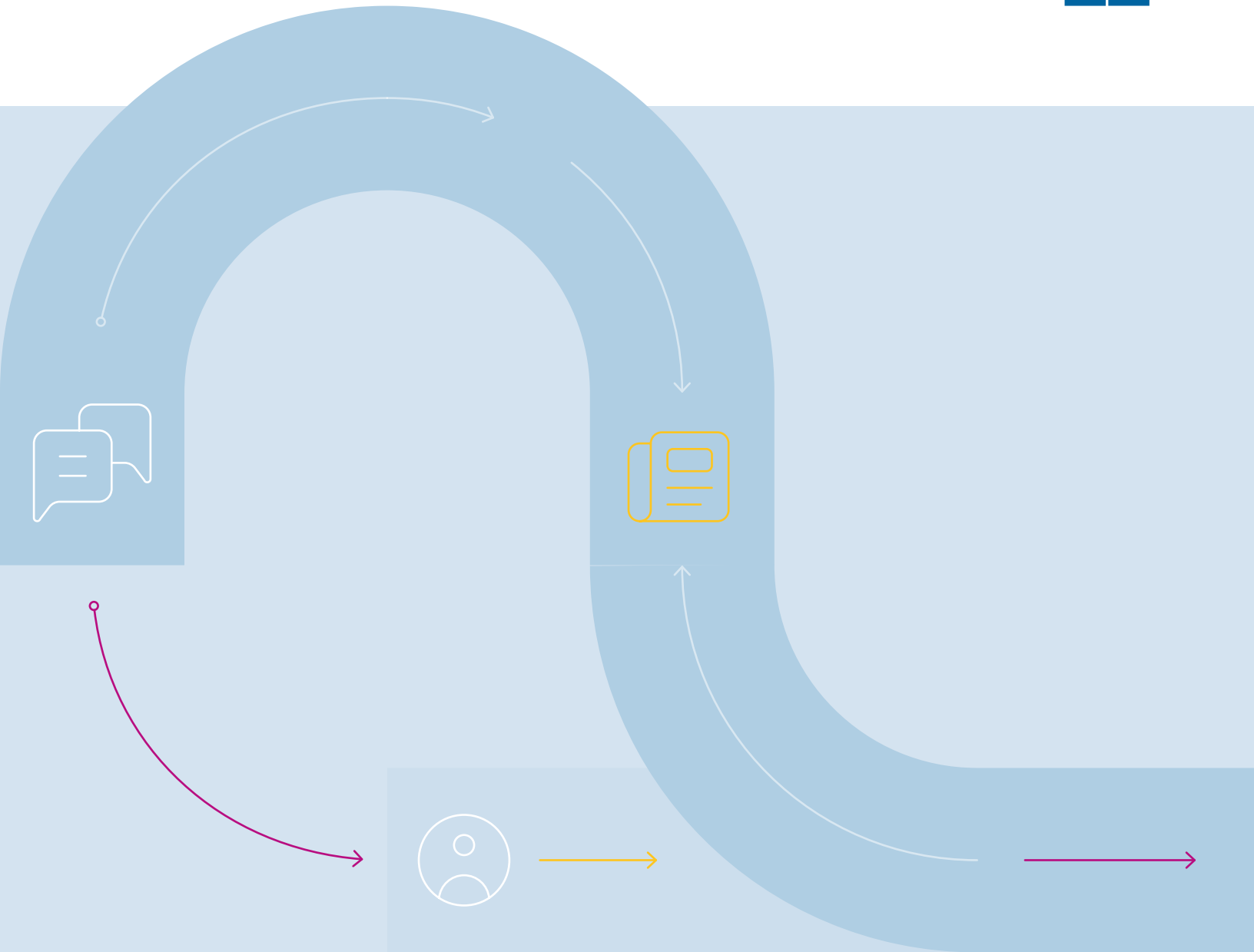
- 🔍 Maximizing the use of the Universal Periodic Review at country level, Practical Guidance, OHCHR, year [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR\\_Practical\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_Practical_Guidance.pdf)
- 🔍 UPR Documentation, HC letter and Matrix <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>
- 🔍 Universal Periodic Review: Tips for engagement at country level for national human rights institutions and civil society, OHCHR, 2020 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Tips\\_21Sept2020.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Tips_21Sept2020.pdf)
- 🔍 Universal Periodic Review: The specific role of members of parliament before – during – and after the review, OHCHR [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/TIPs\\_Members\\_Parliament.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/TIPs_Members_Parliament.pdf)
- 🔍 Midterm Evaluation. Implementation of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (2017-2020). Stakeholder report to midterm reporting (third cycle), OHCHR [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/NGOsMidTermReports/Report\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/NGOsMidTermReports/Report_Eng.pdf)
- 🔍 Study on emerging Good Practices from the Universal Periodic Review, OHCHR, June 2021 [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Emerging\\_UPR\\_GoodPractices.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Emerging_UPR_GoodPractices.pdf)
- 🔍 The Highest Aspiration, The Secretary-General's Call to Action on Human Rights, United Nations, February 2020 [www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The\\_Highest\\_Aspiration\\_A\\_Call\\_To\\_Action\\_For\\_Human\\_Right\\_English.pdf](http://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Aspiration_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf)
- 🔍 Strengthening Engagement with the International Human Rights Machinery, UNDP (now UNSDG) [unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/strengthening-international-human-rights](http://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/strengthening-international-human-rights)  
[unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/strengthening-international-human-rights/universal-periodic-review](http://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/strengthening-international-human-rights/universal-periodic-review)
- 🔍 Cycles of the Universal Periodic Review <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CyclesUPR.aspx>
- 🔍 Universal Human Rights Index: <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/>  
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>



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