



The Universal Periodic Review as a problem-solving tool – closing the technical cooperation gap

Event Concept Note

Date and time: Tuesday 31 January 2023, 15:00-17:00(CET)

Organizers: The Permanent Representation of Finland to the UN with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Venue: Palais des Nations, Room XXII and online

Link to join the meeting online: <https://ungeneva-vc.webex.com/ungeneva-vc/j.php?MTID=md37337f313618c857b97f28165d43604>

Participants: Member States, UN entities and Civil society

Background

The Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda describes human rights as a 'problem-solving' tool for contemporary development challenges. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that inclusive and participative economies, and societies in which the government is accountable, achieve better outcomes for all people. Over 90 percent of SDG targets overlap with human rights obligations in the normative framework. Agenda 2030 envisions a world 'of universal respect for human rights and human dignity'. Using a human rights-based approach contributes in no one being left behind in development progress.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a key mechanism of the Human Rights Council. It contributes to the respect, promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. All UN member States participate to the review of their human rights records by their peers. Recommendations given in the UPR mechanism are key also to advance sustainable development with human rights at their core. They can be used for action, advocacy and as a source of information.

A [UPR Practical Guidance](#) has been developed and shared across the UN to maximize the use of the UPR process for engagement and as a means to progress on human rights and on sustainable development at the country level.

UPR recommendations are increasingly integrated in and aligned with UN efforts at achieving the Agenda2030 for sustainable development. The UPR has been essential to support dialogues and advocacy efforts by UN Country Teams and UN entities. The UPR recommendations can be used to address sensitive and priority development challenges, leading to concrete results.

The role of the UN system is highly relevant in maximizing the use of this human rights mechanism as an entry point for national policies and action on human rights. This is even more topical with the start of the fourth cycle of the UPR last November, which puts the focus on enhanced implementation of recommendations received and accepted by the State

[A new repository of good practices](#), gathering examples from across the UN system, highlights the growing practice of UN entities and UN Country Teams to broadly engage with the UPR



process and utilize UPR recommendations in their work to address both human rights and development challenges and support the achievement of the SDGs.

This event aims to:

- Explore how the UPR is fitted to be used as a **problem-solving tool** to address development challenges – especially on the ground implemented by the UN Country Teams and States.
 - Discuss with member states their perspectives on how the UPR and UPR recommendations can be utilized at the state level and how states can build on lessons learned from their own situations and from peers.
 - Share **practical experiences** of UN engagement in the UPR process at the country level.
 - Create awareness of how the UN system benefitting from the UPR can contribute to reducing the technical cooperation gap in countries
 - Create awareness of how the UN system supports practical and integrated follow up of UPR recommendations into national development plans and efforts to achieve the SDGs
- **Programme:**

Moderator: Mona M'Bikay, UPR Info

Opening remarks

- Permanent Mission of Finland, Permanent Representative, Ambassador Ms. Kirsti Kauppi
- UNDP, Director of Geneva Representation Office, Ms. Agi Veres

The UPR as a problem-solving tool

- OHCHR, Chief of UPR Branch, Mr. Gianni Magazzeni

Panel: How the UPR can contribute to reducing the technical cooperation gap at country level?

- **Civic space and anti-discrimination, disability rights**

- **Francoise Jacob, UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia**

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.

- **Business and human rights**

- **Renaud Meyer, UNDP Resident Representative in Thailand**

The recommendations Thailand received during the 2nd cycle to develop, enact and implement a National Action Plan on business and human rights led the adoption of the first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights for 2019-2020 by the Government of Thailand.



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

- **Bibiana Aido Almagro, UN Women Representative in Colombia**

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 3rd 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.

- **UN support to State's engagement in the UPR – implementation of recommendations on the ground.**

- **Stephen Jackson, UN Resident Coordinator in Kenya**

Following the 2nd cycle and stemming from an OHCHR-led dialogue with the Government, a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (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.

Discussion and Q&A

Closing remarks

- Permanent Mission of Finland, Permanent Representative, Ambassador Ms. Kirsti Kauppi