



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

COURTESY TRANSLATION

30 October 2023

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Gabon by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 42nd session in January/February 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Gabon was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 53rd session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/ga-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

H. E.
Mr. Régis Michel M. Onanga Ndiaye
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Gabon



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The on-going process of reform of the National Human Rights Commission is encouraging in order to strengthen its conformity with the Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions (the Paris Principles). The recent adoption of the bill on the re-organization of the National Human Rights Commission by the National Assembly is an important step in the effective establishment of the Commission. This initiative should be continued until completion of the process. The establishment of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture compliant with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment should be finalized.

Gabon's culture of tolerance, which is expressed through the recognition of the rights of LGBTI persons and the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation, particularly through the decriminalization in 2020 of consensual same-sex relations, is welcome and could serve as an example for other countries around the world.

The persistence of discriminatory gender stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society remains, however, a matter of concern. The lack of sustained and systematic measures to challenge and eliminate patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes, which contribute to the persistence of gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls, including sexual violence and child marriage, is also concerning.

In the context of this year's celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Gabon is encouraged to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Gabon is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the National Assembly and the Senate, the judiciary, the National Human Rights Commission, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations of other international or regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is further encouraged to strengthen the National Committee for the Drafting of Human Rights Reports in Gabon, with the aim of making this body permanent and ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the commitment made by the Government of Gabon during the adoption of its UPR outcome to submit a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations is welcome. The mid-term report should be submitted by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
30 October 2023