

Impacts and relevance of the UPR at country level

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Thank you for offering UPR Info the opportunity to share its experience on the UPR.

The organisation has been active to promote human rights and the engagement of stakeholders in the UPR process for 15 years.

We have observed that the mechanism has achieved substantial results over the last three cycles.

The UPR is supporting the realisation of the three United Nations pillars:

- (a) By inviting all UN members States to protect, respect and fulfill human rights, it contributes to strengthen the realisation of human rights. The recommendations received by States require action to prevent and respond to human rights violations. The mechanism also embodies a human rights-based approach. The UPR has raised the voice of people living in vulnerable situations and marginalised groups. Cambodia has for instance adopted a recommendation on LGBTQI, Chili introduced an observatory to better protect the rights of LGBTQI communities, New-Zealand has adopted a well-being budget and DRC has adopted a legislation to protect the rights of indigenous people following UPR recommendations.
- (b) The UPR also prevents the aggravation of human rights violations and conflicts by addressing their roots causes such as exclusion or discrimination in accessing rights and resources. UPR recommendations for instance asked for the enactment of legislation against hate speech (The UK and Germany strengthened their legislation on hate crimes), the reform of the security sector or the establishment a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- (c) Finally, the UPR contributes to achieve the 2030 Agenda. More than 80% of UPR recommendations are linked to the sustainable development goals. The UPR has for instance led to the strengthening of national institutions with the establishment of NHRIs and national mechanisms for the prevention of torture (Slovakia has nominated the Public defender as the National preventive mechanism). Hence, it supported the realization of SDGs 16. Several recommendations also relate to economic, social, and cultural rights (SDGs 3 and 4) or gender equality (SDG 5). As concrete measures to implement those recommendations, I can share Zambia

and Sri Lanka decision to adopt a new legislation on child marriage. Canada has included a rights-based approach to its housing policy.

We take this opportunity, as we enter the 4th UPR cycle, to further encourage States to ensure that civil society has a safe space to act. In many instances they have proven that they can be a partner to raise awareness about human rights at the community level. Inclusive consultations ensure that no one is left behind and that policy decisions respond to societal needs. Furthermore, the participation of parliaments, as well as actors from the judicial system and local and regional governments in the UPR process is of paramount importance to ensure an effective implementation of the UPR recommendations and to advance human rights. The UPR contributed to strengthen the engagement of parliamentarians who are key actors to ensure that the State delivers and is held accountable on its human rights obligations and commitments.

Moreover, the set-up of national mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and follow-up planning for the consultation of national actors and the establishment of human rights actions plan with indicators to assess the implementation of accepted recommendations ensure a sustainable approach to implementation.

During the 4th UPR cycle, it will be key to continue strengthening the legislative framework, strong and independent institutions to ensure that the implementation of the UPR recommendations translate into an effective improvement of the human rights situation for all segments of society. It will require a multi stakeholder approach, capacity building, structural changes, transparency, and accountability.

Finally, we would like to encourage members States to financially support the implementation of the recommendations formulated and received to further strengthen national protection systems, advance human rights and the achievement of the SDGs.

As the president of the HRC mentioned, the UPR is an opportunity to connect the dots between human rights, development, and peace building actors so that everyone can achieve its full potential.

Thank you for the attention.