

An Overview of LRGs engagement in the UPR – Some good practice

This analysis was prepared by Alessia Preti, PHD student at the University of Bologna, in the context of an internship at UPR Info and reflects their academic area of specialization.

Importance of LRGS engagement: Local and Regional Governments are increasingly emerging as key domestic actors to be included in human rights monitoring processes. In its latest Resolution on Local Government and Human Rights (57/12 of 2024), the Human Rights Council renewed its encouragement to States to ‘promote the engagement of local governments in the work of regional and international human rights mechanisms and in implementing relevant recommendations, including in the preparation of State submissions for the universal periodic review and in follow-up thereto’.

The involvement of LRGs in the UPR matters because LRGs are the level of government closest to the people: they are the most aware of local needs on the ground and therefore the most efficient to collect data relevant for human rights reporting, ensuring that local insights inform global assessments. They are also, in many cases, the authorities with the actual power to implement human rights measures, giving them a strategic role in translating UPR recommendations into concrete action.

Advancements: During the current 4th cycle of the UPR – considered up until the 51st session –, various States have accounted for forms of Local and Regional Governments’ involvement in their national reports. The national report is a particularly insightful instrument to get an account of LRGs engagement in the UPR process because States are encouraged to describe the process of preparation of the report, including information on the inter-institutional consultations with local and regional governments, and because the report is now meant to be focused on the implementation of past recommendations from previous cycles and impact thereon (OHCHR [Guidance Note to the 4th cycle](#)). It follows that LRGs’ consultation in view of the preparation of the national report should be focused on their implementation of recommendations. From the analysis conducted it emerges that when LRGs have been involved in the implementation and follow-up phase, which should be the object of following consultations functional to the preparation of the report, States mention it in the methodology section.

**To get a view of the current level of LRGs engagement in the UPR it could also be relevant to look at the presence of LRGs representatives in the delegation of the State under Review to the UPR WG session. Taking an example from the latest one, Austria for the first time included the City of Vienna to the delegation. But this is not the object of the present fact-sheet.

Results of the analysis: Almost 30 States that had already undergone the review mention some form of involvement of LRGs. Consultation for the preparation of reports appears broadly, albeit often without insights of the process of consultation itself. The majority of States reported that the phase of drafting or discussion of the drafted report was carried out ‘in consultation with’ or ‘on the basis of contributions from’ different LRGs (ex. Finland; Austria; Nepal; Argentina; Germany; Colombia; Ethiopia; Bolivia; Kenya; Australia; Djibouti, specifying it organised ‘working meeting’).

Conversely, Morocco specified how LRGs were engaged in the consultation process in the different phases of drafting and finalization of the report. Coordination with ‘regional councils’ appears in the first phase on the ‘launch of the preparatory process, engagement of institutional stakeholders, and the collection of key information’. The second phase on ‘consultations with civil society on the drafting of the report’ indicates that consultations were held across the 12 regions of Morocco to present the draft inter alia to ‘the regional offices of government departments’ but also ‘regional councils’. At these meetings the focus was on the regional dimension of implementing the

recommendations emanating from the universal periodic review, the challenges of implementation and the roles of stakeholders.

Pakistan described the phases that have involved LRGs following the review of the third cycle up until the consultation from the preparation of the report. Federal and Provincial stakeholders have received accepted recommendations from the Ministry of Human Rights, 'to consider requisite legislative, policy and administrative measures' and were then solicited to provide information about implementation status of the recommendations. It is specified that 'matrices/questionnaires were designed and circulated among key like Federal Ministries and Provincial Departments as well as Treaty Implementation Cells (TICs) for feedback/data collection'. Finally, consultative meetings were arranged at the federal and provincial levels to seek further input and finalise the report.

Other relevant practices in terms of LRGs engagement in the UPR process that have emerged are the following:

1. Involving LRGs through National Mechanisms

National mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up (NMRIFs) of Italy and Uruguay include local and regional governments. The Italian CIDU includes representatives of the umbrella bodies comprising representatives of local and regional governments. The NMIRF of Uruguay comprises the 'Gobiernos Departamentales.' Nigeria's NMIRF does not provide for representation of LRGs directly in the mechanism, but it engages with them in consultation through letters and regional meetings.

2. Consultations for national reporting

The Netherlands national report includes a part dedicated to 'Human rights at the local level', where the State reported the creation of a 'Municipalities and Human Rights Platform' where municipalities can share promising practices and meetings can be arranged on themes concerning municipalities.

3. Workshops and consultation meetings

Lao People's Democratic Republic's drafting committee organised 10 workshop and consultations with several relevant domestic stakeholders, including LRGs. Also Bosnia organised a preparatory workshop and expert consultation meetings with representatives of the relevant institutions of the Federation of BiH, the Republika Srpska as well as the Brčko District for the preparation of the national report.

4. Contribution in national reporting

In addition to the information provided in the national report, prepared in consultation with 30 federal States authorities, Argentina included in a separate annex the specific inputs provided by local authorities.

Remaining challenges: One of the main challenges in the engagement of LRGs in the UPR remains education to human rights and to a human rights based approach. Although human rights underpin much of the work carried out by local and regional authorities, this is rarely framed or understood in human rights term. Moreover, LRGs' interest in participating into the mechanism should not be taken for granted. There is still work to do in this sense. Indicative is the case of Brazil, where the consultation of LRGs in the preparation of the national report was sought by sending official letters to all federative states requesting for contributions, but only 8 of the 27 federative unites responded.