

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

الاستعراض الدوري الشامل

EXAMEN PÉRIODIQUE UNIVERSEL

УНИВЕРСАЛЬНЫЙ ПЕРИОДИЧЕСКИЙ ОБЗОР

EXAMEN PERIÓDICO UNIVERSAL

普遍定期审议

A Practical Guide for Civil Society

# UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW



UNITED NATIONS



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

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## Part I

### Introduction

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#### **What is the Universal Periodic Review?**

Through a mechanism called the Universal Periodic Review, the Human Rights Council reviews, on a periodic basis, the fulfilment by each of the 193 United Nations Member States of their human rights obligations and commitments.



## How does it work?

A review of a State is based on three documents: a national report prepared by the State<sup>1</sup> under review; a compilation of United Nations information on the State under review prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); and a summary of information submitted by other stakeholders (including civil society actors)<sup>2</sup>, also prepared by OHCHR.

The review itself takes place in Geneva in a session of the Working Group on the UPR, which is composed of the 47 member States of the Human Rights Council. The review takes the form of a three-and-a-half-hour interactive dialogue between the State under review and the member and observer States of the Council. A few days after the interactive dialogue, the Working Group adopts the report of the proceedings.

A final outcome document, containing the report of the working group and the position of the State under review on the recommendations put forward, is adopted at the following plenary session of the Human Rights Council, a few months after the review. One hour is set aside for the adoption of each outcome. That hour is equally divided among the State under review, other States, national human rights institutions, and NGO observers to deliver oral statements commenting on the UPR review.

At its regular sessions, the adoption of UPR outcomes by the Human Rights Council is followed by a general debate under item 6 of the Agenda, on the Universal Periodic Review. Occasionally States that have been reviewed under the UPR will provide an update on their progress in the implementation of the commitments that they have made and the recommendations that they have supported in their examination under the UPR.

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<sup>1</sup> Civil society stakeholders should be involved in the consultation process at the national level leading to the preparation of the national report.

<sup>2</sup> Information on submission of input for stakeholder reports can be found at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>.

## The UPR process

### A. Preparation of information towards review

Includes:

- State information, including through broad national consultations (national reports)
- Compilation of United Nations information (prepared by OHCHR)
- Summary of Stakeholders' submission (prepared by OHCHR).

### B. Working Group on the UPR

- Meets in Geneva for three two-week sessions each year; examines 14 States/session (42 States/year)
- Interactive dialogue held with State under review
- Adopts a report containing recommendations, conclusions and voluntary pledges
- Reviewed State indicates at this stage or later (at the latest during the next relevant regular session of the Council) which recommendations it does/does not support.

Four and a half year cycle

### D. Implementation of outcomes

- Responsibility of the State concerned, which is encouraged to conduct broad consultations with all relevant stakeholders
- Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance to be strengthened and operationalized
- National or regional United Nations representations to assist States upon their request
- Financial and technical assistance should support national needs and priorities.

### C. Human Rights Council regular session

- Council considers each outcome document for one hour
- Reviewed States, Council Member and Observer States and other stakeholders given opportunity to express views before adoption of outcome documents
- Outcome documents adopted by the Council.



## **How to submit information to be included in the summary of stakeholders' information?**

Civil society actors, including NGOs, with and without consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), can submit information. This information should be in line with the guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council in its decision 17/119.

It should be submitted by email to [uprsubmissions@ohchr.org](mailto:uprsubmissions@ohchr.org).

Information used in the summary will be subsequently posted on the OHCHR website as a background document. For more detailed information, please refer to the OHCHR website, and guidelines for stakeholders (see Part II).

## **How to participate in a session of the Working Group?**

Only NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) can be accredited to participate in the session of the Working Group as observers. NGOs are able to observe the proceedings without making oral statements. NGOs may organise Information Meetings on the UPR process, with a view to sharing information and best practices at the country level.

UPR Working Group sessions are broadcast live via webcast. Broadcasts of past sessions are archived and accessible from OHCHR's website.

## **How to participate at the adoption of the UPR outcome in the Human Rights Council?**

Only NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) can be accredited to participate in the plenary session of the Human Rights Council as observers.

During the Human Rights Council session, NGOs may submit written statements, and organize parallel events. In the plenary meetings, NGOs are able to observe the proceedings and to make oral statements, provided that they are inscribed on the list of speakers, and can be given the floor during the 20 minute-segment allocated to them.

For further information on participating in the session of the Human Rights Council, please refer to the NGO Participation Page of the Human Rights Council:

 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/ngo.htm>

Sessions devoted to the adoption of UPR outcome documents are broadcast live via webcast, like all other agenda items of the Council. All broadcasts are archived under the UPR country page of the State concerned.

## Accreditation



An NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC planning to attend a session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group must send a letter of request for accreditation to the Secretariat. The letter should be sent well in advance of the relevant session and at least two weeks in advance if visa attestations are required.

### The letter must contain the following elements:

- ▶ Submitted on the official letterhead of the organization;
- ▶ State the title and duration of the session the organization wishes to attend, e.g. “[Name of NGO], in consultative status with ECOSOC, wishes to send the following members to attend the X<sup>th</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council (dates of session)...”;
- ▶ List the name/s (FAMILY NAME, First name) of the person/s who will represent the organization at the session. Names of persons must appear exactly as they appear in their passports;
- ▶ List the name(s) of those members already in possession of a valid identity badge issued by UNOG Security and Safety Section, and who plan to attend the Council session, with an indication that the person(s) hold(s) an annual badge.
- ▶ The letter must be signed by the President, or Chief Executive Officer of the organization, or the organization’s Main Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva if he/she is so authorized.

Please send the letter of request for accreditation by email to the Secretariat: [upraccreditation@ohchr.org](mailto:upraccreditation@ohchr.org).

- ▶ NGOs in need of ‘attestation of accreditation’ for Swiss visa application purposes, should state this explicitly in the letter of request



for accreditation. Please consult Swiss consular officials in your country regarding visa application deadlines, apply accordingly and ensure documentation is in order. Please note that visa attestations are issued by the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). If a visa attestation is required, please also send a copy of the letter to the United Nations Office at Geneva NGO Liaison Officer to:

**Fax: +41 22 917 05 83**

**E-mail: [ungeneva.ngoliaison@unog.ch](mailto:ungeneva.ngoliaison@unog.ch)**

Please Note: When there is a large number of NGOs seeking to participate in a session, the Secretariat may limit the number of accredited participants per NGO delegation with access to the plenary room. Please indicate in your accreditation request whether you seek access to the plenary, the public gallery (see also below) or a parallel event (see also below).

## Attending the Sessions

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The UPR Working Group and the Council plenary sessions both meet in Room XX (room 20), Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland.

All representatives of organizations must obtain a photo identity badge upon their arrival at the United Nations and before attending the session:

**Palais des Nations - Security entrance  
Pregny Gate, 8 - 14 Avenue de la Paix  
1211 Geneva 10**

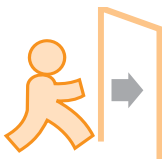
Upon presentation of an identity document (i.e. a passport) a photo identity badge valid for the duration of the session will be issued. NGO representatives are advised to take a copy of the letter of accreditation (above) sent by the concerned NGO.

NGO representatives in possession of an annual or temporary photo identity badge issued by UNOG Security and Safety Section, and valid for the duration of the session, will have access to the conference rooms.

All travel related-expenses, accommodation and medical insurance arrangements are the responsibility of the NGO or its representatives.



## Access to the Public Gallery



A limited number of seats in the Public Gallery, above the main conference room, Room XX, are available for persons wishing to observe the proceedings of the Working Group without being accredited as participants (e.g. students and academics).

Access to the public gallery will be granted depending on the availability of seating and other circumstances.

Individuals or groups who wish to attend are required to email [upraccreditation@ohchr.org](mailto:upraccreditation@ohchr.org)

(24 hours before the desired date) with the following information:

- ▶ Date of the visit;
- ▶ Purpose of the visit; and
- ▶ Full names of those wishing to attend.

## Requesting a Room for an Information Meeting



NGOs may organise Information Meetings on the UPR process, with a view to sharing information and best practices at the country level. Organizers are encouraged to inform and/or involve State(s) under review.

Requests for rooms are made on-line:

 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>

The indicative deadline for requests is two weeks prior to the start of a session. These requests are processed in priority, subject to availability of rooms.



## Documentation and Resources

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Links to documentation and resources related to the work of the Working Group, including the webcast service, can be found here:



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

Copies of documents that form the basis of a review may be picked up from the document desk at Door 40 of the Palais des Nations. Copies of the draft outcome report are distributed in the room shortly before its adoption by the Working Group.

UPR-related draft documentation, and copies of oral statements as delivered by States, etc. can be found at the Human Rights Council Extranet, under the tab “HRC Mechanisms & Subsidiary Organs”.

To access the Extranet:



<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/form.htm>

Under the “General Information” heading of the Human Rights Council Extranet, free subscription to our SMS alert service is available.

You can also stay informed through Twitter ([www.twitter.com/un\\_hrc](http://www.twitter.com/un_hrc)).

Please also consult the *Handbook for Civil Society*, available at:



<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Pages/Handbook.aspx>

## Participation in General

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### Access to UN premises and the plenary room (Room XX)

- ▶ Palais des Nations is accessible to accredited NGO delegates from 8 a.m.
- ▶ Participants must comply with the requests and instructions of United Nations officials and security



staff relating to access and use of United Nations facilities and premises.

- ▶ Participants must display their badge visibly at all times when entering and exiting, and while present on United Nations premises.
- ▶ Participants may be subjected to security scrutiny. Access to the United Nations premises with large luggage is not permitted.
- ▶ On occasions of increased demand for participation in a given meeting, the Secretariat may limit the number of accredited participants per NGO delegation having access to the plenary room. In lieu, any additional NGO participants not being given access to the plenary will have access to the public gallery, or alternate arrangements will be made.
- ▶ Smoking is not permitted in the Palais des Nations. Eating and drinking are not permitted in the plenary and side-event meeting rooms.
- ▶ Use of visual recording equipment is not permitted in Palais des Nations, except within NGO Information Meetings (see below).

### Media areas

- ▶ NGOs are not permitted to hold press conferences in UN premises. Press briefings, and dissemination of press releases and media advisories by NGOs may be arranged only through the Association of Correspondents Accredited to the United Nations (ACANU), [acanu.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:acanu.secretary@gmail.com).

### NGO materials

- ▶ NGO material (e.g. leaflets, publications, boards, banners, etc) that is relevant to the work of the Working Group may be posted or displayed only on the tables and boards clearly marked for this purpose (i.e. outside plenary Room XX).
- ▶ Distribution of NGO material elsewhere in the Palais des Nations is not permitted, including in the cafeteria and Serpentine Bar, and other public spaces.
- ▶ Materials containing abusive or offensive language or images are not permitted on United Nations premises.



- ▶ Material for display should clearly indicate the logo and full name of the NGO in ECOSOC consultative status.

### Information Meetings

- ▶ NGO Information Meetings are public meetings, unless otherwise indicated by the organizers; as such, they may be attended by all NGOs, Permanent Mission Representatives, UN Staff and other persons with access to Palais des Nations.
- ▶ Inside the Information Meeting room relevant NGO material may be made available with the agreement of the organizing NGO. Any remaining documentation should be removed by the organizing NGO at the end of the meeting.
- ▶ Interpretation for NGOs' Information Meetings is not provided by the United Nations. NGOs may bring their own interpreters, if they so wish, and in order to do so, inform the Secretariat ahead of time.
- ▶ Visual recording by accredited NGO delegates is permitted during an Information Meeting with the approval of the event organizers and upon written notification to Secretariat, subject to the following guidelines:
  - Chair of the meeting should inform the participants at the start of the meeting that it is being recorded; and
  - Photography (still and/or video) should not interfere with the sight-lines of other delegates or disrupt the proceedings of the meeting. Tripods should be erected at the sides or the back of the room.

### Use of the United Nations emblem

- ▶ Use of the United Nations emblem on non-official documents and publications, including NGO material is expressly prohibited.
- ▶ The United Nations flag may not be displayed in meeting rooms where NGOs organize events, except with the authorization of the Secretary-General, requested through the Secretariat.



## Part II

# Universal Periodic Review: information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders' written submissions<sup>3</sup>

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### I - Background

1. In its resolution **16/21**, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the basis, principles and objectives of the universal periodic review as set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution **5/1**.<sup>4</sup>
2. Resolution 16/21 further provides clarification on the focus and documentation to be used during the review:
  - (a) The review will be based on the three documents identified in paragraph 15 of the annex to Council resolution 5/1, namely:
    - Information prepared by the State concerned, which can take the form of a national report;
    - A compilation prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the information contained in the reports of treaty bodies, special procedures, including observations and comments by the State concerned, and other relevant official United Nations documents, which shall not exceed 10 pages;
    - Additional, credible and reliable information provided by other relevant stakeholders to the universal periodic review which should also be taken into consideration by the Council in the review.

<sup>3</sup> Stakeholders, which are referred to in resolution 5/1, include, *inter alia*, NGOs, national human rights institutions, human rights defenders, academic institutions and research institutes, regional organizations, as well as civil society representatives.

<sup>4</sup> One of these principles reads as follows: "The UPR should ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions, in accordance with General Assembly resolution **60/251** of 15 March 2006 and Economic and Social Council resolution **1996/31** of 25 July 1996, as well as any decisions that the Council may take in this regard."



The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will prepare a summary of such information which shall not exceed 10 pages.

- (b) The review should focus on, inter alia, the implementation of the accepted recommendations and the developments of the human rights situation in the State under review;
  - (c) Other relevant stakeholders are encouraged to include in their contributions information on the follow-up to the preceding review;
  - (d) The summary of the information provided by other relevant stakeholders should contain, where appropriate, a separate section for contributions by the national human rights institution of the State under review that is accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles. Information provided by other accredited national human rights institutions will be reflected accordingly, as well as information provided by other stakeholders.
3. Relevant stakeholders shall keep in mind that the review is based on :
- (a) The Charter of the United Nations;
  - (b) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
  - (c) Human rights instruments to which a State is party;
  - (d) Voluntary pledges and commitments made by States, including those undertaken when presenting their candidatures for election to the Human Rights Council; and
  - (e) Applicable international humanitarian law.
4. In its decision 17/119, the Human Rights Council adopted the following General Guidelines for the preparation of information under the Universal Periodic Review:

- (a) Description of the methodology and the broad consultation process followed for the preparation of information provided under the universal periodic review;
- (b) Developments since the previous review in background of the country under review and framework, particularly normative and institutional framework, for the promotion and protection of human rights: constitution, legislation, policy measures, national jurisprudence, human rights infrastructure including national human rights institutions and scope of international obligations (see para. 3 above);
- (c) Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground: implementation of international human rights (see para. 3 above), national legislation and voluntary commitments, national human rights institutions activities, public awareness of human rights, cooperation with human rights mechanisms...;
- (d) Presentation by the State concerned of the follow-up to the previous review;
- (e) Identification of achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints in relation to the implementation of accepted recommendations and the development of human rights situations in the State;
- (f) Key national priorities, initiatives and commitments that the State concerned has undertaken and intends to undertake to overcome those challenges and constraints and improve human rights situations on the ground;
- (g) Expectations of the State concerned in terms of capacity-building and requests, if any, for technical assistance and support received.



## II - Written contribution

### A - Content

5. Stakeholders are strongly encouraged to provide written submissions that:
  - (a) Are specifically tailored for the UPR;
  - (b) Contain credible and reliable information on the State under review, notably information on the follow-up to the preceding review;
  - (c) Cover the period elapsed since the last review;
  - (d) Do not contain language manifestly abusive.
6. While referring to information attributed to United Nations bodies/agencies and/or mechanisms in their submission, stakeholders should refrain from listing all treaties ratification, concluding observations and recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies and/or the special procedures of the HRC or reports by UN bodies/agencies, as the latter are reflected in the UN compilation prepared by OHCHR.
7. Written submissions should include first-hand information.
8. Recommendations made by stakeholders to the State should be linked to the information provided on any given theme.

### B - Format

9. Written submissions should not be longer than five pages (and not exceed 2815 words) in the case of individual submissions, to which additional documentation can be annexed for reference. Submissions by coalitions of stakeholders can be up to ten pages (and not exceed 5630 words). For ease of reference, paragraphs and pages should be numbered. Written submissions should be saved as a Word document only.
10. Information included in footnotes/endnotes will not be taken into consideration in the word/page limits but will not be taken into consideration for the summary of stakeholders either.



11. Written submissions should be clearly identified. Consequently, the cover page should present the submitting organisation(s) (letterhead, name, logo, acronym, address and telephone/email contacts, webpage, etc.). A paragraph describing the main activities of the submitting organization/coalition, their status with regard to ECOSOC, as well as date of establishment, especially for those organizations which interrelate for the first time with the UN, would be also welcomed. This cover page will not be counted within the word/page limits.
12. Written contributions should be submitted in UN official languages only, preferably in English, French or Spanish.
13. Written submissions should be final; in principle, it will not be possible to accommodate revisions.
14. Annexes to the submissions should NOT include pictures, maps, organizations' annual reports or reports from other organizations.
15. **Submissions, which do not respect the abovementioned guidelines will not be considered.**

### **C - Methodology**

16. Stakeholders are encouraged to consult with one another at the national level for the preparation of the UPR submissions. Joint submissions by a large number of stakeholders are encouraged.

### **D - Confidentiality**

17. The UPR mechanism does not provide for confidentiality and is conducted on the basis of public documents. Submissions which respect the abovementioned guidelines, as originally received, will be made available on-line on OHCHR's website, including the name of the submitting party.
18. Consequently, reference to individual cases should be made only if the protection of all relevant individuals concerned will not be jeopardised by such a reference.



### III - How to submit written contributions

19. Stakeholders' submissions should be sent to **[uprsubmissions@ohchr.org](mailto:uprsubmissions@ohchr.org)**.
20. OHCHR secretariat will (a) confirm electronically receipt of your message and submission; and (b) while stakeholders are discouraged from faxing or mailing a hardcopy of their submission to the OHCHR secretariat, they may do so in the case of repeated technical difficulties with electronic mail to: +41 22 917 90 11.
21. Each electronic submission and relevant e-mail message should refer to **one country only**. In the **e-mail message** accompanying the submitted documents kindly include: In the title of the e-mail message: the name of the (main) stakeholder submitting the contribution, the kind of contribution (individual and/or joint), the name of the reviewed country and indicate the month and year of relevant UPR session, e.g., "*Women's coalition – joint UPR submission – Ecuador – June 2012*" or "*National Human Rights Institution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (EHRC) – UPR Submission - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – June 2012* ;
22. Deadlines for stakeholders' submissions will be posted on the OHCHR UPR webpage.
23. Stakeholders should note that written submissions to OHCHR should be sent indicatively at least five months before the relevant session of the Working Group on UPR, to take into account UN Conference Services' requirements.
24. **Submissions received after specified deadlines will not be considered.**



## IV - Further information

OHCHR UPR webpage



<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>

Chapter VII of Working with the United Nations Human Rights Programme: A Handbook for Civil Society



<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Pages/Handbook.aspx>

*Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Also in CD ROM format in English and French for persons with visual or print disability, [publications@ohchr.org](mailto:publications@ohchr.org).*

## Contact us

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For further information or assistance, please access the link:



<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>

You may also contact the NGO Liaison Team of the Human Rights Council Secretariat during sessions behind Room XX, Palais des Nations.

Civil society updates relating to UN mandates and mechanisms may be accessed via:



<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx>

OHCHR's Civil Society Section can be contacted at:

[civilsociety@ohchr.org](mailto:civilsociety@ohchr.org)

Tel: +41 22 917 96 56

Fax: +41 22 917 90 11

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## **A Practical Guide for Civil Society UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

### **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Palais des Nations

CH 1211 Geneva 10 – Switzerland

Telephone : +41 (0)22 917 90 00

Fax : +41 (0)22 917 90 08

[www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)



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