

# Universal Periodic Review (Third Cycle): Information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders' written submissions <sup>1</sup>

## I. Background

1. The basis, principles and objectives of the universal periodic review were set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1<sup>2</sup> and reaffirmed in resolution 16/21. The objective is the improvement of the human rights situation on the ground.

2. Resolution 16/21 (12 April 2011) further provides clarification on the focus and documentation to be used during the second and subsequent reviews:

The reviews will be based on 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;
- A summary of 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, with a separate section foreseen for contributions by the national human rights institution of the State under review accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles. Information provided by other national human rights institutions will be reflected accordingly, together with information provided by other stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> 4. Stakeholders, which are referred to in Human Rights Council 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. Different stakeholders may also provide joint submissions.

<sup>2</sup> One of the principles reads as follows: "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".

3. The reviews should focus on, inter alia, the implementation of previous recommendations and the developments of the human rights situation in the State under review. As such, relevant stakeholders are encouraged to focus their contribution on assessments of implementation of past recommendations and comment on their impact thereon, as well as on developments or relevant issues not addressed during previous reviews.

4. In addition, 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.

## **II. Written contribution**

### **A. Content**

5. Stakeholders are strongly encouraged to provide written submissions in line with the following:

- a) The submissions should be specifically tailored for the UPR and contain information on the follow-up to the preceding reviews, including an assessment of and comments on the implementation of recommendations. Developments since the last review and any other human rights issues should also be included. A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations shall be posted on the OHCHR-UPR country pages and the webpage on UPR at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>.
- b) When referring to the implementation of recommendations from previous cycles, the clear identification of each recommendation (HRC report, cycle, paragraph number, recommendation number and recommending country) is encouraged, as it will contribute better to report on the status of implementation and follow-up to the preceding reviews.

c) If reference is done to repeated recommendations from the previous cycles, all recommendations by cycle and report number should clearly be identified, also indicating that the recommendation is a repeated one.

d) Follow-up information and analysis should be given on: progress made in the implementation of recommendations, including comments on its impact on the enjoyment of human rights; regressive actions if any; and the identification of the actions that remain to be taken for full implementation, if any, i.e. in the form of a recommendation to the State under review.

In addition to the comments on the implementation of previous recommendations, measuring and reporting on the level of implementation of recommendations -including against indicators that may have been defined by States as part of their follow-up action plans - may also be done by using values (i.e. numbers, percentages, or categories such as “fully implemented”, “partially implemented”, “in the process of implementation” or “not implemented yet”), with relevant explanations. As regards any non-implemented recommendations, challenges or needs of technical cooperation could also be identified.

e) Relevant stakeholders may find it useful to add into the column in the matrix of thematically clustered recommendations (referenced above point 5a) any such values and comments on the implementation of previous recommendations. The matrix may be submitted as an annex to the main contribution (its input would not be added to the word count). The submission of the matrix should not replace the main contribution provided by the stakeholder.

f) The submissions must contain credible and reliable information on the human rights situation in the State under review, highlight main human rights issues of concern, best practices and recommendations thereon; and cover the period elapsed since the last review.

6. Submissions must not contain abusive language, must comply with the word count limits and must be presented within the established deadline.

## **7. Practical suggestions**

- a) First-hand information should be given priority, as well as the stakeholder's own views, findings and conclusions. Second-hand information should be referenced and referred to in endnotes, and included only if necessary.
- b) While referring to information attributed to United Nations bodies/agencies and/or mechanisms in their submission, stakeholders should consider, to the extent possible, not listing all treaties ratification or copying 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 expected to be reflected in the UN compilation prepared by OHCHR.
- c) Stakeholders should consider making recommendations and reiterate previous ones where relevant. These should be S.M.A.R.T. – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-Oriented and Time-Bound, and linked to the themes addressed in the main submission.
- d) Only submissions and annexes to the submissions which are used for the summary will be uploaded. Stakeholders are encouraged to make submissions accessible for persons with disabilities.
- e) When available, stakeholders may also share progress reports (e.g. mid-term/periodic progress reports) by including them in an annex.

## **B. Format**

8. **Document format** - Use of word documents only - Written (main) submissions should be saved and submitted as a Word document only.
9. **Identification** - Written submissions should be clearly identifiable. The cover page of the main submission should clearly identify the submitting stakeholder(s) (letterhead, name and acronym, logo, webpage, email and postal address, etc.). For joint submissions, a list of organizations should be added as an Endnote in the cover page or as an annex to the document.
10. **Brief description of main activities of the organization/coalition (not to be included in the word count)** - A paragraph describing the main activities of the

submitting organization/coalition, as well as date of establishment, especially for those organizations which interrelate for the first time with the UN, is also encouraged to be included in the cover page.

11. **Length** – Individual written submissions must not exceed 2815 words (additional documentation can be annexed for reference). Joint submissions must not exceed 5630 words. The cover page, endnotes and annexes will not be counted within the word/page limits of contributions.

12. **Use of endnotes** - Stakeholders should only use endnotes to reference information. Endnotes should not include any substantive information therein as it will not be taken into consideration in the summary.

13. **Numbering paragraphs and pages** - For ease of reference, paragraphs and pages should be numbered.

14. **Language** - Written contributions should be submitted in one of the UN official languages and preferably in English, French or Spanish.

## **C – Methodology**

15. 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, when the stakeholders focus on issues of similar nature.

## **D – Confidentiality**

16. 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 publicly made available on OHCHR's - UPR country webpages, with the name of the submitting stakeholder(s).

17. Reference to individual cases should be made only if the safety and well-being of all concerned individuals will not be jeopardised by such a reference.

18. Addressing acts of intimidation and reprisal against those who seek to cooperate, cooperate or have cooperated with the United Nations in the field of human rights is a

priority for OHCHR, Any act of intimidation or reprisal should be promptly reported (reprisals@ohchr.org).

### **III. When to submit written contributions**

19. Deadlines for submissions – Tentative deadlines for stakeholders’ submissions can be found on the OHCHR UPR webpage (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>). Stakeholders should check regularly the above-mentioned webpage, in case updates (or extensions) are announced.

20. Stakeholders should note that written submissions to OHCHR should be sent indicatively at least six months before the relevant session of the Working Group on UPR, please consult the UPR webpage regarding the exact deadlines of upcoming sessions <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>.

21. Please note that submissions received after established deadlines will not be considered.

22. Written submissions should be final.

### **IV. Where and how to submit written contributions**

23. Stakeholders’ submissions should be sent only through the **“On-line UPR Submissions Registration System”** for written contributions for the UPR documentation available at the following link:

<https://uprdoc.ohchr.org>

24. All contributing organizations – national and international, individual organizations or coalition of organizations - will be requested to open an organizational profile in the system.

25. The approval of the organizational profile can take up to 24 hours and it is not automatic. Automatic messages are sent when a profile is created, approved and when contributions are submitted.

26. Contributing organizations may submit one individual contribution and participate in one or more joint contributions per country (per session). When submitting joint contributions on behalf of coalitions, it is advisable to create a separate profile for each coalition.

27. Should organizations need to provide more than one joint submission on behalf of a number of coalitions, it is advisable to contact the UPR Submissions Helpdesk to the email indicated below, to get assistance and avoid duplicating organizational profiles.

28. All submissions used by the Secretariat will be listed in the Endnote 1 of the Summary report and posted on the UPR country webpages. Joint submissions will be referred to in the UPR documentation as 'Joint submissions' and identified with a number, as well as with the name of the Coalition and/or the list of organizations which form part of the coalition.

29. Contributing organizations can submit: (a) a cover letter/page; (b) one main submission (and translations in different UN languages) and (c) a maximum of 10 annexes.

30. Once contributions have been uploaded in the system, organizations will receive an automatic confirmation of their submission. Organizations can also consult their contributions history in the on-line system at any time. No additional confirmation by the OHCHR Secretariat will be sent.

31. The system does not allow organizations to add documents for a country after the automatic confirmation of their initial submission has been received. Additional documents (such as translations of main submissions, cover letters or annexes) should be sent by email to the UPR Submissions Helpdesk.

32. Should organizations encounter technical problems using the on-line system, please contact the **UPR Submissions Helpdesk**.

## **V – Further Information**

- OHCHR UPR webpage at  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>.

- OHCHR UPR webpage for NGOs and NHRIs:  
<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, which is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish at  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Pages/Handbook.aspx>.

**How to contact us:**

1. **UPR Submissions Helpdesk:** [uprsubmissions@ohchr.org](mailto:uprsubmissions@ohchr.org)

2. **OHCHR National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section:**

▪ **National Institutions and regional Mechanisms:**  
[nationalinstitutions@ohchr.org](mailto:nationalinstitutions@ohchr.org)

▪ **Civil Society:** [civilsociety@ohchr.org](mailto:civilsociety@ohchr.org) or Tel: +41 22 917 96 56