

# UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW TOOLKIT

**A Guide for Country  
Programmes**

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**Save the Children**

# WHAT IS THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW?

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a new inter-governmental human rights process within the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva. It offers real opportunities for children's rights organisations seeking to raise the political profile of children and the non-implementation of children's rights obligations by governments in a global setting.

The HRC is a body within the United Nations (UN) made up of 47 states. It is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. The HRC was created by the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 to strengthen government accountability for human rights. In order to do this, the HRC created the UPR to examine the human rights records of all states and was given the power, through a two-thirds majority vote, to suspend the membership of any member that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights.

The UPR assesses the extent to which governments are meeting their obligations to protect, respect and fulfil human rights, including children's rights, in their countries.

- It is **universal**. All governments of the world will be reviewed by the UPR process. This is important because it prevents accusations of political bias in focusing on certain 'problem states'. It encourages all governments to do more, no matter who they are, and promotes human rights as commitments that are realised progressively over time.
- It is **inter-governmental**. The UPR's defining feature, and perhaps its greatest strength, is the fact that governments review other governments. Unlike the other treaty body reports, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which involve panels of experts, UPR reports are reviewed and debated by other states. This makes it potentially very influential as most governments do care how others governments perceive them.
- It is **periodic**. Countries will be reviewed every four years. This creates momentum and allows states to be reviewed on the basis of their progress since the last UPR.
- It is **action-oriented**. The focus of the UPR is on achieving improvements in human rights situations on the ground. The review is focused on recommendations to states on what needs to change, as well as best practice that can be shared by others.

The HRC will review human rights obligations based on the following **three reports**:

1. Information **provided by the state** under review. This can be presented orally or in written form, provided that it does not exceed **20 pages**.
2. A compilation by the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** of relevant information from the UN human rights system, such as reports of treaty bodies (including the UNCRC's concluding observations) and special rapporteurs. This document is limited to **ten pages**.

3. A summary of information compiled by OHCHR from submissions by **other relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations** (NGOs) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). This summary must not exceed **ten pages**. One of Save the Children's objectives is that our submissions will form part of this NGO summary. The submissions must not exceed five pages if they are solely by Save the Children, or ten pages if in coalition with another organisation.

The UPR is **conducted in a working group composed of all 47 member states** of the HRC. The working group will allocate **three hours** to the consideration of each state, and **an hour to the adoption of a report** on that state in the UPR session in the HRC a few months later.

The report may include conclusions, recommendations, and voluntary commitments made by the state. **The reports will then be adopted by the plenary of the HRC**. The outcome report will include **two sets of recommendations**: those which have the support of the state concerned, and those which do not (accompanied by comments from the state).

A group of **three state representatives** from different regional groups (called a troika) will be selected by drawing lots from the members of the Council. They will **facilitate each review**, including the **preparation of the working group's report**. There will be 48 different troikas each year – one for every state under review.

## WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR SAVE THE CHILDREN TO GET INVOLVED?

So far, all states have submitted their reports on time and have actively engaged in the examination of other states. The UPR has turned out to be highly political and a very efficient advocacy and programming tool.

We can achieve a huge impact at national level for relatively little work. The five or ten page (if in coalition) report gives us an opportunity to influence government policy and practice, and move children further up the political agenda. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

### **It is our responsibility**

The UPR is a state-led human rights review. Without the involvement of civil society, the only information on the reality of human rights on the ground will come from the state or OHCHR's compilation of treaty body and special rapporteur reports. As civil society, we have a vital role to play as a watchdog, holding governments to account for their legal obligations to children.

We understand the realities on the ground and are more likely to have up-to-date information that can help to produce a more comprehensive picture of the situation for children in the countries we work in.

We have a responsibility to make sure that children's rights are presented as part of human rights and are not forgotten. If we don't engage, it is possible that governments won't be held accountable through the UPR for their responsibilities to children.

## **It enables us to push children up the political agenda**

We know that the major obstacle to realising children's rights is not a lack of resources but a lack of political will. The UPR is a very public and politically-oriented review. It is conducted by states, in front of states, in an interactive dialogue. The process has proven to be very lively and state participation is high. Issues such as birth registration, quality education, child labour, trafficking, child mortality, and malnutrition are human rights issues and governments can be made to answer to them, as well as pressured to accept recommendations to tackle them.

## **It gives us an opportunity for constructive dialogue with the state on its children's rights obligations**

In preparing its report, every state has an obligation to involve civil society in its consultations. Civil society can highlight gaps in implementation and propose solutions. Often governments lack good quality, disaggregated data and civil society can help them to identify hidden problems such as inequity, discrimination and abuse of disabled children, and child marriage rates.

Experience has shown us that governments are taking this seriously and once recommendations have been accepted, states will ask donors and civil society for capacity building in order to implement their new obligations to the HRC.

## **It gives us a framework for national and international advocacy**

Whether governments accept or reject recommendations, a framework of advocacy for the next four years has been established. If they accept, we must hold them to their promises, and if they reject specific recommendations, we can continue to lobby them to reconsider.

The UPR is a publicly documented review. The sessions in Geneva are recorded and all documentation including the state report, civil society reports and concluding recommendations are online. All questions and issues raised by other governments are captured and are public records. Once reports have been submitted, civil society can organise press releases, events, and awareness campaigns to bring the UPR process and government responses to the attention of citizens in the country.

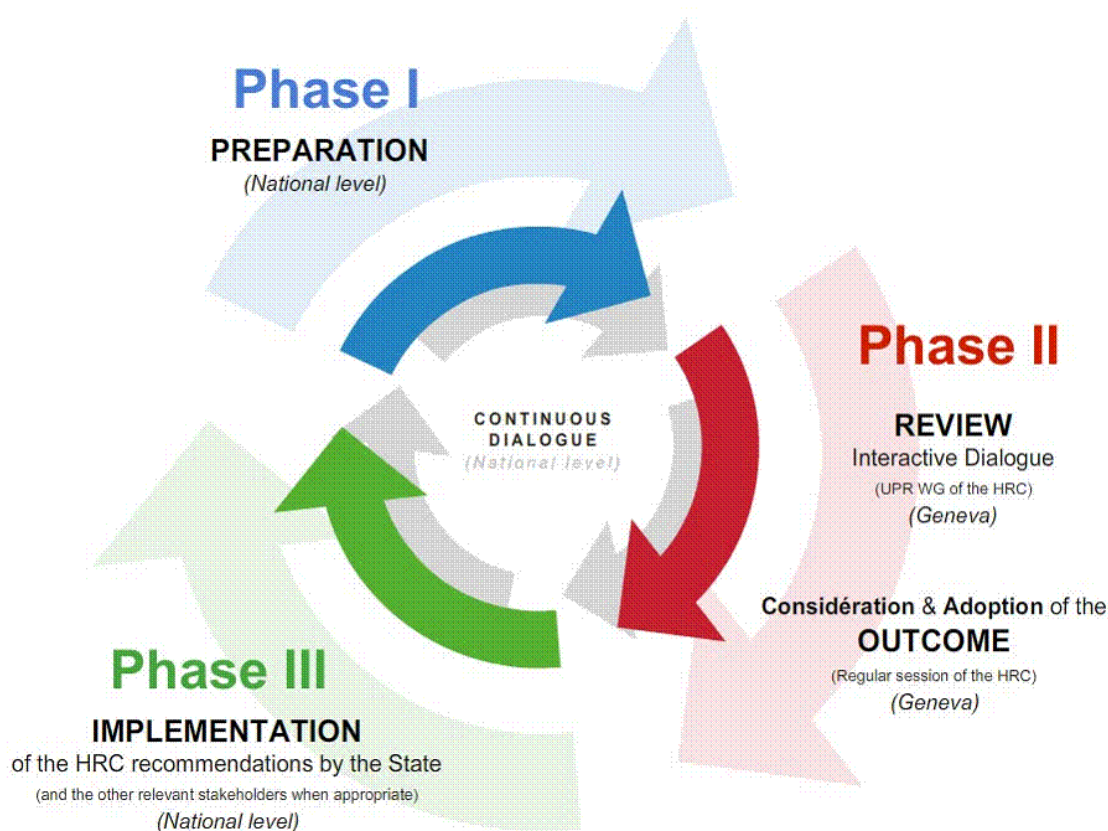
## **It builds the capacity of children's rights coalitions**

Often children's rights coalitions are created for alternative reporting to the UNCRC, but between reports they can either become dormant or disband altogether. The UPR process can maintain momentum for the coalition as a whole. It provides opportunities for networking across civil society. This can be particularly crucial for small national NGOs who can feel unable to engage on their own. The chance to join coalitions within the human rights community can be crucial for them, particularly in countries with very few children's rights advocates.

## **It works**

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) recently carried out a study which found that in the last session of the UPR, 82% of children's rights recommendations were accepted by governments (up from 65% when the review started two years ago). Out of the 18% that were not accepted, only 10% were rejected and the others are pending. The impact of accepted recommendations on the ground is yet to be documented fully, but what is clear is that the removal of UNCRC reservations has been positively impacted by the UPR, particularly in the UK and Mauritius.

## HOW CAN CHILDREN'S RIGHTS NGOS AND ADVOCATES GET INVOLVED?



- **Find out who is doing what.** Speak to your civil society contacts and find out which civil society organisations are submitting reports. If possible, find out what the focus issues will be in their reports. Encourage coordination and ideally, joint reports through coalitions. Contact the government and find out which department is reporting, it is usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Justice. Find out the government's timetable for preparing its state report and encourage the state to consult civil society.
- **Join forces.** If you can, encourage a civil society organisation with similar to produce a joint submission with Save the Children and a joint work plan on UPR advocacy. If a children's

rights coalition already exists, then that would be the natural place to start, but if it doesn't, this can be the first step in creating one. It is particularly important for larger NGOs to facilitate the participation of smaller NGOs who may lack the time and resources to engage on their own.

- **Be open.** Tell the state that you, as civil society, will be reporting and are keen to engage in the preparation of their report. There is no possibility of confidential reporting in the UPR.
- **Start early.** Save the Children has produced reports in coalition within ten weeks but the ideal way to approach this process is with plenty of time. The Danish Centre for Human Rights recommends that state-led consultation with civil society should happen ten to 12 months before the review date.
- **Expand engagement beyond children's rights coalitions – engage in human rights coalitions as well.** Save the Children has found that engagement in broader human rights society UPR coalitions, can create additional and effective possibilities for impact on the final outcome and add new synergies for lifting children's rights violations into other important national and international human rights processes.
- **Analyse your government's past behaviour in the UPR process.** It is likely that your government has reviewed another state as part of a troika in the past. Find out as much as you can about its involvement in the troika, whether it pushed certain issues, sent high-level representation, and took the process seriously etc. In addition, it is worth finding out whether your government have made any recommendations to other governments or asked any questions during their review. This can highlight areas of interest for your government. For example, Tanzania has made a number of recommendations encouraging civil society consultation by the states under review. Civil society in Tanzania could then use those quotes to ask for a high level of consultation in the drafting of Tanzania's report in 2011. All the information on state involvement and participation can be found at [www.upr-info.org](http://www.upr-info.org)

## Case study

In Nepal, Save the Children engaged in a historic process. By providing technical assistance to 138 human rights organisations and by financing the first National Human Rights UPR Consultation for all these organisations, we were able to lift children's rights violations into the broader human rights agenda within the country. This process also impacted very positively on the interest of the government in Nepal, creating fruitful synergies with a number of embassies and UN missions in Geneva.

## Involvement in state report preparation

NGOs need to insist that the state involves as many citizens and civil society organisations as possible when preparing its own report. Civil society can also ask states to run an awareness campaign on the UPR to bring it to the attention of the public and media.

As a children's rights community, we should try to convince the state to include some of our concerns in their report. The deadline for NGO submissions to the OHCHR in the UPR process is **before** the government deadline. Therefore we can share our reports with the government and seek to influence their report in line with our recommendations. We can also encourage the government to use the data we cite in our report to ensure an accurate and comprehensive review of children's rights in the country. The government, unlike our report, will be concentrating on the whole range of human rights and therefore it is essential that we, as civil society, are very focused on the most important children's rights issues and have clear recommendations that governments can engage with.

Different countries consult with civil society in different ways and at different stages.

## State-led consultations with civil society

Republic of **Korea** held consultative meetings with NHRI, NGOs and experts after they had produced the first draft of its report. The government set up an online survey to gather public opinion on the draft.

In **Bahrain**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew up a plan of action before it started drafting its report, in order to identify the different stages of preparation and the opportunities for stakeholders to participate, provide input and take part in the process.

The government of **Guatemala** worked together with the OHCHR country office to consult members of civil society and train them on how they could participate in the UPR process.

In **Tonga**, the consultations took place with capacity constraints but briefings and preparatory work took place with government ministries and agencies, including the Tonga Police, the Tonga Defence Service, as well as with most of the 49 civil society organisations that are members of the Civil Society Forum of Tonga. Discussions were held with the Chief Justice, the Minister for Justice and Attorney General, the Solicitor-General and the Tonga Law Society. In addition, the Tonga Chamber of Commerce was consulted, as was the Tonga Media Council. By the end of the consultation process, civil society as a whole had publicly approved the national report.

## The NGO submission

In addition to influencing the government's report, civil society has the opportunity to submit its own UPR reports (alternative reports) to the UPR process. This is an important role for civil society and we should aim to engage with this process in every country we work in. Without civil society reports, the realities of children's lives may not be represented in the review process.

In order to have maximum influence on the OHCHR summary document, and ultimately the final outcome document, we need to write our submissions in a way that makes them **relevant** and **easy** for states to read and use. Our reports must be **focused** on the key children's rights issues, be **action oriented** and **persuasive** with clear, concise, and concrete **recommendations**.

Save the Children, and our partners, have managed to get many of our recommendations included in state reports, but we have had more success in some countries than others and that is linked to the quality of the reports submitted.

## The basics

- Send email submissions to the OHCHR at [uprsubmissions@ohchr.org](mailto:uprsubmissions@ohchr.org)
- **Title of email:** name of the organisation, whether it's an individual or joint submission, name of the country under review, number of the UPR session, the month and year. E.g. *Save the Children – individual submission – Nepal – 14<sup>th</sup> Session, October 2012*
- **Report format:** Word document only (no PDF files), Times New Roman, font size 12, paragraphs and pages must be numbered, and the extensive use of footnotes is discouraged.
- **Language:** OHCHR prefers submissions to be written in UN official languages, preferably in English, French or Spanish.
- **Page limit:** individual submissions must be no longer than five pages and joint submissions can be up to ten pages. Annexes can be attached with no page limit but they should not include pictures, maps, annual reports, or reports from other organisations. Check the OHCHR website for up-to-date deadlines on NGO submissions. Note: it is much earlier than state deadlines. Late submissions (even by one day) will not be accepted!  
[www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NewDeadlines.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NewDeadlines.aspx)
- NGOs are advised to address the concerns and recommendations by using the relevant headings, in line with the headings developed by the secretariat of the OHCHR. They are not required to use *all* the headings but are strongly advised to apply the relevant ones. They include:
  1. Background and framework
    - i. Scope of international obligations, constitutional and legislative framework, institutional and human rights infrastructure, and policy measures
  2. Promotion and protection of human rights
    - i. Implementation of international human rights obligations, equality and non-discrimination, civil and political rights, economic social and cultural rights

## Some key points to remember:

- **Identify the main issues.** This is a short report of only five to ten pages. The key to success is being clear in your focus. You can't discuss all children's rights issues in your country in a meaningful way within the page limit. Identify the top children's rights issues in the country, and prioritise. This isn't the UNCRC report, which has to cover all rights issues. The important thing for the UPR is prioritisation. In our experience, the most effective lobbying has focused on three to four children's rights issues.

A **useful exercise** in a coalition meeting is to split the group up into smaller groups and give each group 45 minutes to discuss their top three to five children's rights issues in the country. Try to get people to think outside of their sectors and divide the groups to get a mix of expertise. Ask each group to come back and present their prioritised issues and the reasons for choosing them. Once all groups have done that, identify whether there were any areas of agreement. If not, give each

participant a number of votes (if you want three areas in the report, give them three votes each). The whole group then votes for the areas of focus for the UPR report.

- **Use up-to-date data as evidence.** Once you have chosen your issues make sure you include evidence and reliable data in the couple of paragraphs that set out the problem. Don't depend on opinions, such as "in our experience, quality education is a problem". Instead use statistics that show teacher: pupil ratios, levels of illiteracy and drop-out, water and sanitation facilities, and teacher training standards etc. If you don't have the information, do some research to find out what the most recent UNICEF report says. Also, check out national academic institution studies, speak to other civil society organisations, and if the data is impossible to find, such as in sexual abuse cases, raise it as a problem in the UPR report as something that the government needs to prioritise.
- **Spend time on writing your recommendations.** These are possibly the most important part of your report. The UPR is action oriented. Your report should state not just the problem, but how the problem should be fixed. The recommendations should ask the government to start do certain things, or continue to do certain things, to deal with the problems you have highlighted. Only so many recommendations will make it into the final list. Remember the OHCHR takes all NGO submissions and produces a summary of ten pages. To ensure we feature in those ten pages we need to make sure our recommendations are relevant, action orientated and monitorable.

It is essential that we don't produce endless amounts of recommendations in our report. If we have three issues, we should have only nine recommendations, and if we have five issues, then 15 recommendations are more than enough. If it is possible to reduce the number of recommendations and still include everything we need to say, then we should do that.

**What makes a good recommendation?** When writing recommendations it is important to keep four things in mind:

1. They must **relate to the problem**. In other words, the recommendation must solve the problem (at least in part) that we have raised. That might sound obvious but it is something some reports fail to do.
2. They must be **specific**. The three W's. **Who** do you want to do **what** and by **when**?
3. They must be **measurable**. Do not just ask governments to 'improve' or 'increase.' We can't measure that. We need to ask for specific increases by X amount.

They must be **realistic but ambitious**. This is particularly important in setting deadlines. If all your recommendations are for six months after the review, that's not realistic. On the other hand, don't give governments too long if something needs to be done quickly.

## Examples of good, action-orientated recommendations

### **Sierra Leone**

We urged the government to improve the birth registration mechanism in accordance with Article 7 of the UNCRC, by improving access and services, exempting costs for registration for all children under 12 months of age, and making registration facilities available within a reasonable geographical distance in all areas of the country by April 2012.

### **Tanzania**

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and local governments in Tanzania and Zanzibar should establish social protection mechanisms, such as safety nets in emergency situations and regular cash transfers targeting children under the age of two in the poorest families, by 2013.

### **Zimbabwe**

The Government of Zimbabwe should abolish corporal punishment through a constitutional provision by December 2012.

## Three types of recommendations – nuances in language

### **1) Urgent action**

As NGOs, we have a tradition of urging immediate action from states. In the UPR process, we should continue to do so, and include timelines for our demands.

However in order to make states pick up our suggested recommendations we might also need to balance our approach with different types of recommendations

### **2) 'Consider' recommendations**

Encouraging states 'to consider' a specific action can make it more likely that governments will accept recommendations than the 'calls for urgent action'. This nuance is important as our ultimate goal is that governments accept our recommendations and those recommendations result in concrete changes for children.

### **3) Encourage states to continue good work**

Recommendations encouraging states to continue good work for children, such as following up on a National Plan of Action or continuing to financially support a specific thematic issue, are also recommendations that have proved effective.

As NGOs this means that we need to challenge our own perception of recommendation language.

To learn more, see [www.upr-info.org](http://www.upr-info.org) Article: Analytical assessment of the UPR 2008-2010.

# WHAT CAN NGOS DO ONCE THEY HAVE SUBMITTED THEIR REPORT TO MAKE SURE IT HAS INFLUENCE IN THE REVIEW SESSION IN GENEVA?

## Lobbying embassies in the state under review

Unlike the reporting to the UN treaty bodies, including the UNCRC, those who examine and are examined in the HRC, are not necessarily human rights experts, but politicians, diplomats and other state representatives. They may therefore not have experience dealing with human rights violations on a daily basis.

Many states depend on information from their embassies and representatives in the country under review. The embassies are therefore very interested and dependent on updated information on human rights violations on the ground in the country where their embassies are present, and NGOs are, in most cases, more than welcome to submit information. This is a golden opportunity for NGOs to share valuable information with the embassies and input is normally highly appreciated.

The embassies are usually asked by their capitals to provide relevant input and questions to the review **approximately two months before the date of the review in the HRC in Geneva** .

This implies that NGOs must start lobbying the embassies in due time (after they've submitted their report) to be able to influence the state's questions, concerns and recommendations at the crucial embassy level.

Note: most states normally only raise two to four issues regarding other states. If we, as NGOs, want to impact this, we need to be able to prioritise efficiently among the concerns and recommendations we highlight to the embassies. If they decide to raise the issue of children's human rights, each state will probably only pick one or two of our recommendations. It's worth doing some research on what specific areas of children's rights are of interest to the state the embassy is representing, before approaching them with our prioritised concerns and recommendations.

**In addition to this, it is very important to know that states will, in principle, only be able to address concerns and recommendations on issues already covered by the state under review.** Ideally, the lobbying should wait until the state report has been made public, but in practice this is not always possible as there might be delays in the publications of these on the website of the OHCHR etc.

## Lobbying states at capital level

INGOs with offices in many countries will also have an opportunity to influence the concerns and recommendations at capital level, as capitals receive their information from the embassies. To impact at capital level, NGOs need to provide information to contacts at the ministries before the internal deadlines. Deadlines for providing input may vary from ministry to ministry, and from country to country. NGOs will not automatically be informed about these procedures. Some states may choose

not to respond to NGO correspondence, but will still use the information we provide in their examination of the state under review.

## Lobbying missions in Geneva

Once states have compiled the country-specific information from their embassy in the country under review, they forward the issues of concern and recommendations – and sometimes also suggestions for written advance questions – from their capital to their permanent representative at the missions in Geneva. The missions in Geneva are the ones who conduct the review, in terms of orally raising concerns and suggesting recommendations to the state under review during the UPR session in the HRC. The missions in Geneva are also involved in the preparation of possible advance written questions to the state under review.

Our office in Geneva has carried out detailed analysis on which governments are most likely to raise children's rights issues during the UPR process. The Geneva office can help country programmes to compile a list of the key recommendations from their NGO submission and identify which states should be approached with which recommendations in order to have the best chance of influencing the UPR review. For example, if Slovenia has a particular interest in violence, the Geneva office could take a recommendation on violence against children from the NGO submission from Zimbabwe and ask Slovenia to raise that in Zimbabwe's interactive dialogue session.

The most successful lobbying and impact occurs when our messages, concerns and recommendations on children's rights violations to embassies at country level, are efficiently coordinated with the lobbying of Ministries of Foreign Affairs at the capital level *and* the UN mission in Geneva.

## DO NGOS HAVE A ROLE DURING THE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE IN THE HRC?

NGOs may attend the review in the HRC and listen to the examination, but NGOs will not be allowed to take the floor at this stage. That is why it is so important that we have asked other governments who can speak in the review session to raise our recommendations and questions (see page 11 for more details).

However, NGOs do have the possibility to hold parallel events during the session of the working group to create increased awareness around children's rights violations in the countries under review. These side events can coincide with the days of the interactive dialogue. Please note that arranging a side event at the HRC is a time-consuming process and must be planned in due time and coordinated with the Save the Children Geneva office.

# WHAT CAN NGOS DO AFTER THE ORAL EXAMINATION AND UNTIL THE FINAL OUTCOME DOCUMENT IS ADOPTED IN THE NEXT HUMAN RIGHTS SESSION?

When a state is examined in the HRC during the UPR session, they will be presented with a written list of the concerns and recommendations raised by the other states – a list which is prepared during the review by the troika and the secretariat of the OHCHR.

The state is then expected to explicitly express which of these recommendations they will accept and which recommendations they will not accept before the final outcome document is adopted in the next UPR session in the HRC some months later. Most states choose to flag which recommendations they need more time to consider and which recommendations they accept immediately.

While the state is considering the recommendations before the next UPR session in the HRC, the NGOs should use these months to actively influence the state in their choices.

So far this has been a rather closed process within governments, but **by using our informal channels in the most effective way, we can potentially create a great impact through this process. We should meet with the government, hold press events and try to lobby as much as possible for the government to accept the children's rights recommendations.**

NGOs can also use the months in-between the two UPR sessions to prepare a statement in order to take the floor during the plenary before the adoption of the outcome in the following UPR session in the HRC. Even if these statements cannot influence the UPR outcome document and recommendations, they can be an important voice and part of the written documentation of the HRC, which can be useful in the advocacy work on the follow-up of the recommendations at national level.

Please note that UPR sessions are public, non-confidential and broadcasted by a public webcast, which, for some countries, may imply a risk analysis.

## **If it is too risky for NGOs to engage in the UPR – the possibility of quiet diplomacy.**

Unlike the treaty body reporting, including the reporting process to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UPR submissions and sessions are **not confidential**. Both the plenary UPR session and the following UPR session in the HRC a couple of months later, where the final outcome document is adopted, are broadcasted by webcast.

There may be countries where Save the Children is present and it is considered too risky for local staff on the ground to engage in the UPR process. Within Save the Children, we have nevertheless been able to engage in the UPR process and have had impact on the UPR outcome document in

countries without having engaged publicly in the process. This has been done by providing the necessary concerns and recommendations regarding children's rights violations either through quiet channels to missions in Geneva and/or engaging international human rights organisations which are not present in the country, and *without any mention* of Save the Children. The support of the Save the Children Geneva office in these circumstances can be particularly important.

## WHAT CAN NGOS DO WHEN THE FINAL OUTCOME DOCUMENT HAS BEEN ADOPTED?

**The UPR outcome document and recommendations to the state is a highly important advocacy tool for NGOs.**

The final UPR outcome document will, as mentioned above, be made up of two sets of recommendations: those that have the support of the state under review, and those which do not. The final outcome will in turn be adopted by the plenary of the Council, and contain a summary of the process, conclusions and/or recommendations, and the voluntary commitments of the state concerned.

NGOs should be directly involved in the follow-up to the review, and the UPR outcome document, including recommendations to the state, is a very important advocacy tool for NGOs! We can push the state to address the recommendations, and collaborate with national human rights organisations, such as NHRIs, parliament, civil society, academia, media, etc. In particular, children's rights NGOs can make sure children are an integral part of the national agenda following the review. We can distribute the review report nationally, draw attention to children's rights issues and draw up an action plan or strategy to help with implementation.

**In fact it is our duty to monitor the implementation of the UPR recommendations!**

### Engage voluntarily in mid-term reviews

A number of states have voluntarily chosen to conduct a mid-term review two years after the UPR review and the adoption of the report. By doing this, the state is willing to assess the implementation of the UPR recommendations half way through the cycles. This provides another important window of opportunity for us as NGOs to actively monitor the implementation of the UPR recommendations in due time before the mid-term review and also comment and monitor on the states' own perception of improvements after the mid-term review.

### Child participation and the UPR

Children can be involved in every stage of the UPR process and we should help to facilitate that.

“TAKE CHILDREN SERIOUSLY, BECAUSE THEY WILL BE THE LEADERS IN THE FUTURE. AND CHILDREN WHO LEARN

**TO SOLVE PROBLEMS NOW WILL BE MORE ABLE TO SOLVE THE BIG PROBLEMS LATER.”** Hassan from World Vision Lebanon's child-led UPR submission.

In a recent survey by CRIN they found that very few NGOs had involved children in the reporting process, or at any stage of the UPR. However, when asked what they would do differently next time, more than half said they would involve children in the process. The responses suggested the lack of child participation was more a result of time and capacity issues as opposed to recognising the benefits of involving children in the UPR.

### **Case study: child participation in Lebanon's UPR**

World Vision successfully incorporated the views of children into their alternative report for Lebanon's review. The NGO staged a series of workshops with children in different parts of the country and in different socio-economic contexts to discuss the issues they faced in their own country. After hearing about the broad range of issues that existed, the children voted on the concerns they felt were particularly problematic and affected them most. With the children's involvement, research was then conducted into evidence of these violations and reports were drawn up. Finally, a lessons-learned session with children and staff involved in the child-led reporting process was conducted to help improve the process for the next UPR session. A 16-year-old child, who was involved in the process, attended the review in Geneva and will report back to his peers about the experience. (CRIN)

Save the Children has not succeeded so far in prioritising child participation in our submissions. As children's rights organisations, Save the Children and its partners have an obligation to not just raise children's rights but provide a space in which children themselves can be heard in this important process.

Obviously the more time given to the preparation of the NGO submission, the more meaningful any child participation can be. However even when pushed for time we can and should at least consult the children we work with on our draft report and include their feedback and priorities in any final submission.

We can also lobby for children to be consulted by the government when writing its report, which as we know is prepared after the NGO report is submitted and children can be involved in the planning for implementation of the recommendations.

**Please contact the Child Rights Governance Initiative for more information** about UPR reporting; Jennifer Grant [j.grant@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:j.grant@savethechildren.org.uk) or Ellen Stie [ellen.stie@reddbarna.no](mailto:ellen.stie@reddbarna.no)

