Project “Coordination Meeting for UPR Stakeholders”: Outcome Report

Strengthening Dialogue and Cooperation between All UPR Stakeholders

Nairobi, Kenya
13-14 July 2015
Executive Summary

On 13-14 July 2015, UPR Info, thanks to the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nairobi, and together with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Kenya Human Rights Commission, organised a “Coordination Meeting for UPR stakeholders”. The purpose of the two-day event was to ensure that all national stakeholders are equipped with the tools to maximise their influence and input in the implementation phase. The meeting also aimed to create space for a cooperative dialogue between civil society organisations (CSOs) and Government representatives, a space to meet and discuss the way forward, and the possibility of securing partnerships to ensure an effective and inclusive process of implementation of UPR recommendations in Kenya.

The July meeting was the climax of an eight-month project meant to act upon the many opportunities offered by the UPR. The first stage of the project began in December 2014, at the UPR Info Pre-session on Kenya. The Pre-session provided a critical platform for several Kenyan CSOs to brief Permanent Missions on human rights issues within the State, in advance of the UPR session of Kenya in January 2015. Following the Pre-session in Geneva and the subsequent UPR a second step took place: a workshop was held in March 2015 outside Nairobi, where approximately 25 CSO representatives met to discuss UPR recommendations and to work on an implementation plan. The two-day event is the third step of the project and UPR Info’s comprehensive strategy to improve in-country knowledge of the UPR and cooperative discussion. A final fourth step, in 2017, will focus on the drafting of a civil society mid-term report, to reinvigorate national dialogue on the UPR among stakeholders.

In practical terms, the July meeting was divided into two days. During the first day, two parallel sessions took place: one dedicated to CSOs, where the implementation plan for UPR recommendations was discussed and updated, putting emphasis on the indicators that will assess the progress of the implementation phase. The second session aimed to train Government representatives on the UPR, and prepare them for a dialogue with CSOs.

Once all stakeholders were more aware of what they could gain through partnerships with all actors, a bilateral dialogue was organised on the second day for CSOs and Government representatives to
discuss the way forward, including identifying the opportunities for cooperation on how to implement UPR recommendations on the ground.

Overall, 50 civil society members and over 15 Government representatives participated in the event. This ensured a solid foundation for fruitful discussion and collaboration.

This meeting is only the first step of a long-term cooperation among the different stakeholders for the implementation of UPR recommendations. Government representatives and CSOs were able to constructively discuss the UPR recommendations and their subsequent implementation. More concrete plan of actions will be discussed in a new dialogue scheduled for September. The OHCHR in Kenya supported the organisation of the meeting, and will continue working together with all stakeholders.

Kenya was selected by UPR Info as a target country due to its successful first UPR cycle. UPR Info set out with two goals: to learn more from this experience and to support a successful second cycle. We undoubtedly met the first goal as we will share in other countries the Kenyan UPR process, and we look forward to seeing how the outcomes of our activities take root in the future. The cooperative spirit that guided the two-day workshop will serve as a reminder of how new partnerships and joint strategies and projects can lead to an amelioration of the human rights for all citizens of Kenya.

1. Conceptual background

In March 2015, UPR Info, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) and the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) organised a coordination meeting that resulted in a discussion among CSOs about the implementation of UPR recommendations and their role in the implementation process. The main outcome document of the meeting was an implementation plan containing CSO expectations for implementation of UPR recommendations. Since the March meeting, Kenyan CSOs have been engaging through various UPR activities to monitor and support the implementation of the recommendations.
In June 2015, during the formal adoption of its UPR by the UN Human Rights Council, the Kenyan Government provided final responses to all recommendations it had received during its second UPR in January 2015. This process marked the beginning of the implementation phase. In order to ensure that all national stakeholders are equipped with the tools to make the most of the implementation phase, UPR Info, together with its partners, organised 1) a one-day workshop among civil society organisations 2) a one-day training for line ministry representatives and 3) a one-day dialogue between CSOs and the Government. During these meetings, UPR recommendations and a corresponding implementation plan were discussed among all the participants. The July UPR meeting provided space for CSOs and the Government to constructively discuss implementations plans, and paved the way for a future cooperation that will positively impact the human rights situation in Kenya. It was organised together with Kenyan stakeholders with a view to facilitate further dialogue.

2. Organisation and participants

During the first day, all except two CSOs that attended the March workshop, as well as additional CSOs, took part in the event. A total of 50 CSOs representatives attended the two-day Coordination Meeting for UPR stakeholders. Among those, 10 representatives from grassroots CSOs coming from outside Nairobi and from rural areas were also present in the meeting. Thanks to the high number of CSOs, all human rights areas addressed by UPR recommendations were covered.

On the same day, a parallel training was provided by KHRC, KNCHR and UPR Info to the Government representatives. Over 15\(^1\) representatives attended the training.

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\(^1\) Ministry of Water, the Department of Refugee Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of land housing and urban development, the Ministry of development & planning, the National legal aid & awareness program, the National Legal Aid and Awareness Programme, the Ministry of agriculture livestock and fisheries, the National Police Service Commission, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Social Security, the Department of Justice, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Ministry of home affairs (Kenya Prisons), the Human Rights Caucus of the Parliament, the Judicial, and the National Gender and Equality Commission.
During the second day, all the above participants were brought together. In total the workshop saw the participations of more than 70 participants from both government and CSOs. It is worth mentioning that the second day of the Coordination Meeting for UPR stakeholders saw the presence of a European Union representative in Nairobi.

3. Summary of the two-day Coordination Meeting

The Coordination Meeting for UPR stakeholders was held over a period of two days. As previously mentioned, during day one, two different sessions took place in parallel, and were both led by UPR Info representatives. The first training session was designed for civil society organisations as a follow-up of the March workshop and as a preparation for the dialogue day. The second session was organised to meet a demand by the Kenya Department of Justice (DoJ), the body responsible for UPR implementation, that arose right after the official adoption of the Working Group report of Kenya in Geneva. UPR Info was asked to train representatives of the line ministries on the UPR who wanted to become more acquainted with the UPR process at both the international level and in the Kenyan context. Having two training sessions was also a way to ensure a productive discussion among all stakeholders during the Coordination Meeting, as cooperation and collaboration among all parties was emphasized during the two individual sessions.

On Day 2, all the participants from both Government and CSOs met in plenary to discuss the way forward, including identifying the opportunities for cooperation on how to implement UPR recommendations on the ground. In this regard, each category of actor was encouraged to collaborate as it was in their best interests. Kenya’s second UPR and its outcome were also presented, while during the second part of the morning, CSOs presented their matrices for implementation of recommendations.

It is important to mention that CSOs only presented a limited number of recommendations due to time constraints, but all of them have worked on many more recommendations that will need to be taken into consideration when drafting the national implementation plan.
4. Way forward

The objective of the two-day meeting was to ensure that all national stakeholders are equipped with the tools to make the most of the implementation phase. Most importantly, the workshop aimed to create space for a cooperative dialogue between CSOs and Government representatives, a space to meet and discuss the way forward and the possibility of securing partnerships to ensure an effective and inclusive process of implementation of UPR recommendations in Kenya. In that sense, the major goal was fully achieved.

Indeed, Ms. Emily Chweya from the Department of Justice mentioned that a second meeting to harmonise the implementation plan will be organised by the Government in September 2015, and will see the participation of several line ministries and parliamentarians. The KNCHR will be present and so should a number of CSOs in order to arrange the meeting as inclusive as possible. The matrices developed by the CSOs should be the cornerstone for discussions and should provide useful information to be included in the draft national implementation plan.

This workshop is a very promising beginning, but only the beginning of a long-term process. It is now up to the Kenyan government and CSOs to find a way to constructively cooperate for the common good of Kenya. Once more, this meeting provided all the participants with the basis for a joint long-term strategy for the implementation of UPR recommendations in Kenya. The meeting to be held in September will be another great opportunity to discuss UPR recommendations and to concretise a national implementation plan that will include all the different actors working together with the common goal of ameliorating the human rights situation in Kenya.

4.1. Sustainability

The Coordination Meeting for UPR Stakeholders was the climax of a project that started in Geneva with CSOs briefing Permanent Mission during the Pre-session on Kenya, and continued with a CSOs workshop that took place in March outside Nairobi with the objective of starting to work on an action plan, on the indicators and on an implementation plan for UPR recommendations.
91% of the CSOs that were present in the March session were also present in the Coordination Meeting. New CSOs are becoming expert of the UPR mechanism and will continue working on the implementation of the recommendations together with the different stakeholders. CSOs will also disseminate the knowledge acquired throughout the different workshops and provide assistance and technical support to other CSOs that might want to start working on the UPR. Most importantly, many new partnerships have been established: among CSOs and among CSOs and the Government, paving the way for a long-term collaboration that will have a positive impact on the human rights situation in Kenya.

5. Main Outputs and Outcomes

- 1 implementation plan discussed among CSOs and Government
- Concrete indicators were clearly indentified and discussed among the stakeholders and were included in the matrix
- CSOs are empowered with long-term strategy
- CSOs are more aware of the UPR framework and how to cooperate with the Government
- Government is more aware of the UPR framework and how to cooperate with CSOs
- Several UPR recommendations were discussed in depth and many more will be discussed in future meetings
- CSOs improved their network
- CSOs and Government representatives made plans to continue working together on the UPR recommendations
- A second meeting will take place in September 2015 to further discuss plans for the implementation of UPR recommendations among CSOs and Government representatives
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