

## UPR Info's database

### Voluntary pledges and commitments

One of the main objectives of the Universal Periodic Review is to assess the fulfilment of the State's human rights obligations and commitments, positive developments and challenges faced by States. In this regard, the UPR mechanism provides States and stakeholders the opportunity to update the Human Rights Council on the status of implementation of the voluntary pledges and commitments made by States, including those undertaken when presenting their candidatures for election to the Council. It also provides States the opportunity to announce additional voluntary pledges and commitments in the context of their UPR.

While most voluntary pledges and commitments made in writing by States when announcing their candidature for election for membership to the Council can be found in the website of the United Nations General Assembly ([www.un.org/ga](http://www.un.org/ga)), not much attention has been paid to the importance of systematically and clearly recording the voluntary pledges and commitments made by States in the context of the UPR.

This database of voluntary pledges and commitments made by States in the context of the UPR (which is an extension of the UPR Info database of recommendations) aims therefore at: (i) contributing to making information on the voluntary pledges and commitments made by States during their first UPR easily available; (ii) facilitating the analysis of the pledges made in the context of the UPR by classifying them by issues/rights and by action-categories, and; (iii) contributing to establishing accountability mechanisms.

## 1. Methodology of identification

Only voluntary pledges and commitments **announced or expressly reiterated** during their first UPR, and **clearly identified and/or recorded as a voluntary pledge** - by the State under Review (SuR) or with the consent of the SuR - in the relevant UN official UPR documentation<sup>1</sup>, were considered for this database.

Statements made by States describing (general/specific) commitments to promote and protect human rights as part of their international obligations, and information on priorities, plans or actions intended to achieve certain goals and/or to implement previously announced pledges, **unless listed in specific sections on ‘voluntary pledges and commitments’** in the relevant official UN reports, are not included in the database.

**No distinction between pledges focusing on activities to be undertaken by States at national or at international or regional levels is made in the database.**

In a few cases, States announced their decision to ‘convert’ UPR (accepted) recommendations into ‘voluntary pledges’. **These voluntary pledges were also incorporated in the database.**

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<sup>1</sup> Relevant UN official UPR documentation:

- (i) National report, as prepared and submitted by the SuR;
- (ii) UPR Working Group report, as prepared by the Troika with the support of the OHCHR/UPR Council Secretariat and the involvement of the SuR;
- (iii) Addendum to the UPR Working Group report, as prepared and submitted by the SuR and;
- (iv) Summary of the Council meeting during which the UPR outcome of the concerned SuR was adopted, as prepared by the OHCHR/UPR Council Secretariat with the involvement of the SuR, as relevant.

With regard to the timing of when the pledges were made, the UN UPR official documentation easily allows for making the following distinction:

- (i) voluntary pledges made **before the review** (as contained in the national reports);
- (ii) voluntary pledges made **during the interactive dialogue** - before or after other States have made recommendations – (as contained in the UPR Working Group report section I A. ‘Presentation by the State under review’, section I.B. ‘Responses by the State under review’ and/or section III entitled ‘Voluntary Commitments of the State under Review’ ) and;
- (iii) voluntary pledges made **after the interactive dialogue** (as contained in the Addendum to the UPR Working Group report and/or the summary of the HRC regular session and meeting during which the UPR outcome was adopted).

Information on progress made in the implementation of voluntary pledges and commitments made by States when being elected for membership of the Council **has not been included** in the database.

Voluntary pledges made by countries when announcing their candidature for membership to the HRC **are not classified** in the database.