



# Child Protection Protocol

## Introduction

UPR Info is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Geneva. The organization aims to strengthen the capacity of Governments, Parliamentarians, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), and civil society organizations to engage in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process in order to improve the human rights situation in all segments of society.

Among its programmes and projects, UPR Info organizes the UPR Pre-sessions three times per year, one month in advance of the UPR Working Group sessions. The Pre-sessions offer civil society and NHRIs an international platform to advocate directly to State delegations ahead of the UPR Working Group and to facilitate exchanges with diplomatic delegations to contribute to a better understanding of the human rights situation in the State under Review. The aim of the Pre-sessions is to ensure that the recommendations that will be made at the Review are specific and context-based.

With the support of Child Rights Connect, UPR Info is committed to inviting at least two children per year to participate in UPR Info's Pre-sessions in Geneva, providing them with the opportunity to benefit from this advocacy platform as well as technical training ahead of the event. As part of this project, UPR Info and Child Rights Connect have also developed a child-friendly guide to the UPR that describes how children can effectively engage at all stages of the UPR process. This is provided to all child participants ahead of their participation in the Pre-sessions.

## Scope

This Child Safeguarding Protocol covers all of UPR Info's Pre-sessions and related activities. The Protocol applies to any child up to the age of 18, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), any accompanying adults from the host organization and all UPR Info staff. For youth participants between the ages of 18-24, the principles of this protocol are also applicable.

'Staff' is defined as those who are employed directly by or volunteer for UPR Info as well as staff and volunteers of partner organizations whilst they are engaging with children and youth as part of UPR Info's activities.

'Host organization' indicates the organization that the child participant will be representing at the Pre-session. This is the organization that has put forward the application for the child. The accompanying adult or chaperone is the person from the host organization who travels with the child and is present with the child at all meetings and events organized within the framework of UPR Info's Pre-sessions.

The Pre-sessions and related activities comprise the timeframe from the application process to the end of the child's stay in Geneva during the Pre-session week. A detailed description of UPR Info's engagement



with children participating in the Pre-sessions can be found in the document *Pre-sessions Protocol: Child Participation Project*.

Under the framework of the child participation project, UPR Info works in coordination with Child Rights Connect (CRC). CRC has its own Child Safeguarding Policy and UPR Info has signed its *Agreement of Joint Procedure* confirming that both organizations agree to follow Child Rights Connect's child safeguarding policy and procedure. UPR Info verifies that the child's host organization is affiliated with Child Rights Connect, has signed the *Agreement of Joint Procedure* and has its own child protection policy.

## Guidelines

This section of the Protocol outlines UPR Info's responsibility to ensure a safe and enabling environment for children participating in the Pre-sessions.

### Support

UPR Info will support the child in the following ways before, during and after the Pre-sessions:

- provide guidelines to help the child prepare their statement and presentation for the Pre-session;
- deliver a one-hour, one-on-one training to prepare the child for the Pre-session, in addition to the regular UPR advocacy training with civil society during the week of the Pre-sessions;
- provide the child with a copy UPR Info's Child Guide to the UPR to prepare them for engagement in the mechanism throughout the process.

In addition, the following protocol will be observed throughout the Pre-sessions:

- panelists, including the child speaker, will be introduced to each other via email to coordinate their interventions;
- the audience and the other panelists will be informed of the presence of a child at the Pre-sessions;
- panelists will be asked to not use offensive, aggressive or explicit language in their respective statements and to not insert any graphic image to their presentations;
- a strict no-photo, no video policy will be enforced during the Pre-sessions;
- there will be space on the podium for the accompanying adult to sit behind the child speaker. The accompanying adult is not allowed to answer questions on behalf of the child, but the child may, if he or she wishes, consult him or her before answering a question;
- prior to the question and answer session, the audience will be asked to specifically frame questions if these are explicitly directed to the child speaker;
- the child speaker can accept or refuse to answer to any question raised by the audience during the question and answer period;
- a debriefing session on the child's experience with the Pre-sessions will be organized with the child speaker either while in Geneva or at a later stage, depending on the child's availability;
- technical follow-up tools will be provided to the child speaker following the Pre-session, in order to encourage and facilitate their continued engagement in the UPR process.



## **Communication**

Use of social media and photography:

- participants to the Pre-session, including the audience, are not allowed to take pictures or videos at the Pre-session;
- UPR Info will only take pictures of the panelists upon receiving their consent, including the child;
- the names of the speakers and contact information, including that of the child, will not be divulged at any stage of the Pre-sessions;
- UPR Info will ask for consent to share statements and presentations on its website.

## **Reporting in case of reprisals**

- It is the responsibility of the host organization to inform UPR Info if there is a safeguarding risk or if the child faces intimidation, threats or acts of reprisals at any point during their engagement in the UPR Info Pre-session;
- UPR Info will report concrete threats to the child's security to the appropriate office at the OHCHR;
- the focal point for child safeguarding during the Pre-sessions at UPR Info is the Programme Manager of the Policy and Advocacy Programme. UPR Info will maintain a channel of communication with the host organization following the Pre-sessions in case of reprisals.