



Promoting and strengthening
the Universal Periodic Review
<http://www.upr-info.org>

Activity Report - Bangladesh 2021

1. Introduction

Bangladesh's human rights record was reviewed for the third time on 14th of May 2018 at the United Nations in Geneva, during the 30th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. Bangladesh received 251 recommendations. In September 2018, the Human Rights Council, at its 39th session, adopted Bangladesh's Report of Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: The Government accepted 178 of these recommendations.

In 2021 and to prepare the ground for the upcoming fourth cycle, UPR info in partnership with ASK and the Bangladeshi NHRC as well as UNDP Bangladesh organized a UPR and mid-term reporting workshop. The workshop included representatives of civil society, NHRC and government as well as UN Agencies.

The overall objective was to raise awareness about the current implementation status of the UPR recommendations and the possibility of submitting a mid-term report summarizing that information.

These activities fall within the new phase of *UPR Info's In-country Programme* and aims at building the capacity of national stakeholders in Bangladesh and ensuring a national ownership of the third cycle to further improve the human rights situation on the ground.

Due to the current pandemic caused by Covid-19, UPR Info and partners had to change the delivery methods of these training and adapt through innovative strategies to support the technical capacity building of national stakeholders.

2. Country Context

Bangladesh has been a new target country of UPR Info since the second phase of its In-Country Programme was launched. During this new phase, UPR Info has been relying more on the role of the NHRI to lead the UPR efforts and national ownership of the improvement of the human rights situation.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainty of international travels, UPR Info could not guarantee its presence and implementation of activities as per usual. Nonetheless, to sustain the technical support to national stakeholders, activities were maintained and adapted accordingly to the context. As such, UPR Info conducted consultations with its national implementing partners to find alternatives to the implementation of 2020 activities. Following this exchange, the outcome was that UPR Info should facilitate the sessions online with support from local partners. This option required that UPR Info transmitted the knowledge through a "Training of Trainers" (ToT) their colleagues.

Therefore, UPR Info organized an online training session preparing implementing partners in the content and delivery of the sessions. Other target-specific sessions were also conducted online where each stakeholder participating to the workshop could learn about the specificities of their roles within the UN mechanism. Finally, the workshop was conducted with joint interactive sessions between UPR Info's staff, UNDP Bangladesh officers and representatives from civil society, NHRC and Government.

UPR Info envisions continuing providing support to partners for the upcoming key UPR phases and cycle.

3. Activities

UPR Info organized a virtual ‘Workshop on the Universal Periodic Review’, from 17 to 20 January 2021, in cooperation with Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh (NHRCB) and the Human Rights Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-HRP).

The objective was to strengthen capacities of national stakeholders to utilize the UPR as a driver to promote and improve human rights at the national level. It also aimed at triggering dialogue among groups of stakeholders on the human rights situation and therefore, foster an inclusive UPR cycle. The specific objectives were to:

- increase awareness among national stakeholders on the UPR and how to engage with the mechanism.
- raise awareness among national stakeholders on the implementation of UPR recommendations.
- enhance the quality of CSOs and NHRC third cycle mid-term report.
- sensitize participants on how to integrate a gender perspective and exploit synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their reports, advocacy material and analysis.
- strengthen coordination among national CSOs/NHRC including organizations working in different regions of the country, when advocating at the UPR.

The workshop provided representatives from line ministries, CSOs and NHRC with information on the cyclic modalities of the UPR, good practices of mid-term reporting and how to make the most of the period leading up to the next review. Practical advice was shared to ensure impactful reporting. The workshop provided space for the line ministries, NHRCB staff and members, and representatives from CSOs to share their engagement in the UPR process as well as equipped them with the tools to develop an MTR report.

It was a four-day workshop. In the first two days, the CSOs, NHRC and GoB representatives were separately oriented about the UPR process and their role as the key stakeholders. The last two days were kept discussing UPR Mid Term reporting, its process and procedures, some reporting guidelines, best practices, and synergies between the UPR and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UPR Info provided key presentations while participants raise their questions and shared their experiences. In the panel discussions, key speakers (GoB, NHRCB, ASK) addressed implementation efforts as well as addressed issues raised by the participants. Enough time was allocated to allow discussions in Bengali in regular intervals. After the workshop, participants had the opportunity to ask questions through the interactive platform and it was agreed that *UPR Info* would further assist with technicalities in the drafting process via remote support.

The **Training of Trainers** developed by UPR Info aimed to equip national partners with the sufficient knowledge, skills, and technical understanding of the United Nations’ Universal Periodic Review process to facilitate training sessions for their own civil society and National Human Rights Institutions. This session focused on the timeline and best practices for gathering and analyzing data to popularize the UPR MTR reports.

Below is a break-out of the activities conducted in partnership with national stakeholders:

| Activity | Format | Target audience | Dates |
|--|--------|---|----------------|
| 1 Training of Trainers on UPR Mid-term reporting | online | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO • NFP • UNDP • NHRCB | 4 January 2021 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 participants, 4 of which were women (90%) Participants from implementing partners (UNDP, ASK Bangladesh, NHRCB) Outcome: a multi-stakeholder workshop on the UPR and mid-term reporting | | | |
| 1 | CSO Orientation Session | Remotely: online | • CSO | 17 January 2021 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37 participants, 17 of which were women (57%) Achievement: CSOs were also made aware of advocacy opportunities around the Mid-term reporting stage | | | |
| 2 | NHRC Orientation session | Remotely: online | • NHRC Bangladesh | 18 January 2021 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-organized with ASK and UNDP Nepal 6 participants, of which 2 were women (40%) Translation of material into Bangladeshi Outcome: information was shared with regional NHRC offices | | | |
| 3 | Government Orientation Session | Remotely: online | • Line ministries representatives | 18 January 2021 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-organized with the NHRC and UNDP 26 participants Outcome: GoB able to engage in fruitful discussion about UPR Implementation with other stakeholders | | | |
| 4 | UPR and MTR workshop | Remotely: online | • CSOs, NHRCB, UNDP, Line ministries representatives | 19 and 20 January 2021 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-organized with ASK, the NHRC and UNDP 69 participants, among them 51% were women 12 districts of Bangladesh represented Achievement: a multi-stakeholder discussion on UPR implementation and UPR mid-term reporting. | | | |

4. Outcomes:

Step 5: UPR Mid-term reporting workshop

- The workshop brought all the stakeholders in one platform where they could discuss the importance of mid-term report, how can they prepare the report and how this report can be used to track the progress.
- It provided the opportunity to the stakeholders to highlight Bangladesh's engagement with the UPR process.
- Newcomers to the process from remote areas were made aware about the UPR process and created interest among them to be involved in this process.
- There was no such capacity building workshop for the CSOs, NHRC and GoB on UPR MTR. This workshop was unique as it provided the technical guidelines as well as presented the best practices around the world.
- It has created a pathway for the GoB, NHRC, CSOs to be engaged with the UPR of their country.

Two UPR CSO mid-term reports were submitted to the mechanism.



Promoting and strengthening
the Universal Periodic Review
<http://www.upr-info.org>

Contact



UPR Info
Rue de Varembé 3
1202 Geneva
Switzerland



Website <http://www.upr-info.org>



Phone: + 41 (0) 22 321 77 70
Fax: + 41 (0) 22 321 77 71



General enquiries
info@upr-info.org



<http://twitter.com/UPRInfo>



<http://www.facebook.com/UPRInfo>