



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

17 July 2023

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Morocco by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 41<sup>st</sup> session in November 2022. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Morocco was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 52<sup>nd</sup> session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/ma-index>), and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "[UPR practical guidance](#)" and the "[UN good practices](#)" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

His Excellency  
Mr. Nasser Bourita  
Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation  
and Moroccan Expatriates of Morocco



## **Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review**

Morocco's ratification, in 2022, of the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are welcome, as are institutional measures taken to protect the human rights of children and persons with disabilities. It is encouraging that Morocco has affirmed its willingness to strengthen cooperation with OHCHR, to interact with the human rights mechanisms, and to follow up on their recommendations, as well as to show leadership in the discussions about national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up.

The adoption of a law to reorganize the National Human Rights Council is welcome, and Morocco is encouraged to continue strengthening its role in full conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). Morocco's commitment to promote public debate on the question of the abolition of the death penalty is also noteworthy, and the Government is encouraged to continue efforts towards its abolition.

While taking note of the adoption of a law on combating violence against women, Morocco is encouraged to adopt a comprehensive legal framework to combat gender-based violence, strengthen support services for women victims of gender-based violence, and to carry out a comprehensive legislative review with a view to amending or repealing all laws that discriminate against women.

Measures taken to promote freedom of opinion and expression are also noted, and Morocco is encouraged fully to harmonize its legislation with international law, in particular with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Continued efforts to facilitate civic engagement on human rights issues are also urged, in particular through measures to safeguard the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and freedom of association, including for human rights defenders, journalists and media workers.

Morocco is further encouraged to continue updating the implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the parliament, the judiciary, the national human rights institution, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations of other international or regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is also encouraged to further strengthen the Inter-ministerial Delegation for Human Rights, its national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that can positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Morocco is encouraged to continue with the practice of submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR  
17 July 2023