



General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
15 November 2018

Original: English

UNEDITED VERSION

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Thirty-first session
Geneva, 5–16 November 2018

Draft report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Belize

* The annex is being circulated without formal editing, in English.

Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its thirty-first session from 5 to 16 November 2018. The review of Belize was held at the 12th meeting, on 12 November 2018. The delegation of Belize was headed by the Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Patrick Andrews. At its 17th meeting, held on 12 November 2018, the Working Group adopted the report on Belize.

2. On 10 January 2018, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Belize: Ecuador, Nigeria and Qatar.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Belize:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/BLZ/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/BLZ/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/BLZ/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Brazil, Liechtenstein, Portugal on behalf of the Group of Friends on national implementation, reporting and follow-up, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay was transmitted to Belize through the troika. These questions are available on the website of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

[To be completed by 23 November 2018]

A. Presentation by the State under review

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

5. During the interactive dialogue, 46 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations

6. **The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue/listed below have been examined by Belize and enjoy the support of Belize:**

6.1. **Adopt an open, merit based selection process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

6.2. **Strengthen cooperation with treaty bodies, including through taking steps to fulfilling its reporting obligation (Viet Nam);**

- 6.3. Establish an institution specifically dedicated to promote and protect human rights in the country (Spain);
- 6.4. Establish a national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles (Ukraine) (Côte d'Ivoire);
- 6.5. Increase investments in institutions responsible for access to justice and human rights, including the Ombudsman's office (Canada);
- 6.6. Strengthen efforts to establish a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Chile);
- 6.7. Continue with the efforts aimed at establishment of the national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Georgia);
- 6.8. Establish a National Human Rights Institution in line with the Paris Principles (Germany) (Iraq);
- 6.9. Take further steps in establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Indonesia);
- 6.10. Align the mandate of the national human rights institution with the Paris Principles (Portugal);
- 6.11. Establish a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles, given the Office of the Ombudsman's limited authority and capacity to fully address complaints of human rights abuse (Republic of Korea);
- 6.12. Establish a National Human Rights Institution (Senegal);
- 6.13. Request the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen existing cooperation, in order to establish a national system for the preparation of reports, as well as the implementation and follow-up of recommendations and obligations in the area of human rights (Paraguay);
- 6.14. Consider establishing or strengthening a national process to assist in coordinating its reporting under various human rights instruments, such as a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) (Bahamas);
- 6.15. Take further proper legislative measures to address discrimination against different groups (Ukraine);
- 6.16. Guarantee the rights of everyone to equal protection under the law, in conformity with Belize's international commitments (Iceland);
- 6.17. Carry out the necessary legal reforms so that the legislation guarantees the protection and promotion of the rights of the LGBTI persons thereby avoiding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (Spain);
- 6.18. Ensure legal protections are enforced to address violence against LGBTI individuals as well as discrimination such as in housing, employment and government services (United States of America);
- 6.19. Take the necessary measures to investigate and punish cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation (Argentina);
- 6.20. Take further measures to reduce the societal stigma faced by LGBTI persons, including through enacting laws that prohibit discrimination against them (Australia);

- 6.21. **Adopt specific legislation aimed at eradicating, punishing and preventing all forms of discrimination, violence or abuse against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity (Chile);**
- 6.22. **Combat discrimination against LGBTI persons (France);**
- 6.23. **Secure equal human rights for LGBTI persons by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the anti-discrimination legislation, in order to protect LGBTI persons against discrimination and violence (Germany);**
- 6.24. **Take measures to fight all forms of discrimination, including those based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Italy);**
- 6.25. **Include sexual orientation and gender identity in the collection of statistical data in order to develop policies that effectively combat violence, discrimination and harassment against LGBTI persons (Mexico);**
- 6.26. **Further integrate climate change approach into strategies to implement Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development in order to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights (Viet Nam);**
- 6.27. **Continue to consider implementing inclusive policies that take into account the needs, views and vulnerabilities of women, children and persons with disabilities on issues relating to education, healthcare, climate change and disaster risk management (Fiji);**
- 6.28. **Investigate and prosecute all alleged cases of security officials using excessive force or engaging in corrupt activity and appropriately penalise offenders (Australia);**
- 6.29. **Address the use of excessive force by law enforcement, including through training, effective investigations and appropriate disciplinary actions in cases of police brutality (Canada);**
- 6.30. **Continue and increase enforcement related to the efforts to address excessive use of force by law enforcements officials (Guyana);**
- 6.31. **Strengthen the capacities of police officers to better treat cases of violence against sexual workers and LGBTI persons (Uruguay);¹**
- 6.32. **Develop and implement training programmes for State authorities, including law enforcement and judicial officials, to ensure non-discrimination and protection of LGBTI persons (Ireland);**
- 6.33. **Enhance efforts to reinforce the rule of law and to prevent and combat episodes of arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings and abuses by security forces, including against human rights defenders (Italy);**
- 6.34. **Expand human rights training to all law enforcement officers including the police and security forces (Republic of Korea);**
- 6.35. **Strengthen the criminal justice system, and speed up the court process to reduce the amount of time prisoners are being held on remand before trial (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

¹ The recommendation, as read out during the interactive dialogue, was: “Review the Constitution and legislation in order to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation, strengthening the capacities of police officers to better treat cases of violence against sexual workers and LGBTI persons”.

- 6.36. **Seek strategic guidance and technical assistance with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as soon as possible (Haiti);**
- 6.37. **Expand human rights training to all law enforcement officers, including magistrates, judges and lawyers (Portugal);**
- 6.38. **Strengthen the protection of human rights defenders against violence and threats they may be subjected to (France);**
- 6.39. **Strengthen measures around investigating, prosecuting and punishing those responsible for modern slavery offences, and ensure adequate victim protection and care (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**
- 6.40. **Address human trafficking challenges with a focus on investigating and prosecuting suspected traffickers, including complicit officials (United States of America);**
- 6.41. **Invest in legal and social services for trafficking and gender-based violence victims with an emphasis on accountability mechanisms that ensure legal protections, prevent abuses by security officials, and provide human rights training for front line officials (United States of America);**
- 6.42. **Strengthen measures to combat trafficking in persons by investigating and prosecuting those responsible, as well as adopting a protection-sensitive approach to victims (Canada);**
- 6.43. **Continue efforts in public awareness raising and capacity building training for duty bearers on anti-trafficking in persons (Philippines);**
- 6.44. **Adopt legislation to combat and punish trafficking in persons in accordance with international standards, ensuring the protection of victims at all times (Mexico);**
- 6.45. **Continue the efforts to overcome challenges in the full investigation, prosecution, and punishment of trafficking in persons, especially women and children (Republic of Korea);**
- 6.46. **Raise the minimum age for marriage for women to 18 years-old, and ensure that this age is always the same for men and women (Mexico);**
- 6.47. **Continue promoting the program “Job Readiness Course” in order to help people improve their skills through capacity building and the development of individual work plans (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**
- 6.48. **Continue to implement socioeconomic developmental policies to empower and safeguard the rights of youth (Maldives);**
- 6.49. **Facilitate access to civil registry centres in rural zones (Senegal);**
- 6.50. **Adopt measures aimed at improving the possibilities for persons with disabilities to access health services (Algeria);**
- 6.51. **Consolidate the achievements obtained in the area of access to health and reduce the social and health vulnerability of some population groups, particularly the inhabitants of rural areas and indigenous peoples (Paraguay);**
- 6.52. **Continue the effective implementation of the National Strategic Health Plan until 2024, including through programs that would allow the continued broadening of access by rural populations (Cuba);**

- 6.53. **Adopt the National Health Strategic Plan 2014-2024 and increase efforts to ensure access of all to adequate healthcare (Guyana);**
- 6.54. **Continue to enhance access to health for all population of Belize (Indonesia);**
- 6.55. **Take concrete steps to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV tests, with particular attention to the specific needs of women and girls, and the LGBTI population (Brazil);**
- 6.56. **Ensure that an effective HIV/AIDS Prevention Strategy includes the principles of human rights and non-discrimination on the basis of gender, age, sexual orientation or gender identity (Iceland);**
- 6.57. **Include education on sexual and reproductive health, including on HIV prevention, in the education system and among health sector staff, and integrate HIV testing and treatment into the public health system without discrimination (Portugal);**
- 6.58. **Pursue policies which seek to further stem the dropout rates for primary and secondary schools as well as improving the transition ratio from primary to secondary school (Trinidad and Tobago);**
- 6.59. **Step up efforts to improve education and to stop school dropouts (Tunisia);**
- 6.60. **Pass specific legislation on access to education (Ukraine);**
- 6.61. **Continue reducing the gap of inscription and training between students of rural and urban areas by providing resources for infrastructure and training of teachers in all schools, particularly in the rural area (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**
- 6.62. **Increase opportunities within the school system for pregnant adolescents to return to school post-delivery and intensifies efforts to stem the premature departure of young males from the school system (Bahamas);**
- 6.63. **Increase investment in education and health fields to effectively reduce school dropouts rate and to guarantee to right to health (China);**
- 6.64. **Continue efforts to ensure access to education, in particular to expand the continuity of studies and inclusive education for children with disabilities (Cuba);**
- 6.65. **Strengthen the curriculum of the health education and family life, framing it within the guidelines of UNESCO (Peru);**
- 6.66. **Intensify efforts in undertaking programmes designed to ensure universal primary education and to reduce school dropout (Indonesia);**
- 6.67. **Continue the implementation of the educational programs to provide primary education to all (Senegal);**
- 6.68. **Develop a national policy for education on sexual and reproductive health that guarantees women's rights and that allows taking informed decisions to prevent HIV (Uruguay);**
- 6.69. **Adopt additional policy and legislative measures, including an increased allocation of financial resources, in order to guarantee the provision of education on sexual and reproductive health, particularly in rural communities**

and indigenous populations as well as intensify efforts to avoid school dropouts among pregnant teenagers (Honduras);

6.70. Update the Health Family Life Education curriculum to comply with the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, and develop a legal framework to ensure its execution (Iceland);

6.71. Redouble efforts to ensure the adequate representation of women in public positions (Peru);

6.72. Strengthen and expand the measures being taken to address discrimination against women and girls (Guyana);

6.73. Intensify measures to reduce gender-based inequalities in the areas of reproductive health, empowerment and economy activity (Philippines);

6.74. Put in place concrete measures to implement the National Plan of Action to combat violence against women and assign sufficient resources to guarantee the rights of women as well as the review of the law that allows marriage at the age of 16 (Spain);

6.75. Continue efforts to combat violence against women (Tunisia);

6.76. Combat violence against women (Ukraine);

6.77. Set up a specific program to combat violence against women (Algeria);

6.78. Intensify implementation of a multi-sectoral approach to eradicating domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, which includes appropriate training for law enforcement, educators, and medical personnel, as well as effective support and accountability for victims (Canada);

6.79. Adopt specific programs to combat all forms of violence against women (Chile);

6.80. Establish the Registry of Sex Offenders with a view to combating domestic violence against women (Costa Rica);

6.81. Continue efforts to eliminate violence against women (Peru);

6.82. Fully implement the National Gender-Based Violence Plan through concrete measures nationwide, to decrease domestic violence and discrimination against women (Germany);

6.83. Strengthen the implementation of its National Policy on Gender Equality and the National Gender-Based Violence Plan 2017 to 2020 (Philippines);

6.84. Formulate specific programmes to combat violence against women (Iraq);

6.85. Strengthen measures to address gender violence, including by fully implementing its Domestic Violence Act and National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (Ireland);

6.86. Continue fight against violence against women (Serbia);

6.87. Continue efforts to strengthen children's rights in order to protect them from sexual abuse and violence (Tunisia);

6.88. **Take timely measures to ensure the rights of girls and women, in particular by raising the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 to prevent forced child marriage (Netherlands);²**

6.89. **Strengthen the necessary measures in order to raise awareness among the population regarding the consequences of child labour (Argentina);**

6.90. **Continue and expand the current efforts to make birth registration more accessible and efficient (Guyana);**

6.91. **Further strengthen the implementation of legislations to fulfil its obligations on the protection of children under the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Philippines);**

6.92. **Take effective measures to concretely protect the rights of ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups, and formulate a national plan to combat violence against women (China);**

6.93. **Strengthen the work of the Bilateral Technical Committee for the effective promotion and protection of the rights of the Mayan and Garifuna peoples (Peru);**

6.94. **Adopt national legislation to harmonize local laws to make them compatible and in line with the terms of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Iraq);**

6.95. **Take steps to decriminalize irregular migration and to guarantee that, when the administrative detention of a migrant is necessary, it is carried out for the shortest time possible and in full compliance with relevant international standards (Brazil);**

6.96. **Establish a total prohibition on hiring and employing all migrant children under the age of 14, and intensify its efforts to combat the work of migrant children (Costa Rica);**

6.97. **Adopt national legislation on statelessness, in particular regarding a statelessness determination procedure to identify and guarantee the rights and protection of stateless persons (Mexico);**

6.98. **Adopt comprehensive legislation establishing a statelessness determination procedure to identify and guarantee the rights and protection of stateless persons (Serbia).**

7. The following recommendations will be examined by Belize, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the fortieth session of the Human Rights Council.

7.1. **Ratify the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organisation (Denmark);**

7.2. **Establish a National Preventive Mechanism against torture in accordance with the obligations contracted (Paraguay);**

² The recommendation, as read out during the interactive dialogue, was: “Take timely measures to ensure the rights of girls and women, in particular by raising the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 to prevent forced child marriage, and by guaranteeing independent access to sexual and reproductive health services in accordance with the age of consent and without parental permission”.

- 7.3. **Take timely measures to ensure the rights of girls and women, in particular by guaranteeing independent access to sexual and reproductive health services in accordance with the age of consent and without parental permission (Netherlands);³**
- 7.4. **Approve the draft amendment to the Representation of the People Act that would establish a 33% quota of women in the National Assembly (Costa Rica);**
- 7.5. **Include specific programmes on combatting violence against women in Belize's Gender Equality framework under the National Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (Fiji);**
- 7.6. **Strengthen its legislative framework on the protection of the rights of Indigenous People (Honduras).**
8. **The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue/listed below have been examined by Belize and have been noted by Belize:**
- 8.1. **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Chile);**
- 8.2. **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Spain) (Slovenia); Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Australia) (Chile); Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Mexico);**
- 8.3. **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Chile);**
- 8.4. **Consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Bahamas) (Latvia); Extend an open invitation to the special procedure mandate holders (Slovenia); Issue an open invitation to the special procedures mandate holders and take better advantage of these mechanisms in order to foster national capacity to combat persistent challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights (Chile); Issue a standing invitation to all Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council (Denmark); Issue a standing invitation to the United Nations special procedures (France); Extend an open invitation to the Special Procedure of the Human Rights Council (Portugal); Extend a permanent standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council (Spain);**
- 8.5. **Consider extending a standing invitation to the special procedures mandate holders (Georgia);**
- 8.6. **Extend an open invitation to the special procedures mandate holders (Montenegro);**
- 8.7. **Fully resource and empower the Ombudsman to act as a National Human Rights Institution in full compliance with the Paris Principles, including**

³ The recommendation, as read out during the interactive dialogue, was: "Take timely measures to ensure the rights of girls and women, in particular by raising the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 to prevent forced child marriage, and by guaranteeing independent access to sexual and reproductive health services in accordance with the age of consent and without parental permission".

through investigating complaints against public authorities and police misconduct (Australia);

8.8. Include an explicit prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in the Constitution and amend any other relevant legislation, such as the Administration of Estates Act and the Social Security Act, in order for same-sex couples to enjoy equal rights a heterosexual couples (Netherlands);

8.9. Review the Constitution and legislation in order to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation (Uruguay);⁴

8.10. Abolish the death penalty for all crimes and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (France);

8.11. Abolish the death penalty for all crimes and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (Iceland);

8.12. Consider to abolish the death penalty (Italy);

8.13. Abolish death penalty *de jure* (Portugal);

8.14. Preserve and protect the natural institution of marriage as a conjugal union between a man and a woman based on free consent (Haiti);

8.15. Amend the legislation in order to decriminalize abortion, in particular in case of pregnancy resulting from a rape (France);

8.16. Prohibit corporal punishment at home (Ukraine);

8.17. Prohibit explicitly corporal punishment of children in all settings through enacting legislation (Montenegro);

8.18. Adopt legislation with a view to prohibit all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings (Slovenia);

8.19. Grant asylum seekers the opportunity to apply for a work permit in order to be able to support themselves and their family members (Côte d'Ivoire);

8.20. Comprehensively revise its migration and asylum legislation in order to align it with its human rights obligations and international standards and remove from it any discriminatory provision on any grounds (Honduras).

9. All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.

⁴ The recommendation, as read out during the interactive dialogue, was: "Review the Constitution and legislation in order to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation, strengthening the capacities of police officers to better treat cases of violence against sexual workers and LGBTI persons".

Annex

[English Only]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Belize was headed by H.E. Mr. Patrick Andrews, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and composed of the following members:

- Ms. Judith Alpuche, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation;
 - Mrs. Orla Coleman, Director of International Affairs (Cooperation), Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
 - Mr. Raineldo A. Urbina, First Secretary, Embassy of Belize, Brussels, Belgium.
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