



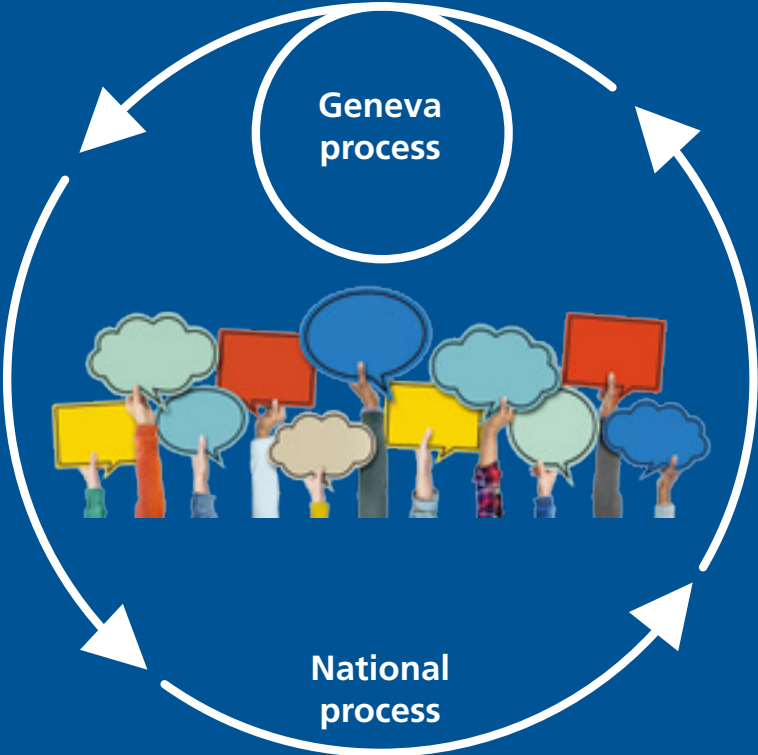
Exploratory study

**BEYOND THE PROCEDURE:**

**THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW AS A CATALYST  
FOR PUBLIC DEBATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

Selected national practices

José Parra



## Team

José Parra, lead researcher and author

Mona M'Bikay, researcher

Yves Lador, Acting Director of the CIFEDHOP – International Training Center for Human Rights and Peace Education

Hannah Peters, Human Rights and Development Programme Officer at the Geneva Office of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

## Acknowledgments

FES and CIFEDHOP would like to thank the representatives of civil society organizations and National Human Rights Institutions that have contributed to the study.

FES and CIFEDHOP are also very grateful for the contribution and guidance received from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Conectas, the Forum Asia for Human Rights and Development. Also, the views provided by and the exchange with UPR-info, Geneva for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have been of great value.

FES and CIFEDHOP would like to extend their thanks to Noreen Eberle (FES) and Dinah Dreher (FES) for their support in the realization of the study as well as to Cynthia Orchard for her substantive insights and editing.

The study benefited from the generous financial support of FES and the Loterie Romande.



## Disclaimer

The study is based on information and views gathered in the course of the research. Nonetheless, the final content of the present publication is entirely the responsibility of FES and CIFEDHOP.

December 2016

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# Acronyms

ALHR	Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
ANND	Arab NGO Network for Development
CCPR	Human Rights Committee
CED	Committee on Enforced Disappearances
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CHRAGG	Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance
CIFDHA	Le Centre d'Information et de Formation en matière de Droits Humains en Afrique
CIFEDHOP	International Training Center on Human Rights and Peace Teaching
DIHR	Danish Institute for Human Rights
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GIHR	German Institute for Human Rights
HRC	Human Rights Council
INSAN	Coalition for Universal Periodic Review in Jordan
ISHR	International Service for Human Rights
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Intersexed
NACLAC	National Association of Community Legal Centre
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
MPs	Parliamentarians
NHRI(s)	National Human Rights Institution(s)
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PEB	People Empowerment Foundation
SCHR	Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGII	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Intersex Rights
THRDC	Tanzania Human Rights Defender Coalition
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# 1. Introduction

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The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is widely acknowledged as one of the major innovations of the United Nations Human Rights Council, established in 2006. As the second UPR cycle ended in 2016, all States have been examined in the UPR twice. At the outset of its third cycle, it is worth assessing whether the UPR has been delivering on its promise to make a difference to the human rights situation on the ground.

In this regard, the Human Rights Council review of the first UPR cycle called for subsequent cycles to focus on the implementation of accepted recommendations and human rights developments in the country under review.<sup>1</sup> Such focus on implementation is in line with the primary objective given to the UPR: the improvement of human rights on the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Within the international human rights system, the first two UPR cycles have provided an additional opportunity for civil society and national human rights institutions to advocate for human rights. In this regard, these first cycles have served as a learning process for all stakeholders about the procedures and have led to the improvement of the modalities of participation for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and National Human Rights Institutions NHRIs.<sup>3</sup>

These developments, however, do not prevent critical assessment. The International Service for Human Rights points out that “throughout the second cycle, fears that the UPR will disintegrate into a purely ‘ritualistic’ review have exacerbated” and the effectiveness of the UPR has been limited by the “lack of follow-up mechanisms, procedural weaknesses, patchy implementation and obstacles to NGO participation”.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the UPR faces the pitfall of formalism or “ritualism”. As observed by Charlesworth and Larking, “in the context of the UPR, ritualism may mean participation in the process of reports and meetings, but an indifference to or even reluctance about increasing the protection of human rights”.<sup>5</sup>

Several studies focus on the shortcomings of the procedure, the quality of UPR recommendations and their follow-up. “Assessments of the success of the UPR often focus on statistics relating to States’ implementation of recommendations, without assessing the UPR’s impact more broadly”.<sup>6</sup> Exclusive attention to UPR procedural aspects might feed skepticism about its effectiveness in light of the mixed record in terms of implementation of recommendations. From this perspective, the UPR record might appear at odds with the high expectations resting on the mechanism and, more generally, on the Human Rights Council.

In this regard, a formalistic or procedural oriented assessment of the UPR should be complemented by a wider understanding of the political and social processes involved. In the terms of Charlesworth and Larking, the UPR should be assessed as a regulatory mechanism, which “draws attention both to the goals (the UPR) seeks to realize and to the specific devices it deploys in order to achieve these goals”. We should also assess the way in which the UPR brings “social and political power (...) into focus”,<sup>7</sup> with respect to both international and national dynamics. Regarding impact on the ground, the social dynamics taking place nationally are key.

In this connection, national civil society organizations and NHRIs have participated in the UPR throughout the first and second cycles. This participation has unfolded in both national and international arenas. Consequently, the dynamics between the debates in Geneva and actions at the national level should be factored into any UPR assessments.

As emphasized by the representative of the Arab NGO Network for Development, it is important to make public at the national level what is discussed in Geneva in order to turn this “moment in Geneva into a national process where different stakeholders can engage and take their role.”<sup>8</sup> In the same vein, a representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) points out that the “UPR is senseless without the meaningful engagement of all relevant social actors at the country level, who are fundamental in ensuring the effective enjoyment of human rights”.<sup>9</sup>

In sum, a ritualistic practice of the UPR, notably by States, supports the status quo. On the other hand, the potential of the UPR as a regulatory mechanism can be ensured through the active participation of civil society and NHRIs compliant with the Paris principles.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, their actions transform the UPR into a catalyst for social change, notably through dialogue, awareness-raising and public debate. Indeed, the UPR involves resources that merit better use. In particular, the UPR encourages and facilitates public debate within as well as among States. Beyond the formalities of the mechanism, the UPR offers an opportunity for national public debate and social mobilization which, in turn, contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Against this backdrop, the objective of this study is to assess whether and how the UPR can serve as a catalyst for generating public debates on the situation of human rights in national contexts. The study presents a sample of the type of actions, strategies and methodologies of information, awareness-raising and social mobilization that has been undertaken by stakeholders using the UPR. This selection of practices illustrates the potential of the mechanism to promote public debate, understanding and protection of human rights at the national level.

## 2. The UPR in context

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“The UPR: a catalyst to create country-wide campaigns and organize a human rights grassroots movement around the world.”<sup>11</sup>

Joshua Cooper, Director of the Hawaii Human Rights Institute,  
UPR Task Force member of the US Human Rights Network.

The UPR is commonly introduced as the most innovative feature emerging from the 2006 reform of the United Nations human rights machinery. The decision to reform the former Human Rights Commission (Commission) arose from harsh criticism against the decreasing legitimacy of the Commission. The reform aimed at establishing a more efficient body capable of delivering improved impact on the ground and restoring the legitimacy and credibility of the United Nations regarding its human rights commitment and performance.<sup>12</sup>

In this regard, the first President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, underscored that “the overarching challenge of the Council was to become an effective body with the capacity to deal with the vast and intricate universe of human rights. This implied keeping all the conquests achieved by its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights while overcoming its limitations and shortcomings”.<sup>13</sup> The reform took place with the view of engaging in the new century with a renewed and strengthened human rights body.

The reform also opened an avenue for States to seek greater control over the international human rights agenda. This objective was translated into the promotion of an inter-State peer-review mechanism, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). In this regard, the former facilitator for negotiating the UPR, Ambassador Mohammed Loulichki, noted that the “[F]aithful implementation of the principles of the UPR (...) will serve, in the end, the authority and cred-

ibility of the Human Rights Council”.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, the UPR bears most of the expectations regarding the human rights performance of the United Nations.

Along with the discussion on the UPR, many States attempted to remove, or at least undermine, the functions given to independent experts and quasi-judicial bodies. In particular, a majority of States unsuccessfully challenged the maintenance of the special procedures in the Council. “The majority of States (...) sought to limit the role of the Special Procedures and weaken this essential tool the Council needs to address human rights violations effectively by early findings [,] recommendations for remedy and their implementation by Governments”.<sup>15</sup> In the end, special procedures “survived the reform of the UN human rights system in 2006”.<sup>16</sup>

Several observers have pointed out the challenges as well as the opportunities created by the UPR being a State-driven mechanism.

“The inherently political nature of the UPR continues to provide the biggest opportunity for achieving significant human rights change on the ground but also remains the biggest challenge for NGOs. The universal participation of States, which have all subjected themselves to review under the UPR, suggest that the process is one which is taken seriously. On the other hand, however, States clearly do not want to be criticized and will engage in a variety of tactics to minimize criticism.”<sup>17</sup>

During the negotiations on the modalities and functioning of the UPR, it was feared that the participation of civil society would be left out. In the end, however, the requirement of civil society and other stakeholders’ participation in the UPR was included as an inherent feature of the UPR, which “revolutionize[s] the UPR process to make sure that civil society is not just a part but core participant in this process”.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the inclusion of the participation of civil society and NHRIs as part of the UPR is of paramount importance for the credibility of the Human Rights Council.<sup>19</sup> And more importantly, the participation helps secure a space for civil society to bring human rights demands to the attention of the international community. It is now indisputable that civil society brings unique expertise which is essential to the United Nations to fulfill its mission in the field of human rights.

“[A]s the history of the Commission shows, working with civil society and NGOs is crucial. The Council must also take into consideration that the work of NGOs is much more than the denunciation of violations, as it is too often

and too easily pictured. Over the last decades, the specialized human rights organizations have constructed a specific “know-how”.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, the emergence of the UPR raised concerns among States and civil society actors regarding its potential to undermine the treaty body system, despite the call for ensuring that the UPR will “complement and not duplicate other human rights mechanisms thus representing an added value”.<sup>21</sup> One answer to this concern is to underscore the particularities of each human rights mechanism and assess an interaction between the UPR and other mechanisms in a strategic and complementary manner. Among other possible interactions, “the UPR process could be used to promote following up on the recommendations of special rapporteurs for the countries concerned. For this, the Council should make the reports of special rapporteurs an integral part of the UPR”.<sup>22</sup>

The reflections around these interactions and dynamics prove to be particularly relevant to comprehending the framing of strategies by national civil society and NHRIs. Indeed, they need to make a strategic choice about which specific human rights mechanism or combination of mechanisms would be the most appropriate to achieve their objectives, considering their limited resources and other constraints, notably the extent to which national contexts are responsive to human rights issues. In this regard, while expertise with the United Nations procedures and mechanisms often lies with international organizations, national actors should retain full ownership over their strategic choices in their engagement with the UPR and other human rights mechanisms.

## 2.1 The UPR: a distinct arena

The use of international human rights mechanisms aims to bring about change in the national context. The strategic thinking underpinning mobilization around international mechanisms is, and should be, embedded in national strategies. In this sense, the UPR is a national process as much as an international mechanism. In comparison with other human rights mechanisms, the UPR combines distinctive characteristics, which should inform strategic thinking and action.

- **Periodicity:**  
States are reviewed every four years and since the second cycle four years and a half.<sup>23</sup> The periodicity of the review reflects the functioning of international monitoring bodies such as treaty bodies. In practice, however, all United Nations member

States have participated in the UPR while the State parties to the main human rights treaties do not all comply with their treaty body reporting obligations on time or, in some cases, at all.

- **Universality and equal treatment:**  
All States are scrutinized under the Universal Periodic Review, in contrast to all the other human rights mechanisms, in particular treaty bodies whose scope is limited to State parties to the international human rights instruments creating them.
- **InterState cooperation:**  
The review is conducted according to the principle of “peer review”, unlike all other international human rights mechanisms.
- **Comprehensive legal framework:**  
The review encompasses international human rights law and international humanitarian law, unlike the other international human rights mechanisms that focus on specific issues or rights.
- **Required participation:**  
The Human Rights Council has adopted the participation of all stakeholders as a central principle of the UPR since its inception. Accordingly, the UPR should

“(m) Ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, as well as any decisions that the Council may take in this regard.”<sup>24</sup>

In the context of the preparation of a State review, civil society and NHRIs are formally invited to contribute to the review by submitting their own submissions on the human rights situation in the country while, to comply with their obligation to submit a national report the “States are encouraged to prepare the information through a broad consultation process at the national level with all relevant stakeholders”.<sup>25</sup>

Regarding UPR follow up, the Human Rights Council has also recommended the involvement of all relevant constituencies. “While the outcome of the review, as a cooperative

mechanism, should be implemented primarily by the State concerned, States are encouraged to conduct broad consultations with all relevant stakeholders in this regard.”<sup>26</sup>

Finally, in the context of the second UPR cycle, national human rights institutions gained additional space for participation at the review:

“The national human rights institution of the State under review consistent with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134 (the Paris Principles) shall be entitled to intervene immediately after the State under review during the adoption of the outcome of the review by the Council plenary.”<sup>27</sup>

## 2.2 The UPR: a participatory process

The UPR is in essence, a participatory process. Thus, there is a need to consider at least two factors to understand the dynamics and potential for participation generated around the UPR, namely the shrinking political space in an increasing number of countries and the distinct nature of civil society organizations and NHRIs.

### The UPR: the challenge of shrinking political space

In 2011, the OHCHR reaffirmed that “[V]ibrant civil society participation in the United Nations human rights system is indispensable to the effective protection and promotion of human rights. Civil society actors identify protection and other gaps in the international architecture; alert the international community of impending crises and campaign for the creation of new standards and mechanisms. Their participation enriches the system’s responses by linking them to what is happening at the country level”.<sup>28</sup>

In the same breath, the OHCHR recognized that “civil society is under attack in too many places, and with an increasing variety of weapons”<sup>29</sup> used by States and armed groups across all regions. The impediments and reprisals against representatives of civil society and NHRIs participating in international human rights mechanisms remain constant, including in the context of the UPR. These cases have been regularly reported and denounced by civil society actors<sup>30</sup> and United Nations representatives.<sup>31</sup> In this regard, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed, in October 2016, its Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Andrew Gilmour “to put a stop to all intimidation and reprisals against those cooperating

with the United Nations on human rights”.<sup>32</sup>

In this connection, the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) reports a “disturbing pattern of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders seeking to engage with the UN, including cases of arbitrary detention and travel bans in China and Sudan, defamation and stigmatization in Honduras and Venezuela, judicial harassment in the Maldives, and serious threats against defenders”.<sup>33</sup> In all these countries, reprisals were directed against representatives of civil society and of the NRHI of the Maldives for their work around the UPR.<sup>34</sup> Thus, participating in the UPR involves serious risks in certain countries, undermining, if not completely alienating, the purpose of the UPR to promote and protect human rights, including its potential for human rights awareness-raising and public debate.

Nevertheless, at least to some extent, the requirement of participation of all relevant stakeholders and the universal scope of the UPR opens an opportunity for promoting human rights in all settings. While the political context might be conducive or deterring for participation, the specific nature of the various stakeholders, like civil society organizations and NHRIs, influences the avenues, forms and scope of participation in the UPR process.

### The UPR: distinctive roles and participation dynamics

Indeed, civil society organizations and NHRIs are distinct entities. Both are meant to participate in the UPR process in an independent manner and strive for the promotion and protection of human rights. However, their different institutional nature suggests a distinct type of contribution and role in the UPR process. With regard to NHRIs, when established, there is one institution per country, as opposed to civil society, which encompasses many and diverse organizations.

NHRIs are established by law, giving them a status both at the national and international level, in conformity with the Paris Principles on NHRIs, to promote the respect of human rights. They have a broad mandate: human rights awareness, advocacy, review of legislation, human rights monitoring and investigation.

Unlike the general mandate of an NHRI, which covers the full spectrum of human rights issues, civil society organizations’ mandates are as diverse as numerous and may be specific to particular issues. They engage in humanitarian action, defending human rights, economic development, cultural activities, charity work, industrial relations, and professional organizations, among others.

Consequently, their contribution to public debate and awareness-raising about human rights is defined by their organizational mandates and often differ from NHRIs. For instance, NHRIs' mandates systematically contemplate general human rights education and awareness-raising, unlike civil society organizations whose respective mandates may be restrained to specific causes and types of actions, according to their mandate or know-how.

Finally, NHRIs generally enjoy greater access than civil society to State institutions, including the Parliament, and tend to adopt a supportive approach to civil society for their participation in the UPR process. However, civil society organizations may be more flexible and creative than NHRIs in their approach to the UPR process and may thereby help shape the UPR process itself.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the UPR can and should be assessed bearing in mind the differences between NHRIs and civil society, as well as the ways in which the participation of NHRIs and civil society may be mutually beneficial and create synergies.

### 2.3 The UPR: an object of research

The present exploratory study reflects on the practice of civil society organizations and NHRIs engaging with the UPR. The study is undertaken on the premise that the range of actions is broader at the national level than in the international setting of the UPR, which is highly formalized and regulated. More specifically the study has been guided by the following central question:

Is the UPR serving as a catalyst for public debate on human rights at the country level? And how?

There is a growing number of studies of the UPR conducted by civil society organizations, NHRIs and academic scholars. Yet none has specifically discussed this question. Some studies discuss the "politicization" of the UPR, as opposed to fostering constructive dialogue; others review the modalities of participation; and many assess the implementation of UPR recommendations.<sup>36</sup> Most of these studies are concerned with certain aspects of the functioning of the UPR, thereby remaining in the realm of the procedure.<sup>37</sup>

From the perspective of civil society and NHRIs, the UPR can be conceptualized as a political opportunity to challenge the State.<sup>38</sup> From that perspective, social actors deploy strategies in a double level game engaging in national and international arenas<sup>39</sup> with the view of bringing about change at the national level.

For instance, "when the links between State and domestic actors are severed, domestic NGO may directly seek international allies to try to bring pressure on their States from outside".<sup>40</sup> This strategy has been coined the "boomerang strategy" by scholars.<sup>41</sup> In practice, the actions of national civil society actors and NHRIs can be reinforced through the participation in and the use of international mechanisms, such as the UPR. Ultimately, change in the national context remains the central objective of social mobilization and advocacy undertaken through international mechanisms.

Accordingly, civil society and NHRIs follow a two-pronged strategy, seeking to have an impact on States at the domestic level through engagement on the international scene. Moreover, international mobilization becomes transnational when actors articulate strategies and actions in more than one State and, in some cases, more than one international arena.

In that perspective, the present study discusses the UPR mainly as a catalyst for public debate on human rights in national contexts. To do so, a selection of experiences have been reviewed to illustrate the type of actions undertaken to bring human rights into public discussions and to contribute to awareness-raising at the domestic level during the first and second UPR cycles. A matrix was used to identify and organize the variety of UPR-related actions taken by civil society organizations and NHRIs.

On the one hand, the matrix lays out distinctive audiences, such as the general public, civil society, media, specific groups, the international community and State institutions. The matrix also categorizes activities in order to develop a better understanding of the different strategies and practices which have been employed through the UPR as to promote public discussions on human rights. Thus, the matrix includes the following categories of action: advocacy and monitoring, public conferences and awareness-raising, training and human rights education, and press work and social media. These categories are not comprehensive or exclusive; rather, they reflect a sample of actual practices comprising multiple audiences and various types of actions.

With regard to methodology, qualitative research was undertaken over a period of nine months, from January to September 2016. In addition to a desk review, the methodology relied on open and focused interviews, an online questionnaire and a participatory workshop. A focus group of organizations was identified and includes: FES, CIFEDHOP, Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), Forum Asia for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia) and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS).



At the beginning of the research, general interviews were conducted with representatives of OHCHR, Forum-Asia, CIHRS and GANHRI to sketch out a preliminary account of the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process and a catalyst for public debate. The online questionnaire was conceived to be completed in half an hour, considering that actors, in particular, civil society organizations, have limited resources. The online questionnaire was structured in seven parts: personal information, participation in the UPR, public debate and awareness-raising activities, general assessment of the UPR impact at the national level, and perspective towards awareness-raising and public debate activities in the context of the third cycle.

A participatory two-day workshop was held on 19 and 20 April 2016 in Geneva, with the participation of civil society and NHRI representatives. The workshop benefited from the contributions of representatives of OHCHR, Geneva for Human Rights, UPR-Info and GANHRI. All the participants to the workshop answered the online questionnaire (as did other organizations and resource persons).

At the final stage, focused questionnaires and interviews were prepared to collect detailed information on national experiences with an awareness-raising scope in the context of the UPR.<sup>42</sup> The findings reflect contributions covering 30 countries and present over 30 activities undertaken by civil society organizations and NHRIs. The information collected is by nature subjective, as it emanates from those directly involved in the UPR process. The study presents their views in an analytical manner and as faithfully as possible to the written or oral contributions. The conclusions, however, pertain to FES and CIFEDHOP, as they elaborate on the findings and offer prospective reflections. Annex 1 presents all the organizations that have contributed to the present study.

### **3. The UPR: A practice of debating human rights**

“I don’t believe the strength of the UPR is in the technicalities of it. (...) The strength of the UPR is in the creativity of civil society and how to use it creatively in your own context and in your own way to make it something it’s worthwhile to engage in.”<sup>43</sup>

Jeremy Smith, Director of the Cairo Institute on Human Rights Institute.

In practice, the UPR must be understood as a process unfolding not only through its highly formalized procedure but also, and fundamentally, as a social and political process. Indeed, national civil society organizations and NHRIs primarily operate in the political, economic, social, cultural and geographic context of the State under review.

This section presents a selection of national experiences according to their audience, recalling that the described activities may have been explicitly or implicitly directed to an exclusive or multiple audiences. The identified audiences are the general public, the media, multi-stakeholder alliances, civil society, victims or specific groups, the international community, and the State, focusing on the legislative and executive branches.

Before discussing activities for each audience in separate sections, the following matrix provides an overview of the type of activities undertaken by civil society organizations and NHRIs in relation to the UPR process to raise awareness and generate dialogue and discussion on human rights.

Matrix of selected national experiences

Audience/ Type of action	General public	Media	Multistakeholder holders	Civil society	Victims & Groups	International community	Legislative branch	Executive branch
Advocacy & monitoring	New Zealand National Action Plan		Philippines Monitoring mechanism forum  Philippines UPR Monitoring Mechanism Forum			Brazil Letters and briefings with Embassies  Burkina Faso Audience with the Belgian ambassador  Australia Briefing to embassies and missions  USA Diplomacy dialogues	Australia Reporting to Parliament & Parliamentary committee processes  South Africa Advocacy with the Parliament	Brazil Press coverage
Public conference and awareness raising campaign	Switzerland Public events  Australia Demystifying workshop  Denmark Public hearings	Burkina Faso Facebook page  Iran Monitoring interactive website	Tanzania Dissemination of fact sheets  New Zealand National Action Plan  Bangladesh Workshop and fact sheets	Denmark Public hearings  South Africa Webcasting				Germany Consultation 1st UPR cycle  Lebanon National conference  Philippines Awareness- raising process

Audience/ Type of action	General public	Media	Multistakeholder holders	Civil society	Victims & Groups	International community	Legislative branch	Executive branch
Training and Human Rights education		Burkina Faso Briefing for journalists		Tunisia UPR training  Australia NHRIs consultation  Switzerland Briefing session	Thailand Subregional training  Burkina Faso Training for students		Burkina Faso Training for parliamentar- ians  Germany Parliamentar- ians in action (visit to the HRC) & briefing for local authorities	Australia Consultation workshop (State & civil society)  USA Town Hall Meeting and UPR National Summit  Tanzania National Dialogue  Bangladesh Mock UPR
Press work & social media	Lebanon National Press Conference		Lebanon National Conference				Germany Press conferences	

### 3.1 Awareness-raising: the general public

“The launch of the National Plan of Action is the beginning of an ongoing conversation about realizing human rights for all New Zealanders.”<sup>44</sup>

New Zealand Human Rights Commission.

Human rights awareness-raising is most of the time oriented to the general public, with the underlying purpose of creating and invigorating societies respectful to human dignity. In the context of the UPR, human rights awareness-raising may be a specific objective or part of broader civil society and NHRI strategies. For instance, in the case of the United States, the UPR Task Force of the US Human Rights Network specifically includes in its mandate the action of “raising awareness about human rights standards and reviews of the U.S. Government human rights record”.<sup>45</sup>

In practice, outreach to the general public may include the use of social media, the organization of public events, such as information workshops, public conferences and hearings, the use of the internet and social media and through public monitoring of the implementation of UPR recommendations.

#### Public events

Concerning public events, the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR) organized public events on the UPR while the Danish Institute for Human Rights conducted public hearings on the UPR, in both cases in the main cities across their country. Combining various types of activities, in 2012, Brazilian civil society organizations convened a series of public debates

and published op-eds, recorded a podcast, and disseminated information on the UPR to the general public.<sup>46</sup>

#### The use of social media

Other examples show how the work around the UPR can reach a larger public than those directly involved. With regard to the use of social media, the NGO Centro de Estudios Estratégicos has been using Facebook for publicizing the work around the UPR in Panama.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the Australian Human Rights Lawyer actively participated in the second UPR in Geneva while engaging with different media to raise awareness at home. Specifically, the organization issued press releases, gave media interviews, uploaded blog posts and information on social media.<sup>48</sup>

In another example, CIFDHA in Burkina Faso used Facebook to publicize the international human rights agenda.

Another civil society initiative illustrative of the use of social media to report to the general public, is the website “www.upriran.org”, operated by the NGO Impact Iran. The website displays an infographic and interactive map highlighting the countries that made recommendations to Iran, organized according to whether they are accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and whether they are implemented, partially implemented or if there is insufficient information to report any progress. The website provides a justification for the status given to the recommendations with a list of sources and evidence. Moreover, the information is displayed in English and Persian, thereby accessible domestically and internationally.

#### Monitoring process

The establishment of platforms for monitoring the implementation of UPR recommendations provides an opportunity for awareness-raising among all national constituencies including the general public. The process of monitoring also provides an opportunity to publicize findings to the general public, although the information tends to be only available and accessible on the internet. For instance, the Australian Human Rights Commission reported that Australia has made the voluntary commitment to work with the Commission to develop a publicly accessible monitoring process for the second cycle UPR recommendations. In this line, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission also developed an online tool to monitor the implementation of UPR recommendations.

In some cases, the mid-term review, whether it is undertaken or not, can spark a political discussion and public debate. In Ireland, the NHRIs issued its own mid-term review report to pressure the State to make public its own mid-term report, making the public human rights discussion possible. Another similar experience, although more oriented to advocacy work,

relates to Germany. The government has been reluctant to prepare mid-term reports, which gave an opportunity for civil society to mobilize and denounce the lack of commitment of the State with the UPR and thereby, generate public pressure on the State to speed progress on human rights issues more generally.

### Public events: public “podiums”, public hearings and information workshop

#### Box No. 1 – Switzerland: public “podiums” about the UPR

In the context of the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR cycle, the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR) organized public podiums in ten cities covering the three linguistic regions of the country with the aim to inform the public about the UPR. They took place in Bale, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, Neuchatel, Sion and Zurich, between November and December 2012. Each public podium addressed a specific human rights issue with a focus on the implementation of the UPR recommendations. The Swiss civil society UPR coalition along with representatives of the federal and local (cantonal) authorities participated in some of these events as key speakers.

For instance, in Lugano, the following key speakers were invited: Mario Branda (President of the cantonal commission on the integration of foreigners), Marilena Fontaine (Head of the Office for equal opportunities and transparency), Marco Mona (Member of the National Commission on the Prevention of Torture) and John Nosedà (General Prosecutor of the Canton of Ticino).

The Swiss civil society coalition found that the general public was not very receptive to the UPR, as it was too technical for many to relate to easily. Thus, the coalition considers that such podiums should focus and discuss human rights issues in the country, rather than the UPR and its recommendations.

Source: [humanrights.ch](http://humanrights.ch) and SCHR.

#### Box No. 2 - Australia: workshop demystifying the UPR

In Melbourne, the Castan Centre for Human Rights at Monash University convened a workshop a fortnight prior to Australia’s appearance at the UN Human Rights Council working group. This was an information workshop held for the public – with approximately 80 attendees.

The panel involved representatives of NGOs, the Commission and the head of the Australian government delegation for UPR. The purpose was to create understand-

ing of what the UPR is, how the government, NGOs and the Commission engage in the process, what expectations each actor had of the process, and the type of outcomes that we anticipated. The workshop demonstrated a collaborative approach and an ability to participate in an exchange of views between government, the Commission and NGOs.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission.

#### Box No. 3 - Denmark: Public Hearings

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) is an independent State-funded national institution. Its mandate is to promote and protect human rights and equal treatment in Denmark, Greenland and internationally.

Within the framework of the second cycle of the UPR, the DIHR organized public hearings that took place from February 2015 to March 2015.<sup>49</sup>

The activities were planned specifically with the aim to involve civil society in the UPR process. Civil society organizations were invited to participate in the public hearings through the DIHR NGOs network and advertisement in newspapers. The public hearings were also a channel to raise awareness not only among civil society organizations but also among the general public.

The public hearings were held in the four major cities in Denmark: Aalborg, Aarhus, Odense and Copenhagen and in Nuuk, Greenland. In Denmark, the hearings were held in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Greenland, the hearing was held in cooperation with Human Rights Council of Greenland. Each hearing had a specific human rights theme as a point of departure. The themes of the hearing were selected by the DIHR UPR Committee, which is composed of representatives of the Institute’s Council for Human Rights.<sup>50</sup>

In Aalborg, the theme of the hearing was discrimination and equal treatment; in Aarhus, surveillance and privacy; in Odense, vulnerable groups; in Copenhagen, public administration; and in Nuuk, the rule of law.

The DIHR was present at all the hearings as moderator and contact point for the press. In Greenland, the Human Rights Council of Greenland welcomed the audience. The Foreign Affairs Ministry was present at all the hearings in Denmark, where they presented the UPR. Likewise, the government of Greenland presented the UPR process for the Greenlandic audience in Nuuk. Relevant experts were

## The use of social media



Facebook page on the UPR - Burkina Faso. Source: CIFDHA.



Online infographic on the implementation of UPR implementation in Iran (Extract)

invited to the hearings where they framed the issues and created the basis for interventions from the public.

The public hearings held by the DIHR had several positive impacts. The civil society organizations were notably more involved in the debate about respect for human rights in Denmark and could also make their voice heard at the international level. For instance, the Association for Fathers was very active during the consultations and presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council. The LGBT community could also be more outspoken than in daily context. The public hearings led also to increased awareness about accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The DIHR also benefited from the public hearings, which informed the Institute about specific issues and notably the difficulties people had in accessing their rights, particularly regarding access to rights on the municipal level.

The number of participants varied. Aalborg: 40, Aarhus: 15, Odense: 45, Copenhagen: 75, and Nuuk: 35-40 participants. In parallel to the public hearings, information on human rights violations was collected based on personal interviews. Information about difficulties people faced in accessing their rights was collected through an email address created specifically for this purpose. The DIHR received over 300 inputs by email.

The hearings were cited 33 times in Danish mainstream media, and a local television station made a short film on the hearing in Odense.<sup>51</sup> The Chair of LGBT Denmark produced another film from the hearing in Copenhagen on transgender rights.<sup>52</sup> The Danish Institute for Human Rights also prepared a report for the Government where all the contributions from the hearings in Denmark were collected in clusters.

Source: Danish Institute for Human Rights.



Public Hearing on the UPR held in Copenhagen by the DIHR.

#### Box No. 4 - New Zealand: National Plan of Action

In 2014, New Zealand underwent its second UPR before the United Nations Human Rights Council. Based on the UPR recommendations made to New Zealand, the National Action Plan for the protection and promotion of Human Rights 2015 – 2019 (NAP) was developed following the second cycle of the UPR and will lead into New Zealand's 3rd cycle in 2019.

The NAP is a monitoring and implementation tool which informs the awareness-raising and advocacy work of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (NZHRC). The objective of the NAP is indeed to track the Government's progress implementing recommendations from New Zealand's second Universal Periodic Review. The NAP also aims to raise awareness on the key human rights issues facing New Zealand and provide civil society a platform to continue a constructive dialogue between affected people and the Government around the actions the government is taking and/or areas where no actions are yet being undertaken about realizing rights for all New Zealanders.

Fundamentally, the NAP is a real-time tool to give New Zealanders the opportunity to understand, examine and keep an eye on New Zealand's human rights progress. The development of the NAP was coordinated by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission in consultation with Government agencies. NGOs and civil society were also engaged in the process through face-to-face meetings in the main centers and electronically. Furthermore, the NAP is anchored in national processes through the Human Rights Act 1993.<sup>53</sup> As such, the action plan is New Zealand's action plan and not the Commission's.

A positive change brought by the development of the NAP is that in both the pre-review stage and in its development/implementation, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission has targeted groups that are not traditionally engaged in UN forums such as the refugee sector, migrant workers, and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Intersex Rights (SOGII) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Intersexed (LGBTI) persons. Follow-up/implementation has included organizing dialogues between these groups and key government officials to co-develop actions to better realize the rights of these groups.

Source: NZHRC.

### 3.2 Awareness-raising: targeted at and through using the media

The media, the press, radio and television are central actors for civil society and NHRI advocacy and awareness-raising strategies. In their UPR advocacy work, civil society and NHRIs carry out media work to generate public attention and pressure their State. With the coverage of the UPR process, the media contributes to the public debate on human rights by reaching the general public, in particular readers, listeners and viewers.

#### Media coverage and pro-human rights editorial policy

With respect to media coverage, "mainstream media brings the UPR to a broader general audience beyond the small percentage of people who are already involved or otherwise interested in the process".<sup>54</sup> Thus, often, the media is not the final audience, which is the State and the general public. In part, media coverage stems from pro-human rights editorial policies and strategic engagement by civil society and NHRIs with the media, including with an educational dimension.

In numerous countries, however, national media do not cover human rights work, let alone the UPR, or only the official perspective is conveyed by government-controlled media. In Chile, press coverage is limited to the UPR as a diplomatic event, echoing or reinforcing the risk of ritualism.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, Conectas points out that the Brazilian national press seems to display interest in the UPR only to the extent it is valued by the State in the first place.<sup>56</sup>

In her study on the global coverage of the Universal Periodic Review Process, Sarah Joseph underlines that "thus far, the media has made little effort to convey UPR information and outcomes to the broader populace. Yet greater media engagement is essential if the UPR is to have an impact on public consciousness across the world, a critical basis for the UPR to foster better human rights outcomes."<sup>57</sup>

Importantly, Joseph adds that "a silver lining may be detected in the coverage, still small, of the UPR in free press outlets in the developing world, such as South Asia, India and Indonesia. It seems that these outlets generally take the UPR and its potential to improve human rights more seriously than their more cynical developed world counterparts."<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, the media can also proactively engage in human rights awareness-raising as an independent and proactive editorial policy, as in the case of the Annapurna Post in Nepal that



has been publishing pictures of human rights violations, including victims, underscoring in the text the breach of the international human rights obligations by the State.

Also, “UPR coverage on single issues sometimes adds to ongoing coverage of issues that are already prominent”<sup>59</sup>, such as news about UK austerity measures, caste discrimination in India or press freedom in Iran and China.<sup>60</sup> Thus, in the case of issues high on the agenda, media can reinforce advocacy, public debate and awareness-raising work undertaken on specific human rights issues by civil society and NHRIs in the UPR process.

### Media work: press conferences, op-ed, post-cast

In practice, UPR-related media coverage is usually the direct result of media work carried out by civil society organizations and NHRIs in their strategy of engagement with the UPR. In that respect, Conectas has been strategically engaging with the press at key moments of the UPR process: when the national report is sent, when the UPR takes place and when Brazil indicates whether the recommendations are accepted or rejected. In this line, Conectas also prepared opinion articles published in the press and online and a podcast, replicated by various radio stations.<sup>61</sup>

The UPR of Brazil has been covered by several media outlets (Adital, Folha de S.Paulo, EBC, RedeBrasilActual). All articles highlight the concerns and demands of Conectas and other civil society organizations, prior to the UPR, during the UPR, and after the UPR (follow-up), as well as in relation to another country, Equatorial Guinea. In that case, the press reported that Conectas and other NGOs denounced the incorporation of Equatorial Guinea into the Lusophone Community due to persistent human rights violations in that country. The article reports that Conectas and its partners were asking Brazil to make recommendations to Equatorial Guinea during the UPR of the latter, to improve the human rights in that country.

In Burkina Faso, a press conference was organized by a civil society coalition after the country’s second review.<sup>62</sup> The press conference, held in April 2013 in Ouagadougou, was designed to inform the public about human rights issues raised in their shadow report, such as the death penalty.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the Plataforma EPU in Honduras organized several press conferences regarding the implementation of the UPR recommendations.<sup>64</sup>

### Strategic partnership and training

The ANND experience in the Arab region shows that “the media engagement in the UPR process has been minimal and handled as a special interest topic and not as a national event. In many cases, there is almost an absence of media engagement within the process, with some coverage of the government report exclusively”.<sup>65</sup> Against this backdrop, civil societies

in some countries have been active in engaging with the media. In Jordan, the Coalition for Universal Periodic Review (INSAN),<sup>66</sup> carried out a specific strategy for engaging with the media. In particular, INSAN organized a press conference in Jordan.<sup>67</sup> According to ANND, the civil society strategy of actively collaborating with the media appears to be a success factor.

Indeed, “the excellent coverage by the Jakarta Post was apparently driven by a concerted effort from Indonesian NGOs to engage that outlet in a campaign built around Indonesia’s UPR”.<sup>68</sup> In Lebanon, civil society strategy also included the media in the UPR process from the outset of the process.<sup>69</sup> In this regard, the National Conference organized in Beirut has been well covered by the media. In the same way, the DIHR public hearings also benefited from sound media coverage, cited 33 times in mainstreamed media and covered by a local TV channel. Similarly, Conectas published opinion articles in the national press in 2012 to raise awareness about the UPR in the media as well as in the general public.<sup>70</sup>

Generally, however, the UPR is still not very well known in national media. As a consequence, there is an educational dimension of press work around the UPR, as the mechanism itself needs to be explained when undertaking press work.<sup>71</sup> As an example of direct training to the media, CIFIHDA organized a briefing for journalists and newly established human rights organizations on the UPR, held in April 2016. Similarly, FES Uruguay underscores the importance of involving the press in order to ensure they are prepared to provide an accurate account of the UPR.<sup>72</sup>

In sum, the study identifies various awareness-raising activities targeted at and used by the media, including: press conferences, opinion articles, radio podcasts, briefings, strategic partnerships and progressive editorial policies.



CIFIHDA briefing session with journalists and NGOs.

## Media coverage and pro-human rights editorial policy

### Box No. 5 - Nepal: Editorial on Human Rights Issues.

The Annapurna Post in Nepal published editorials and opinions on human rights issues, such as political parties using school children for a political rally, a rally of relatives of people allegedly disappeared by the security forces, and a hunger strike by Ganga Maya, mother of a boy allegedly abducted and killed by the Maoists during the conflict. In such coverage, the Annapurna Post echoes issues that were raised in the UPR process.

The Annapurna Post benefits from a wide reach. These editorials have led to concrete actions, such as the government agreement to form a Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as a Commission on Disappeared People. According to the Annapurna Post, their consistent media coverage certainly contributed to these outcomes.

Source: Annapurna Post.

## Media work: press conferences, op-ed, post-cast

### Box No. 6 - Lebanon: Press Conference to raise awareness among national stakeholders

On July 23rd 2015, the Lebanese civil society coalition organized a press conference at Press Club in Lebanon in advance of Lebanon's second cycle Universal Periodic Review.

The event was scheduled in the run up to review of Lebanon (November 2nd 2015) to raise further awareness about the process at the national level and to highlight civil society concerns about the human rights situation in the country.

The event included the launch of a compilation of civil society submissions, which provided a resource tool on human rights violations and related remedial actions for civil society and human rights activists.

Moreover, the event brought together representatives from the different civil society organizations that contributed to the publication, in addition to the local media, and press releases were issued.<sup>73</sup> The event was advertised through Facebook, which reached up to 1500 people.

Source: ANND.

### Box No. 7 - Germany: Press conferences in Geneva.

On the occasion of the first and second UPR, press conferences were held prior to the review in Geneva, on 2nd February 2009 and 25th April 2013, respectively. Organized by Forum Menschenrechte (German Forum for Human Rights) and the German Institute for Human Rights (GIHR), these press conferences were multi-functional as they sought to make the German government more aware of specific human rights issues and the importance of the UPR while reaching a larger public audience in Germany. Also, the press conferences targeted members of the Parliament; however, the number of parliamentarians that expressed interest remained rather low – a half dozen out of 600.

At the press conferences, the views of the GIHR and Forum Menschenrechte on the UPR national report were shared orally and in writing with the journalists, focusing on human rights issues such as racism and equal pay for men and women, as well as calling for the ratification of new international human rights instruments such as ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1st UPR cycle) and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2nd UPR cycle).

The attendance of the press was similar at the two conferences, with several journalists working for German media from different agencies. Forum Menschenrechte assesses these activities as a success to the extent that they resulted in good quality coverage and an interview broadcast on a mainstream TV channel on the same evening each of the press conferences was held in both times. On the political level, however, the press conferences had limited impact as the human rights issues continue to be unresolved.

Source: German Forum for Human Rights.

### Box No. 8 - Brazil: Media work on the UPR.<sup>74</sup>

*Ignorando violações, líderes incorporam Guiné Equatorial à comunidade lusófona* (Ignoring violations, leaders incorporate Equatorial Guinea to the Lusophone community), published by Adital on 24th July 2015.

*"Conectas and partner organizations will seek Brazil's commitments regarding the Universal Periodic Review of Equatorial Guinea. Organizations denounced the persistence of the death penalty, of torture and lack of freedom of association and assembly."*



*Organizações de DH e indígenas estão atentas às respostas do governo na Revisão Periódica Universal (Human rights and indigenous organizations are paying attention to government responses in the UPR), published by Adital on 20 September 2012.*

*Brazilian government officials are currently in Geneva, Switzerland, to participate in the process of Universal Periodic Review (UPR). (...) At the time, the country will have to submit responses to the 170 recommendations on human rights made by member countries of the UN. Organizations advocating for human rights and indigenous rights are also in Switzerland to monitor the process and listen to the answers that Brazil will present. The Pará Society for the Defense of Human Rights (SDDH), Conectas Human Rights and Amazon Watch are attentive to the justification of the Brazilian government, as the country is not complying with the rights of indigenous peoples in the case of the construction of hydroelectric Belo Monte on the Xingu River in Altamira, Pará.*

*Conselho da ONU recomenda fim da Polícia Militar no Brasil. (UN Council recommends end of the military police in Brazil), published by RedeBrasilActual on 30th May 2012.*

*“The Human Rights Council of the United Nations has called today that Brazil to work to suppress the military police, accused of numerous extra-judicial executions.”*

*Após aceitar recomendações da ONU, desafio do Brasil é cumprir antigas promessas, avalia ONG (After accepting UN recommendations, Brazil's challenge is to fulfill old promises, observes NGO), published by Empresa Brasil de Comunicação on the 21st September 2012.*

*“The organization (Conectas) is concerned about the impact of economic development on the country's human rights situation”. In 2008, Brazil received 15 questions, criticisms and suggestions on human rights in the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) held by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. In 2012, the number rose to 170. “In these four years, the country that became the 6th economy in the world saw not only its ambitions and capabilities growing but also the concern and the international scrutiny of the numerous human rights violations committed here,” said the organization in a Statement.”*

Source: Conectas.

### 3.3 Multi-stakeholders dialogue

In the UPR process, civil society and NHRIs carry out activities explicitly seeking to reach multiple audiences, as opposed to actions originally oriented to a unique audience that may also involve others groups. Activities with broader audiences often seek to foster a dialogue on the implementation of the UPR recommendations and, thereby, address the salient human rights issues in a given country through engagement with the State and a broad range of constituencies.

One manifestation of multi-stakeholders action is the publication of written material, translated in local languages, with the purpose of wide dissemination. In this regard, the People Empowerment Foundation in Thailand published and disseminated the stakeholder report in English and Thai for a variety of audiences, including students through Universities libraries.<sup>75</sup>

The Tanzania Human Rights Defender Coalition (THRDC) reports that in 2014 the UPR Coalition organized, a day long workshop involving human rights organizations, UN Human Rights Advisors, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and representatives of the Swedish, Finish, German, and Canadian embassies and the European Union, as well as individual members, in order to raise awareness about the UPR among stakeholders and to pressure the government to publish an implementation plan.<sup>76</sup>

#### Factsheets, workshops and online monitoring process

##### Box No. 9 - Tanzania: Dissemination of UPR factsheets

Following Tanzania participation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR cycle on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the Tanzanian Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) drafted and disseminated Factsheets on the UPR Outcome Report.

The factsheets were disseminated in Dar es Salaam and in all CHRAGG branch offices in Lindi, Mwanza and Zanzibar. The target audience was civil society organizations, ministries, departments and Government agencies, the general public, visitors and complainants who visit CHRAGG offices.

To date, around 7,500 facts sheets have been disseminated. It is estimated that 30,000 people gained familiarity with the UPR through the factsheets.

Source: CHRAGG.

#### **Box No. 10 - Philippines: UPR Monitoring Mechanism Forum**

Within the framework of the UPR, the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP) exerted efforts to install a UPR Watch / UPR Tripartite Body that aims to provide a venue for a regular dialogue on the progress of UPR recommendations every quarter once the UPR Working Group report is adopted. This would be backed up by a web-based tool to ensure all initiatives by various branches of government including independent constitutional bodies are recorded alongside civil society initiatives. The online portal of the project, [ihumanrights.ph](http://ihumanrights.ph) – is a database that will house information on the implementation of the UPR, and human rights core treaties by the Philippines.<sup>77</sup>

The UPR Tripartite Monitoring Body (UPR-TMB) was established in 2013 with the partnership of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines through its Government Linkages Office, the Presidential Human Rights Commission (PHRC) and civil society representatives – the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) and the Philippine Human Rights Information Center (Philrights) through the assistance of the United Nations – Development Programme (UNDP).

The UPR-TMB is an attempt for a multi-stakeholders' monitoring of the implementation of the UPR recommendations to the Philippines starting with its second cycle period. Specifically, its objectives are to identify monitoring indicators through a participatory process where government agencies, civil society organizations and the CHRP were involved. Indicators allow monitoring of the situation of the most vulnerable persons and assist in assessing the greatest impact of specific UPR recommendations.

The government, the CHRP and CSOs are all expected to provide inputs and observations relevant to the indicators based on actual accomplishments and/or non-accomplishments of each UPR recommendation and action points. The results of the evaluation were submitted to the UN HRC – UPR Mechanism as the Philippine mid-term report. Before the submission, a feedback consultation with all concerned agencies and CSOs was organized.

Source: CHRP.

#### **Box No. 11 - Bangladesh: National workshops and factsheets**

The National Human Rights Commission in Bangladesh (NHRC) played a catalytic role in the UPR process. The institution engaged with a wide range of stakeholders during the UPR consultations prior to Bangladesh's review by the Human Rights Council UPR Working Group. The activities took place in 2012 and 2013 within the framework of the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR cycle.

The aim of the activities was to assess the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations to Bangladesh during the first cycle, identify critical human rights issues still affecting people's rights and inform the NHRC in the drafting of its first UPR report to the Human Rights Council. At the start of the process, the NHRC Bangladesh drafted a road map that guided its UPR's actions.

The process started in February 2012 with a workshop where ministries were invited to send focal points for the UPR's second cycle. Then, the NHRC organized a series of consultation workshops to monitor the implementation of the UPR recommendations. In total twelve workshops took place in Dhaka and outside the capital city. The consultations led to a nation-wide debate on key human rights issues and held the government accountable for its obligations under international human rights instruments.

Factsheets on key human rights issues (child rights, women rights, climate change, institutional development, refugees, civil and political rights, economic social and cultural rights, rights of persons with disabilities, rights of indigenous people) were also drafted and distributed to the participants of the workshops.

The factsheets highlighted the human rights situation regarding a specific topic in Bangladesh, the UPR recommendations and the progress made by the country in implementing the relevant recommendations and complying with the international human rights instruments. The factsheets informed the discussions at the workshops and represented a good instrument for use in raising awareness about human rights issues affecting Bangladesh.

Within this framework, a national seminar was held on 13 April 2012 with key State actors in the second UPR cycle. The key objective was to strengthen the Government's role in measuring progress made by government institutions on the recommendations from the first UPR cycle.

The consultation also aimed to enhance the understanding of key State actors of the different stakeholder reports compiled by CSOs and the NHRC, review the

progress made after the 2009 UPR session, and prepare for the questions expected to be raised at the 2013 UPR meeting in Geneva.

A total of 45 representatives from ministries, the Attorney General's Office, and the NHRC participated in the Seminar. At the Seminar, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General requested all representatives of line ministries to send progress reports within a specific deadline so that the Foreign Ministry could better prepare and draft its talking points.

In sum, members of the Government, civil society, NGOs, the diplomatic community, media, human rights activists and lawyers took part in the workshops organized by the NHRC. There was wide press coverage on the UPR workshops organized by the NHRC, resulting in increased public awareness of the UPR mechanism and human rights issues.

Source: NHRC in Bangladesh.



National Workshop on the UPR in Bangladesh.

### 3.4 Awareness-raising: civil society

The UPR requires the participation of civil society organizations as one of its fundamental components. In other terms, for the mechanism to be meaningful, national civil societies should be participating. However, some sectors of national civil society do not explicitly work on human rights. And most lack the resources and capacities to engage in the UPR process in a sustained and informed manner. Thus, there is a need for civil society to benefit from support and information in order to be able to fully engage with the UPR process.

#### Learning through coalitions and consultations

The establishment of large civil society coalitions and organization of national consultations raises awareness about human rights among a broad and diverse range of civil society representatives and their constituencies. In this regard, one of the potentials of the UPR process is to gather different civil society sectors that do not frame their issues in human rights terms. Moreover, as the UPR covers the full spectrum of human rights standards, all sectors of civil society should contribute to the UPR.

In other words, the UPR does have an educational value because anyone, regardless of having consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), can participate in the UPR and learn from the process.<sup>78</sup> In the case of Chile, for instance, civil society engagement in the UPR has been limited to Metropolitan NGOs, missing, therefore, the opportunity to involve all sectors of the civil society across the country.<sup>79</sup>

In some cases, UPR consultations bring together organizations focusing on specific issues or groups' rights. In the process of prioritization of themes, they hear and learn about other groups' human rights issues. The general scope of the human rights assessment for the UPR requires civil society organizations to coordinate their efforts and to identify priority issues. Such process creates a space for debate among civil society organizations, assisting specialized organizations to better understand the issues of other groups.

For instance, in Thailand, a national civil society workshop on the UPR set up three working groups on civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights and minority and group rights. The latter gathered representatives of distinct groups, such as religious minorities and LGBTI groups, who become aware of the struggles and human rights concerns of others groups.<sup>80</sup>

In Paraguay, the human rights coalition CODEHUPY gathers 35 civil society organizations and networks.<sup>81</sup> In the context of the UPR, CODEHUPY organized several working meetings and debates with its members to identify, among national human rights issues, the priorities to be brought forth in the UPR process.

Unlike other human rights mechanisms, such as treaty bodies and special procedures, the UPR requires a comprehensive analysis of the human rights situation as a basis for prioritization prior the process of preparing submissions. Civil society needs to be inclusive of all sectors and organizations, widening the scope of issues and learning from the experiences of different sectors.

For instance, in Panama, the representative of the trade union *Convergencia Sindical* recognized the lack of knowledge of the organization in the field of human rights, even if its work and knowledge are highly relevant for assessing the human rights situation in the country. Also, the representative pointed out the need for further training in the union sector; in particular at the grass root level, only the leaders have been trained on human rights issues and the UPR.<sup>82</sup> In the same vein, the *Centrales de trabajadoras y trabajadores* of Honduras submitted a report to the UPR. In this process, the UPR has facilitated trade unions becoming more aware of the international system of human rights protection. This organization sees such process as a direct impact of the UPR process.<sup>83</sup>

Similarly, the women's organization from Panama, *Centro de la Mujer Panameña*<sup>84</sup>, has been invited to a consultation on the preparation of the UPR national report. The consultation was organized through the National Secretary of the Black Ethnic Group, a governmental body gathering government and afro-descendants representatives to promote public policies in favor of the afro-descendant people of Panama. On the basis of that experience, the representative of the *Centro de la Mujer Panameña* has emphasized the need to address the lack of human rights awareness and knowledge regarding international human rights mechanisms among civil society organizations.<sup>85</sup>

### Workshop, trainings and webcasting

In Australia, the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLAC) convened several workshops to prepare the joint NGO coalition submission. While some NGOs decided to prepare separate submissions, reflecting differences in priorities, the process allowed civil society organizations to become aware of other human rights issues than those they are working on.<sup>86</sup> In the case of Indonesia, the Indonesian NGO Coalition on the Universal Periodic Review conducted workshops for other civil society groups.<sup>87</sup> In Switzerland, the UPR civil society Coalition undertook a similar exercise.

In the case of the THRDC, they also carried out activities to train other members of civil society. Starting in April 2015, THRDC organized a workshop on documenting and monitoring the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations (of which there were 107). Approximately 100 human rights NGOs and defenders from across the country attended the workshop, which educated and empowered them to undertake monitoring activities.<sup>88</sup> Thus, as the UPR becomes more and more inclusive, training needs will increase accordingly.

In some cases, NHRIs play a specific role in raising awareness of civil society actors through the process of consultation, in particular when the latter is truly inclusive. The participation

of civil society actors in the public hearings of the Danish Institute of Human Rights is an example of such processes. In that sense, NHRIs can help create links between the State and civil society, as in the case in New Zealand, where the National Human Rights Commission has promoted the UPR-based National Action Plan as a platform to continue a constructive dialogue between affected people and the Government.

In the case of the South African Human Rights Commission, the use of the webcasting of the UPR in several regions of the country to reach out and strengthen the collaboration with civil society is an interesting case of an advocacy strategy based on raising awareness and public discussion of the UPR.

Similarly, during the Working Group session of Jordan on October 24th, 2013, civil society organizations broadcasted the session at the University of Jordan Faculty of Law. This activity aimed to raise awareness about the UPR process and the human rights situation in the country among law students. During the session, many live interviews were conducted with civil society members, who were present in Geneva to attend the Working Group session.<sup>89</sup>

In summary, raising awareness of civil society can occur in the dynamics of consultation and working in national coalitions and through workshops, training and the use of the UPR webcasting.

### Consultations

#### **Box No. 12 - Australia: NHRI consultation with civil society**

Prior to the second UPR, The Australian Human Rights Commissions organized consultation in Sydney and Melbourne with NGOs to explain the process, discuss key issues and develop collective strategies. Given the four-year gap between UPR cycles, many of the NGO representatives were new to the UPR process. The Commission was able to provide leadership, explaining the process and providing input on developing a targeted and collective strategy.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission.

### Box No. 13 - Swiss UPR coalition socializing the UPR with NGO

The NGO humanrights.ch ensures the role of the secretariat of the Swiss NGO platform on human rights. Gathering around 80 Swiss NGOs defending human rights, the platform hold annual meetings. At the 2016 session, a specific workshop was organized to prepare for Switzerland's third UPR cycle planned to take place in 2017. With the specific objective to develop a final paper with recommendations supported by all NGOs, the workshop was structured by topics, group discussion and the revision of the final paper.

The Workshop was held on 22 June 2016 at the University of Bern, using several lecture rooms. Around 30 NGO representatives attended as the primary audience of the workshop. The expectation is that the information about the UPR process is disseminating through the NGOs' communication channels to their constituencies. Regarding the outreach, the information on the UPR engagement of Swiss NGOs is made public through the Internet in two national languages (French and German). The content is prepared to be accessible to a wide audience. According to Humanrights.ch, students, experts and members of the parliaments have been accessing and using the website for their activities.<sup>90</sup> As an indicator, 3,645 page views were registered on the German version of the UPR-dedicated webpage from June 2015 to June 2016.

Source: Humanrights.ch

## Training

### Box No. 14 - Tunisia: regional NGOs providing training to national group rights.

"The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, in conjunction with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, organized a two-day training workshop for a number of Tunisian human rights organizations on the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The workshop, (...), aimed to train Tunisian rights groups on the processes of the UPR, a UN mechanism to assess the State of human rights of member States. Each UN member State undergoes a UPR every four years. The workshop focused on the

UPR stages, how to prepare reports for the various phases, the parties eligible to participate in the process, and the role of civil society organizations in animating the process.

The workshop also examined the post-UPR stage, reviewing the recommendations submitted by Human Rights Council member States, the mechanism for States' acceptance of the recommendations, and the role that civil society organizations, the media, and other parties play in monitoring and assessing each State's compliance with the obligations it accepts during the UPR.

The training workshop is the third UPR workshop, following similar trainings for Algerian and Moroccan organizations in January and February. The workshop is part of a long-term project sponsored by the CIHRS and EMHRN with the goal of promoting the participation of local civil society organizations in the UPR process. This activity will be followed by other meetings and trainings in the run up to the UPR for the three States in January 2017".<sup>91</sup>

Source: Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies.

## Webcasting

### Box No. 15 - South Africa: Human rights Awareness through UPR Webcasting.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) engages in various awareness-raising activities within the UPR framework.

On the occasion of South Africa's UPR cycle in 2008 and 2012, the SAHRC facilitated interactive dialogue sessions with a wide range of civil society actors in Geneva during the State review at the Human Rights Council. In parallel, in South Africa, the SAHRC hosted live webcasts of South Africa's UPR sessions using its main provincial offices to, thereby providing an environment for immediate dialogue and response to South Africa's presentation.

The SAHRC organized the event at its main provincial offices. During the first review, the webcast gatherings took place in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. During the second review, it took place in Johannesburg and Cape Town. A wide range of civil society actors attended the meeting. The meeting was informal and the dialogue was interactive.

One of the objectives of the webcast was to strengthen the relationship between the SAHRC and civil society. It represented an opportunity for the SAHRC to issue a press Statement immediately following the activity analyzing the South African government's performance during the review. The activity further enabled the SAHRC to assess which questions / recommendations were posed to the government and whether they emanated from the NHRI or civil society reports.

The collaboration between the SAHRC and civil society actors on the UPR led to a continuous engagement on the key areas of concern and which ought to be reflected in the SAHRC's and NGOs' UPR submissions in 2017 for South Africa's 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle.

Source: SAHRC.

### 3.5 Awareness-raising: victims or specific groups

A recognized pattern of human rights violations exists against certain groups facing multiple discriminations. Throughout the UPR, specific recommendations refer to these groups, which include women, children, elderly, persons with disabilities, people of African descent, indigenous peoples, linguistic, religious and national minorities, people with albinism, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrant workers and Stateless persons, among many others.<sup>92</sup> These specific recommendations should be the result of meaningful participation of those concerned in the UPR process.

As pointed out by Kate Gilmore and others, in the case of sexual and reproductive human rights (SRHR), "the UPR process provides avenues for ensuring that groups whose lives are affected by specific recommendations have a voice and contribute to defining the way forward. With regard to SRHR, the active participation of women's groups, youth-led organizations, persons with disabilities (such as women and girls suffering from fistula), people living with HIV, and other groups deprived of their sexual and reproductive health and well-being must be encouraged and supported".<sup>93</sup> As for civil society in general, participation of such groups requires that they are aware of the UPR process.

Civil society organizations can also inform their constituencies about the UPR process and human rights issues. For instance, Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) represents a national membership comprising about 2,500 legal professionals. During the second UPR review,

attended by the president of ALHR, updates about the process were sent out to all members.<sup>94</sup>

In the case of the Philippines, the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP) carried out activities at the regional level of the State: "The CHRP also cascaded the UPR recommendations to its regional offices, and embarked on a regional level CHRP-Civil Society Consultation in July 2011. About 75 NGOs and peoples' organizations participated in the gathering which resulted in the inclusion of their recommendations in the CHRP's draft submission."<sup>95</sup>

In Tanzania, the Mtwara Paralegal Center organizes grass-root community dialogue and debate about human rights and the UPR.<sup>96</sup> Another case refers to Thailand, where the People Empowerment Foundation is undertaking consultations and training workshops with grassroots communities facing pressing human rights issues such as the impact of the building of the Pakmoon Dam in Ubol.

In Burkina Faso, the CIFDHA and Amnesty Burkina trained university students on international mechanisms of human rights protection, including the UPR, special procedures and treaty bodies), with the view of preparing for the second cycle of the UPR of Burkina Faso. The training was held at the University of Ouagadougou in May 2012.

In summary, increasing awareness of victims or specific groups seems to generally take place in the context of consultations and training sessions.

#### **Box No. 16 - Thailand: training and awareness-raising focused on local communities.**

The People's Empowerment Foundation (PEF) has been implementing a project to strengthen the effective participation of local grassroots organizations and vulnerable groups in Thailand's 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle Universal Periodic Review in order to advance human rights in Thailand.

Four sub-regional training courses were organized in Bangkok on 19-20 December 2015, in Yala on 26-27 December 2015, in Ubolratchatani on 23-24 January 2016, and in Chiangrai on 6-7 February 2016. The participants were diverse, including workers, disabled persons and indigenous persons. PEF and workshop participants visited the villagers affected by the Pakmoon Dam in Ubol to hear their claims. Only 120 participants could attend the sub-regional training; however, the use of social media might offer avenues to broaden the scope of these activities in future.





Ubol workshop at Thai people's Wisdom Center on 23-24 January, 2016, PEF.

Source: People's Empowerment Foundation.

### 3.6 Dialogue with the international community

Civil society and NHRIs have been engaging with the international community in the UPR process in various ways. Such activities are often part of national advocacy strategies with an awareness-raising scope regarding missions and embassies.

In the context of the first cycle, the Australian Human Rights Commission undertook consultations with the Government and civil society. In that context, the Commission organized a briefing event for embassies held in Canberra at which approximately 40 countries were represented. Similar briefings were held with embassies in preparation for the second cycle, with an attendance of approximately 80 countries. Furthermore, follow-up briefings were convened with approximately 15 countries and the European Union.

In addition, the Australian Human Rights Commission keeps the Human Rights Council informed, on a yearly basis, of the progress made on the implementation of recommendations. The Commission prepares an annual implementation report released each Human Rights Day in Australia and submitted for the March session of the Human Rights Council, under item 6 of the UPR. While these actions are part of advocacy work to ensure the effective implementation of the UPR recommendations, it also serves to inform the international

community of the evolution of the human rights situation in Australia.

The activities oriented to the international community covered by the present research indicate the organization of briefings in the capital and in Geneva. In the case of Conectas, the practice is based on written communications to all embassies, followed by bilateral interviews.

#### Meeting with Embassies

##### Box No. 17 - Burkina Faso: Audience with the Ambassador of Belgium in Ouagadougou

On May 20, 2016, a human rights NGO based in Burkina Faso, CIFDHA, Amnesty International Burkina Faso and Semfilms association obtained an audience with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Burkina Faso.

In the meeting, the discussion covered the participation of civil society in international mechanisms of human rights protection. On that occasion, CIFDHA conveyed to the Ambassador the work undertaken in the UPR process and in the ongoing review of Burkina Faso by the HRC. The civil society delegation sought closer cooperation with the Embassy in this regard.



Representatives of CIFDHA, Amnesty and Semfilms with Mr. Lieven De La Marche, Ambassador of Belgium in Burkina Faso.

Source: CIFDHA.

#### Briefing to all Embassies and missions

##### Box No. 18 - Australia: briefings to embassies and missions

The Australian Human Rights Commission engaged in dialogues with representatives of embassies and missions at the beginning of both UPR cycles. During the briefings, the Commission informed missions of other countries on the human

rights issues facing Australia. These efforts were aimed at ensuring that countries made useful recommendations that address a wide range of human rights concerns in Australia.

For the first cycle, a briefing event was held in Canberra attended by representatives of approximately 40 countries. For the second cycle, another briefing event was held in Canberra with over 80 countries represented. This event, co-hosted with the NGO Coalition, was an opportunity to inform other countries while also learning about areas of interest on which countries would likely make recommendations. After the event was held, 15 missions asked for additional briefings on specific topics of interest.

Lobbying efforts also occurred in Geneva, with Commission and NGO representatives traveling to Geneva to hold briefings with country missions. Based on the information provided in the Canberra event, NGOs and Commission representatives targeted their lobbying efforts, with 35 meetings held with country representatives. The Commission and NGOs also participated in a pre-session briefing hosted by UPR Info. The overall efforts resulted in the Commission and NGOs briefing over 100 countries.

By combining advocacy efforts in Canberra and Geneva, many countries were informed on the human rights issues in Australia and were steered towards recommendations that related to their specific areas of interest.

These efforts were successful, with 104 countries providing Statements during Australia's appearance and making 290 recommendations across a range of topics. Many of the recommendations mirrored the concerns raised by the Commission and NGOs.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission.

### National, international and transnational briefings

#### **Box No. 19 - Brazil: Advocacy targeting diplomats in Brazil, Geneva and other countries**

Conectas' advocacy work on the UPR is aimed at addressing human right issues in Brazil and in other countries. Conectas' approach includes three tracks: first, sending documents with their human rights concerns and suggestions of recommendations to all diplomatic representations in Brazil and seeking bilateral interviews as a

follow-up with some diplomatic representatives; second, Conectas' representative in Geneva undertaking similar work with the diplomatic mission to the United Nations and, third, Conectas works in partnership with NGOs in other countries, asking them to brief their own government on the UPR on Brazil highlighting Conectas priorities.

In this partnership, Conectas engages in similar lobbying work with the Brazilian government regarding the UPR of other countries. In the case of the UPR on Iran, Conectas received a request for information directly from the Brazilian Embassy in Teheran. Another advocacy strategy has been to ask Brazil to raise certain issues in the UPR for other countries, like racial profiling and police violence in the US, in order to have additional leverage to request Brazil to make progress on the same issue, as a matter of consistency.

Source: Conectas.

#### **Box No. 20 - The United States of America: UPR Diplomacy Dialogues**

The UPR Diplomacy Dialogues was a four month process to encourage interaction among US civil society with diplomats at embassies in Washington D.C. and UN missions in New York. The UPR Diplomacy Dialogues took place once a month from January 2015 - April 2015 prior to the UPR review in May 2015. Each month, civil society was able to speak for 1-2 minutes on thematic human rights issues through intervention directly to diplomats in DC and NYC.

There was also format at the final one in April at Roosevelt House where there were two panels -- Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social & Cultural Rights -- featuring 5 speakers each. Then all 24 working groups were able to speak for 1 minute to the diplomats. The event was also live streamed around the world. The four month UPR Diplomacy Dialogues brought over 60 diplomats to meet directly with impacted individuals.

The US Human Rights Network coordinated the UPR Diplomacy Dialogues. The UPR Diplomacy Dialogues resulted in the greatest number of recommendations, a record 343 with over 300 linked to the actual questions and recommendations drafted by the 24 working groups through the US Human Rights Network.

Source: The US Human Rights Network.



### 3.7 Public debate with the legislative branch

Civil society and NHRIs have also carried out specific activities with the State, mainly the executive and legislative branches. In some cases, government entities and parliamentarians have engaged in internal discussion on human rights and the UPR process. These actions contribute to awareness-raising from within government entities, as opposed to actions initiated by civil society, NHRIs or, in some cases, the United Nations.

With regard to Parliament, there are several experiences illustrating the role that Parliament can play in relation to the UPR. The involvement of national legislative bodies represents one type of public debate. For instance, after the UPR Working Group on Jordan took place, “the Freedom Committee in the Jordanian Parliament invited the INSAN coalition to discuss the human rights priorities in Jordan in terms of UPR recommendations. Several ministries were present at this meeting including the Ministers of Media, Justice and State for Installations.” In another example, the Australia Human Rights Commission has “spoken about [the] UPR in parliamentary committee processes”.

According to the representative of the German Forum for Human Rights, the quality of engagement with the State seems to depend on the personal commitment of public officials. Moreover, their regular turnover creates uncertainties about the process and the opportunities to engage with the UPR and, consequently, how to best use the mechanism as a lever for awareness-raising and public discussion. As the current government seems to be less prone to engage in a broad consultation, a key area of increased engagement is with the Parliaments, as they stay longer in their functions than those appointed to the governments. Parliamentarians are generally re-elected for 2 to 3 legislative terms. In this regard, the engagement with parliaments appears more reliable than with the executive branch.

Also, parliamentarians maintain knowledge and commitments for a longer period than executive branch officials. Recognizing that human rights work requires time and perseverance to deliver results, such continuity in the Parliament turns the legislative branch into a key arena. In this respect, German civil society is considering institutionalizing an annual gathering of German parliamentarians in Geneva to discuss the HRC resolutions and the UPR recommendations and their implementation, in order to further clarify their own role in the UPR process in their country.<sup>97</sup>

In the same vein, Conectas considers it essential to inform and involve the Parliament in the process of consultation of the national report of Brazil. In the context of the Brazil-

ian human rights committee involving NGOs and State representative – established since the 1<sup>st</sup> UPR, Conectas advocated for the Parliament to convene a public hearing with the State Ministry of Human Rights to discuss the national report. In other terms, Conectas prefers to organize the consultation with the involvement of the Parliament, as opposed to exclusively with the State, with the view of promoting the checks and balances principle. Furthermore, many representatives of embassies attended the consultation. A comprehensive press release was issued, however, without significant coverage on that occasion.<sup>98</sup>

It is worth recalling the differences between civil society and NHRIs, as the latter may have the legal duty to report to Parliament and therefore official access to the legislative branch. With regard to activities oriented to parliamentarians, the following is an example of reporting, parliamentary action and capacity building.

#### Reporting to Parliament

##### **Box No. 21 - Australia: Reporting to Parliament & Parliamentary committee processes**

Within the framework of its UPR engagement, the Australian Human Rights Commission engages with parliament through the tabling of reports and appearance before committees. The Commission appears two or three times a year before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee as part of normal accountability processes. During the appearance, the Committee can ask questions on a range of human rights issues.

Prior to the second UPR, Committee members asked questions on the UPR process, the substance of recommendations and the practicalities of implementing recommendations. There was also a discussion of specific human rights issues that were raised in the Commission’s UPR submission.<sup>99</sup>

After the first UPR appearance, the Commission hosted a workshop in Parliament to raise awareness of the UPR. The workshop was accompanied by a commitment by the then government to table the UPR outcomes in Parliament, with the Minister making a Statement when tabling this.

Positive outcomes stem from the engagement of the Commission with the Parliament: A) A Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights was established; B) All legislation submitted to the Parliament have to be accompanied by Statements of Compatibility with Human Rights; C) The National Disability Insurance Scheme was established; D) The country has now a person-centered planning approach and

support over the life cycle for people with a disability; E) There are now new federal discrimination protections on basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and inter-sex status.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission.

#### **Box No. 22 - South Africa: Advocacy to the government and Parliament**

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) used the recommendations emanating from the UPR and prioritized them within the work of the institution to advocate for human rights with various stakeholders, the government and the Parliament. At the institutional level, the SAHRC also has designated Commissioners with focal areas which complement UPR recommendations / themes and has dedicated a specific strategic objective to monitoring South Africa's compliance with its international and regional human rights obligations. Furthermore, the SAHRC dedicated unit dealing with parliamentary and international affairs is engaged in the UPR advocacy work.

The SAHRC reports regularly to Parliament and includes in its presentations information about the South African government's compliance with its international human rights obligations and recommendations from the UPR.

Recommendations emanating from the UPR and other treaty body processes were used to influence legislative review processes and advocate for law reform. For example, following both South Africa's UPR sessions, several recommendations were made to the government to enact torture legislation. This provided the necessary impetus to both the SAHRC and civil society to further advocate for torture legislation, which was finally promulgated after the government's second UPR process. The UPR recommendations proved to be a good lever to highlight human rights issues and add weight to the SAHRC's activities: legislative submissions to parliament, advocacy engagements, media releases, legal investigations etc. The institution also has quarterly diplomatic engagements with the Justice Ministry whereby it requests an update on the progress made by the government in respect of UPR / treaty body recommendations and reporting.

Source: SAHRC.

## Parliamentarians in action

#### **Box No. 23 - Germany: Action by parliamentarians**

The engagement of the Parliament on the UPR was led by the then chairperson of the human rights committee and former parliamentarian Ms. Herta Däubler-Gmelin (Social Democratic Party – SPD) who was also the former Minister of Justice. Her personal interest in translating the UPR into a positive instrument for Germany and the UN-led her to engage with other parliamentarians on an issue related to international human rights. As a former minister, she was able to reach out to all parties. She addressed the human rights committee of the Parliament and organized an annual visit to the Human Rights Council. Her actions initiated dialogue about how the UPR can influence the policy-making process in Germany, including the preparation of the UPR hearing. She co-convened an official meeting of the human rights committee on the UPR outcomes.

This process had unfolded between the two UPR cycles. The audience included the 18 members of the human rights committee, representing all parties proportionally to their presence in the Parliaments. Through this process, issues related to arms trade and human rights, racism and treatment of migrants were raised in the parliamentary committee. However, meaningful continuity will depend on the personal commitment of parliamentarians. For instance, general elections were held between the two UPR cycles in 2013, which resulted in the strongest human rights advocates among the parliamentarians losing office.

Source: German Forum for Human Rights.

## Capacity building and training

#### **Box No. 24 - Philippines: raising awareness in the Parliament**

The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP) embarked on a series of activities that are geared towards capacitating national authorities in the implementation of the UPR recommendations. For instance, on the legislative level, the CHRP presentation of the 'Human Rights Legislative Agenda' to Congress is a move towards ensuring a strategic alliance with the legislature and other stakeholders in promoting human rights legislation. The agenda covers legislative measures proposed on the basis of compliance with human rights treaties and the experience of

human rights advocates on the ground.

Source: CHRP.

#### **Box No. 25 - Burkina Faso: training workshop for Parliamentarians on human rights, the UPR and treaty bodies**

From July 27 to 29 2016, a training workshop for MPs was held in Ouagadougou. Following the introduction of the new legislature, it was necessary to strengthen the human rights capacities of these MPs, especially as most were entering for the first time at the National Assembly while possessing little knowledge about human rights and the protection mechanisms that exist.

The workshop was timely as it followed the consideration of the initial reports of Burkina Faso to treaty bodies (Committee on Enforced Disappearance (CED), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Human Rights Committee (ICCPR) while the country began to prepare for the third cycle of the UPR.

The training lasted 3 days, bringing together twenty participants who were then equipped to understand and monitor the effective implementation of the recommendations of the UPR and treaty bodies.

The training was organized by the National Democratic Institute of Burkina Faso with support from USAID. On Tuesday, 27 July 2016, CIFDHA, made a presentation about the HRC and the UPR, underlying the complementarities between the UPR, treaty bodies and other human rights mechanisms with the aim of achieving greater protection of human rights.

The following day, CIFDHA made a presentation of the UPR recommendations and treaty bodies concluding observations with a focus on the regularity of recommendations across human rights mechanisms. Finally, the role of stakeholders was highlighted, including civil society and Parliament in monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

The third day of the workshop was devoted to discussing the challenges and opportunities faced by the Parliament in promoting and protection human rights in Burkina Faso, and a draft roadmap for parliamentarians was prepared. The latter included the monitoring of the implementation of recommendations by the regular questioning of the government (oral questions). Finally, a request for tailored

training for parliamentarians on the role of the Parliament in the process was formulated.

Source: CIFDHA.

### **3.8 Public debate with the executive branch**

National governments have the primary responsibility for undertaking the review, with broad consultation, deciding which recommendations it accepts, and implementing accepted recommendations. The UPR, therefore, provides a unique opportunity for civil society and NHRIs to work with executive branch officials and raise awareness about human rights issues in the country.

The process can only succeed, of course, where the environment allows engagement in a meaningful and transparent dialogue. Indeed, “national dialogue processes need to be clearly grounded in principles of meaningful participation, inclusion, and transparency”.<sup>100</sup> Such dialogue brings human rights into public discussion, although in many instances, consultation remains accessible only to a restricted number of organizations selected by the government, as, for example, in Honduras.<sup>101</sup>

In this regard, NHRIs can play a strategic role in facilitating the dialogue between the State and civil society organizations about the UPR process and the human rights situation. For instance, the Australian Human Rights Commission co-hosted a workshop on lessons from the UPR leading to a tripartite arrangement between the government, civil society and the Commission as a preparatory platform for the UPR.

Likewise, the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh took the opportunity of the UPR to bring together the Government and civil society for a dialogue on human rights issues affecting the country and to define the responsibility of both State and non-State actors to respect, protect and fulfill human rights.<sup>102</sup>

As the following examples illustrate, public debate with the executive branch can include multi-stakeholder platforms, national dialogue, consultations and briefing of sub-regional authorities.

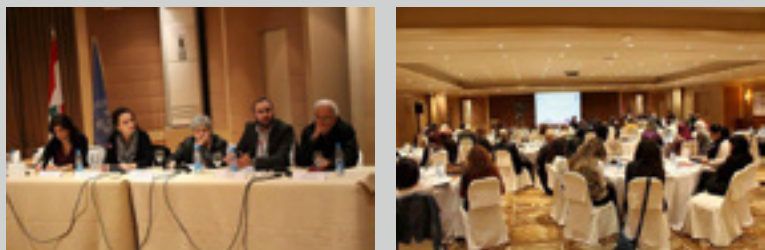
## Multi-stakeholder platforms

### Box No. 26. - Lebanon: National Conference enabling a multi-stakeholder platform to discuss human rights

On Human Rights Day, December 10th 2015, ANND, UNDP and OHCHR organized a national conference in Beirut entitled 'Universal Periodic Human Rights Reports 2015' at the Movenpick Hotel, in Beirut.

The event enabled a multi-stakeholder platform to discuss the human rights conditions in the country, bringing together members of the Parliament, Ministry representatives, international organizations, civil society organizations and experts. Attendees included, among others, the president of the parliamentary commission on human rights; the parliamentarians Michel Moussa, Robert Ghanem, Simon Abi Ramia and Atef Majdalani; and Abir Taha of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.

The conference was organized after the actual conduct of the Review and aimed to present and discuss the recommendations of the Working Group and to create further awareness at the national level of commitments undertaken by the Lebanese government towards advancing human rights. The event was covered broadly by national media, notably by Lebanonfiles, Albaladonline, Alguds and Almस्ताqbal.<sup>103</sup>



National conference on the UPR in Lebanon

Source: ANND.

## National dialogue

### Box No. 27 - Tanzania: National Dialogue on the UPR and human rights

Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR review of Tanzania, the Tanzanian Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) organized in collaboration with Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) a National Dialogue on 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> June

2016. The Dialogue aimed to disseminate helpful information and sensitize Ministries, Departments and Government Agencies, Local Government Authority and civil society organizations on the UPR recommendations.

This activity was also part of an advocacy strategy aimed at ensuring that the Government would accept all recommendations made to Tanzania at the Human Rights Council's session in September 2016. During the dialogue, participants drafted an implementation strategy and a charter, which set out the priority human rights issues to be advocated and lobbied for acceptance by the Government.

A total of 61 participants from civil society organizations and Government agencies attended the dialogue. Following the National Dialogue, the office of the Attorney General organized a stakeholder's workshop on 30th and 31st August 2016 to discuss the UPR recommendations.

Source: CHRAGG.

### Box No. 28 - United States of America: Universal Periodic Review Town Hall Meeting

The UPR Town Hall is a unique innovation in the US experience of the UPR. It was created for the first UPR in 2010 and repeated in 2015. It was a 90-minute meeting following the actual UPR review. The events brought together key figures from administrative agencies and departments as well as local officials including mayors of US cities and Attorneys General of several States.

The US civil society participants in the Town Hall were able to raise questions and make recommendations for new policies and practices to realize human rights. The events have taken place in Geneva immediately following the actual review in Palais des Nations, and additional government officials and civil society actors were able to participate via live teleconference broadcast by the US State Department. Civil society organizations mobilized and coordinated to ensure a structured and sophisticated strategy that is disciplined and also dynamic, with all participants respecting time constraints and suggesting previously agreed upon recommendations.

The Town Halls were coordinated by the US Human Rights Network to ensure effectiveness in the advocacy efforts. Approximately three dozen US government representatives participated in Geneva, with another dozen in Washington DC. Nearly 100 participants from civil society attended in Geneva and another two dozen in DC, in both first and second UPR cycles. The goal of the US Human Rights Network

is to ensure that people whose human rights are violated directly participate in the UPR process, and are able to raise their own concerns. During both cycles, more than half of the participants were participating at the UN for the first time.

Source: US Human Rights Network.

#### **Box No. 29 - Bangladesh: A Mock UPR**

On 16 April 2013, the National Human Rights Commission in Bangladesh conducted a mock UPR in Dhaka. The aim of the event was to prepare the Government Delegation to be more structured and clear in its presentation of the human rights situation in Bangladesh at the 16th session of the UPR Working Group.

It was also an opportunity for stakeholders to remind the Government that it was accountable for respect for human rights in the country. Participants had the opportunity to ask representatives from different Ministries questions on progress made in the implementation of the recommendations made during the first UPR cycle and on current human rights issues in general. The Government Delegation answered the questions posed by the participants on various issues such as the rights of religious and ethnic minorities, non-discrimination and equality for the vulnerable groups, protection of the rights of children and women, and extra-judicial killings. Approximately 150 participants from the Government, civil society, NGOs, the diplomatic community, media, academia, human rights activists and lawyers attended the mock UPR.

Dr. Dipu Moni, the Foreign Minister, considered the mock UPR session a great learning process for the Government. The entire learning process was a tremendous success for the NHRC because it enabled the Government to better understand the recommendations, as well as the implementation status and progress made in the 2009 UPR process. The mock UPR session also allowed for an updated and critical presentation on the human rights situation in the country at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 2 May 2013.

The engagement of the NHRC at the national level positioned the NHRC as a key actor, and knowledge broker facilitating a constructive dialogue with the Government and civil society.

Source: NHRC, Bangladesh.

## Consultations

#### **Box No 30. - Germany: Consultation between the State and civil society**

The German government held a national consultation for the first UPR cycle. Participation was perceived as an obligation, considering the scope of the UPR report, and the consultation brought together all ministries, including those less traditionally involved in human rights reporting. The exercise was limited to the government, the NHRIs and a small number of NGOs (around 10-12). The Government consultation for the 1st UPR took place in the premises of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

For the 2nd UPR cycle, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the German Government between 2009 and 2013, Mr. Markus Löning, displayed a broader understanding of the UPR and international human rights mechanisms. He launched a broad consultation to discuss the draft national report well in advance of the UPR session, making the consultation for the UPR a real, widespread dialogue. The Government used the internet for the consultation, to reach the broadest audience possible. Anyone was invited to submit comments and contribution on the national draft report via the internet. More than 100 NGOs attended the public consultation, including NGOs not usually involved in human rights networks. For the 2nd UPR cycle, the consultation was held in a public space, Humboldt University.

Source: German Forum for Human Rights.

#### **Box No. 31 - Australia: Consultation workshop for States and civil society**

At the beginning of both UPR cycles, the Australian Human Rights Commission convened workshops bringing together the government and NGOs. These workshops were aimed at understanding the UPR process and putting in place a mechanism for dialogue between the government and NGOs.

In the first cycle, workshops were held with NGOs including: A) an introductory forum co-hosted with the Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs in Sydney; B) a consultation workshop co-hosted with the Attorney-General's Department in Sydney; and C) a follow-up workshop in Sydney.

Source: NHRI in Australia

#### Box No. 32 - The United States of America:

##### UPR “Taking Stock” and “Next Steps” National Summit

The UPR Taking Stock and Next Steps National Summit coordinates two conferences at the national level taking place in March 2016 and December 2016 focusing on specific theme of Human Rights Education (HRE). The idea is to continue the conversation with the US administration agencies such as the Department of Education to mobilize to realize the recommendations.

The Taking Stock conference featured NGOs to share what is currently done with HRE. It featured best practices. The Next Steps is a follow-up conference where 9 months later can provide an update on what has taken place so far. There were over 30 NGOs participants in the first conference. The second one in December will be connected with national conference of social studies teachers to ensure wider participation across the country on HRE.

Source: US Human Rights Network.

#### Briefing with sub-regional authorities

#### Box No. 33 - Germany: Engaging with public authorities at the level of Landers

The representatives of some Landers (State members of the German Federal State) based in Berlin, convened a meeting about international human rights mechanisms in Berlin. The meeting was organized as a public discussion with the participation of more than 100 persons, representing members of parliament, general public, journalists, the German Institute for Human Rights and civil society representatives. The outreach towards Landers was limited to their representatives in Berlin. Even though the conveners were certainly motivated by the use of human rights reporting in their political agendas, the meeting provided an opportunity to discuss specific issues raised in the UPR recommendations, such as equality of pay between men and women, as well as making the UPR better known among this level of public authorities.

Source: German Forum for Human Rights.

## 4. The UPR: A process of human rights awareness-raising

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The previous section discussed the practices of civil society and NHRIs in bringing human rights into the public domain, thereby contributing to awareness-raising about the UPR and human rights in a given country. The analysis of these experiences is undertaken in the light of the central questions of the research:

- Is the UPR serving as a catalyst for awareness-raising and public debate on human rights at the country level? And how?

As a result, the analysis led to several findings of general scope:

- The UPR raises awareness on human rights
- The UPR process can reinforce existing awareness-raising and advocacy work
- The context shapes opportunities for public debate in the UPR process
- Challenges and success factors for public discussion can be identified

This section concludes with recommendations emanating from the representatives of civil society and NHRIs about how to develop the potential of the UPR as a tool for human rights awareness-raising and public debate.

### 4.1 The UPR raises awareness on human rights

The UPR has raised awareness among and within States; the participation of all States to prepare for their review and to engage with those of others States has led them to increase their capacities in the field of human rights, including by expanding their diplomatic missions in Geneva.

The case of increased engagement of Pacific States in the international human rights arena is a case in point. On the one hand, they “have engaged with the UPR as infrequent players in the international human rights system”;<sup>104</sup> however, these States have “consciously sought to use the UPR to present their human rights experience to the international community, many of whom had little previous interaction with or understanding of Pacific realities”.<sup>105</sup>



In addition, various governments have engaged several of their ministries in the preparation of their national reports on the human rights situation in their countries. In some countries, inter-ministerial bodies already established for complying with treaty body obligations have extended their work to the UPR.

According to Fernanda Brandão Lapa, Coordinator of the Human Rights and Development Institute in Brazil, “ (...) the UPR mechanism is important for Brazil because it promotes inter-ministerial dialogue regarding human rights policies, not only among specific human rights offices but also with ministries that do not always engage in the national human rights debate”.<sup>106</sup>

Also, the UPR serves as an “open door” mechanism for national and international civil society to engage in dialogue with national governments on the human rights situation in the country. The requirement of broad consultation with all relevant stakeholders for the preparation of the national report forms the key impetus for the State to enter into a dialogue with national constituencies on the human rights situation in the country.

According to its study on the creation and maintenance of a safe and enabling environment for civil society, the OHCHR States that “the universal periodic review, which requires consultation in the preparation of State reports and encourages broad-based input from civil society, has generally proved helpful in fostering dialogue between State institutions and diverse civil society sectors. Maintaining this dialogue is all the more valuable for the implementation of recommendations and to monitor progress”.<sup>107</sup> In the same report, however, the OHCHR underscores that “vigilance is required in State-civil society arrangements to preserve the independence of the latter”.<sup>108</sup>

This is particularly true in authoritarian regimes. For instance, in Africa, “many States ignore NGOs or prevent their involvement in the process of compilation, drafting and submission of reports to both the Commission [African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights] and the UPR. In Egypt, for instance, NGOs play no role in the reporting process. Similarly, In Ethiopia, NGOs’ involvement in State reporting processes is minimal”<sup>109</sup>.

Another example of the “open door” function is to be found in Paraguay, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened civil society organizations and networks to several meetings in the course of 2015, with the view of discussing the key human rights issues in the country in preparation for drafting the national report.<sup>110</sup>

Moreover, the recommendations of the UPR represent an important mechanism to assist in mainstreaming human rights into United Nations assistance in developing national strategies and programming. The integration of the UPR recommendations into United Nations programs is a concrete measure to promote human rights-based programs. To a certain extent, this has already been the case for recommendations emanating from treaty bodies and special procedures. The engagement of States with the UPR provides stronger leverage for advocating for the effective integration of the UPR recommendations into national policies, including those aimed at reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, the UPR can potentially contribute to wider human rights awareness among United Nations agencies and, through their country programs, public authorities.

This is also the case for bilateral development programs. According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Foreign Affairs Ministry has integrated UPR recommendations into the programs for some countries, including by providing funding to support the implementation of UPR recommendations. The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) has issued a brief on how it can engage with the UPR. In this regard, the United Nations, in particular the OHCHR, are producing tools and guidance in this area.<sup>111</sup>

Finally, the UPR consultations and preparation of reports have involved NGOs that have not traditionally engaged in human rights work, as well as grass-roots communities. When coordinating their submission to the UPR, NGOs are exposed to each other’s work and gain awareness about other human rights issues. In this way, the UPR process also can raise awareness within national civil society.

## **4.2 The UPR process can reinforce existing awareness-raising and advocacy work**

In many countries, the public space is shrinking, leaving little room for the freedoms of association and expression. In these contexts, the UPR can be seen as “a space to enhance the watch-dog role of the civil society and its monitoring exercises through concrete advocacy steps at national and international level”<sup>112</sup>.

In Egypt, for example, civil society actors engaged in the second cycle of the UPR process to denounce and raise international attention at the Human Rights Council regarding restrictions and repressive actions imposed by the Egyptian State, notably the repressive law 842002. As a result, civil society has “decided not to participate in any of the UPR’s proceedings in fear that their participation might result in reprisal or possible persecution”.<sup>113</sup>

All the national experiences reported in the present study, either from NGOs or NHRIs, are linked to advocacy strategies, in most cases aiming at the implementation of UPR recommendations. The awareness-raising effect of advocacy varies, of course, according to the type of activities in terms of audience and outreach, as well as other factors.

### 4.3 The context shapes opportunities for public debate in the UPR process

This review of experiences confirms that the context shapes the opportunities and challenges for civil society and NHRIs to engage in public debate. As pointed out by the Arab NGO Network for Development ANND, the “UPR (...) follows the same process for each and every member of the UN. Yet, as every country is unique in its dynamics, [the] human rights situation and more importantly in the engagement of its actors, each represents a different case”.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, differences across countries matter for framing national actors’ strategies. The temptation to promote a model of engagement is very much present, particularly from the perspective of international NGOs, donors and UN agencies. However, as Charlesworth and Larking observe if we promote standard models, the risk of ritualism of the UPR might permeate national processes.<sup>115</sup> In other words, no model fits all.

Various factors are important, such as the size of a country; the type of political system; the nature of the political regime; the extent of social cohesion; the dynamics of civil society actors; the diversity of languages; the degree of institutionalization of the State or the private sector; the accessibility of diplomatic representations; the independence of the judiciary and the media; and the existence of armed conflict.

The size of a country and population offers a striking example of the relevance of specific aspects of a national context. For instance, in the numerous Islands States in the Caribbean Sea, interactions between the national government and civil society are well-established. Everyone knows each other and can meet frequently, as the distance to cross the territory is very short. By contrast, in a country like Brazil, characterized as a giant in terms of population and territory, access to the federal government represents a far greater challenge for civil society.

The national context also matters when assessing the potential of the UPR to increase public awareness about human rights. For instance, “there is low-level awareness of human rights in Australia generally and the UPR has not made a substantial contribution to raising awareness. To a great extent, this is because Australia does not have a range of

formal mechanisms for implementing human rights – such as a Charter of Rights – and so the culture of the country is not positively focused on a human rights dialogue”.<sup>116</sup>

In Germany and Switzerland, there seems to be a predominant perception among the public that there are no human rights problems in their countries. Consequently, it is particularly difficult to attract the attention of the general public, the media and political actors on human rights issues. This is even more the case with respect to the UPR. The NGO *humanrights.ch* noted that it was much harder to bring the UPR to the public than human rights generally, because the UPR is quite technical, and this may act as a deterrent to bring human rights into public debate.<sup>117</sup>

The domestic political dynamics set the stage for social mobilization and action. For instance, elections periods directly influence the behaviors and decisions by political actors. In the case of the United States, the positive changes following the first US review in 2010, “cannot be attributed exclusively to the UPR, but have been influenced by a number of factors, including the Obama administration’s anticipation of the 2012 presidential elections, attempts to enhance the public’s perception of the federal government and consideration of moral concerns facing American society”.<sup>118</sup> A similar process took place in Germany, as elections between the two first UPR cycles brought about a change in government leading to more transparency in the conduct of the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR process by the government in comparison with the previous one.<sup>119</sup> In the case of Australia, the change of government between the two first UPR cycles has altered an initially responsive policy toward UPR recommendations.

“For the first cycle, the [Australian Human Rights Commission] had lobbied the government to make a voluntary commitment to put all accepted recommendations in the National Action Plan on Human rights. We achieved this and got the basis of a good plan in place. However, the government then changed and the new government was not committed to the National Action Plan. The new government did not have the same level of interest in international human rights processes and so despite the best efforts of the [Australian Human Rights Commission] and NGOs, [they] could not get an alternative position articulated. As a result, recommendations were not systematically implemented and new funding initiatives were not commenced. The level of implementation of recommendations was accordingly extremely low”.<sup>120</sup>

Human rights awareness-raising and public discussion is inherent to the UPR mechanism. The process can, nonetheless, be further enhanced by strategies factoring in the evolving opportunities and challenges arising from national social, political, economic and cultural



contexts. Moreover, contributions received for this research show that whatever the challenges and opportunities, any context offers at least some avenues to promote public debate on human rights issues in the context of the UPR process.

#### 4.4 Challenges and success factors for public discussion can be identified

The experiences discussed in this report underscore several challenges to entering into UPR-related public debate; these relate to the absence or weakness of national institutions responsible for protecting human rights, the lack of knowledge about the procedure among NGOs, government authorities and local communities; the lack of ongoing interest by the media beyond the main Review events; the absence of political will for meaningful participation, in some cases combined with repression and retaliation; the dilemma for civil society to engage with the State without making compromise on critical human rights issues; the preference for human rights NGOs to engage with other human rights mechanisms (e.g. treaty and regional bodies); international interferences by international NGO or UN agencies imposing, or at least strongly promoting, a pre-determined agenda and model of intervention to national stakeholders; and the lack of knowledge about the UPR among civil society organizations and the State.

In this regard, the representative from Myanmar of Forum Asian for Human Rights and Development stressed that the UPR should be a national debate, bringing together national actors and not external ones. The improvement and implementation of UPR recommendations should be a bottom-up process, not the reverse.<sup>121</sup>

In Honduras, the lack of political will and reprisals against civil society organizations are cited among the obstacles for translating the UPR into positive outcomes.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, the military regime in Thailand leaves very limited public space for human rights education and progress.<sup>123</sup>

In Uruguay, the lack of understanding of the UPR within civil society and the public in general, as well as government representatives, is one of the major challenges regarding participation in and the effectiveness of the UPR process in the country.<sup>124</sup>

Another challenge regularly raised is the lack of resources to engage in public debate and awareness raising. The lack of interest by the media is an additional and often mentioned challenge.

Despite these challenges, however, it is possible to increase human rights awareness through the UPR. The following factors may contribute to raising awareness and engaging in public debate through the UPR process:

- The effective use of social media;
- A good level of understanding of the UPR among key stakeholders;
- A dedicated entity to human rights within the State,
- The presence of a large number of allies, including in the political system;
- The quality of civil society coordination (transparent, consensus-based, inclusive and with ownership);
- The de-mystification of the UPR process and facilitated access to information about it.<sup>125</sup>
- The provision of tailored information for a wide public, for instance, through infographics;
- The existence of a meaningful dialogue between the State, civil society and NHRIs.
- The participation in the establishment of a monitoring mechanism with indicators, which sets out the responsibilities of all stakeholders.

#### 4.5 Recommendations

The revision of experiences stemming from the first and second cycle, recorded specific needs and recommendations to use the UPR as a catalyst for engaging in public debate and awareness-raising on human rights:

- Researching and publicize information on States' record in implementing UPR recommendations
- A media and social media strategy
- Innovative and participatory human rights awareness raising activities
- A standing follow-up mechanism to inform the public about accepted and non-accepted recommendations
- Donor should support civil society participation beyond the UPR process
- Reinforce civil society platform, notably by incorporating every member from the outset of the UPR process
- To include the UPR process into school curriculum for wide-spread awareness.
- In this perspective, the participants of the workshop highlighted the need for:
- Guidelines for States on conducting meaningful consultation with stakeholders, civil society and the public in the UPR process.

- Need for action research on the UPR over the third cycle, focusing on the strengthening awareness-raising and public debate in the UPR national processes. Such research would allow continuing exchanges among civil society and NHRIs on their experience in engaging with the UPR as it relates to public debate and awareness-raising.

## 5. The UPR beyond the procedure

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“The UPR is an international mechanism whose greater potential is in the national context”<sup>126</sup>

Alejandra Umpiérrez, FES Uruguay.

The present research indicates that the UPR process contributes to raising awareness on human rights among various audiences. At the outset of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle, the focus on improving the procedure and the implementation of the recommendations are central objectives and paramount in the UPR engagement. This focus should be enhanced and complemented by considering insights on the social and political processes in which the UPR unfolds nationally and how the UPR can serve as a catalyst to foster public debate on human rights issues.

### 5.1 The UPR: a focus on the national process

As a corollary, it is important to keep the national context at the forefront of the UPR process. The effective implementation of the recommendations cumulated in the first two UPR cycles will certainly remain the principal strategic objective of civil society and NHRIs. In this regard, though, an emphasis on the implementation of past recommendations might prevent the discussion of emerging issues.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, “there is a risk it will divert attention from the most pressing human rights [violations] in the country concerned – issues that may have been the subject of earlier recommendations that the State chose not to adopt. Participants in the review are not precluded from raising such issues (or new ones that may have arisen), but these issues may be side-lined by the focus on progress towards implementation of accepted recommendations”.<sup>128</sup>

The focus on the country level is inherent to the UPR. Strategic thinking of civil society and NHRIs has evolved along with the unfolding of the first two UPR cycles. In this respect, the first cycle was a learning process whereby all actors involved experienced the mechanism for

the first time with a strong focus on the international procedure; the second cycle has been marked by an application of the knowledge gained during the first four years; while the third cycle will certainly be focusing on the advocacy work at the country level. In other terms, the earlier engagement with the procedure as an international mechanism will probably move towards an increased focus on the national process of the UPR, with a concern to bring about effective change.

In this regard, as pointed out in the findings, national context shapes the opportunities and constraints for civil society and NHRIs to participate in consultations, establish a dialogue with the government and the parliament and organize public events and other awareness-raising activities.

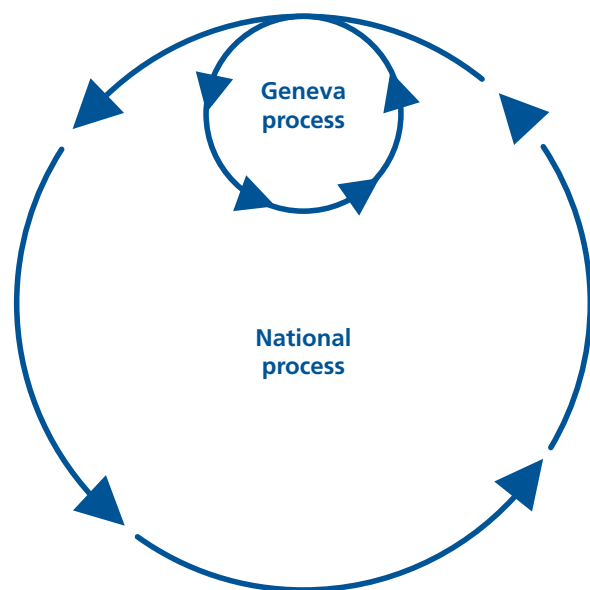


Figure 1. Dynamics of the Geneva and national processes

As a concluding reflection, the experiences of civil society and NHRIs discussed in this study confirm that the assessment of the UPR and engagement in the UPR process should go beyond the procedure. The fear that the UPR might fall into ritualism and become meaningless is tangible. A way forward is to scrutinize the opportunities provided by the UPR's transnational dynamics, national processes, public debate and awareness-raising potential.

## 5.2 The UPR: transnational dynamics

Effective participation in the UPR process requires engagement at two levels, both national and international. Yet, the dynamics created by the UPR goes beyond the vertical interaction. Indeed, the universality and periodicity of the UPR create a space for transnational political interactions. As all States enter into a dialogue about the human rights situation in their own and every other State, the principle of sovereignty can be complemented by the notion of co-responsibility about humanity and the planet.<sup>129</sup>

By inviting all States to initiate a dialogue about the human rights situation in every State, the UPR opens a transnational political space. To some extent, States engage with the international human rights machinery to advance their national interests while preserving the narrative of co-responsibility, paving the way for ritualism.

Nonetheless, in practice, the UPR leads to the development of transnational interactions between States (transgovernmental interactions) and between social actors (transnational interactions). At times these are complemented by cross-level interactions whereby social actors of one country engage with a foreign government or social actors in another country.<sup>130</sup>

This is very well illustrated by the strategy followed by Conectas. This Brazilian NGO engages with NGOs from other countries to lobby their respective government to formulate recommendations to Brazil on issues of common concern in both countries. The practice of engagement of civil society and NHRIs with embassies in their country is also an expression of cross-level interactions.

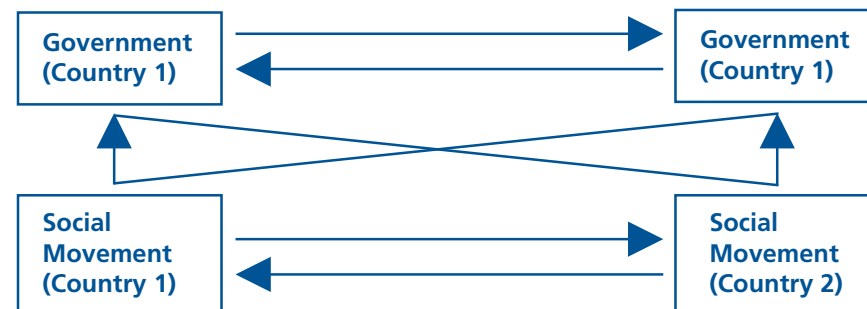


Figure 2. A simple model to keep track of international interactions.<sup>131</sup>

As a result of its peer-review nature, the UPR is the only international human rights mechanism that can be used by all national civil societies to address the human rights situation in every country, in addition to their own. Moreover, every State engages with the situation of other States, thus opening the opportunity for public debate and awareness-raising. At the same time, through the UPR, all States may be made aware of issues which are of concern in more than one country, such as the death penalty, or which affect several or all countries, such as the impact of climate change and related policies on human rights.

Also, human rights issues in one country may find their cause in foreign and multilateral policies or the actions of private actors from outside of the country. The root causes of such human rights issues can be addressed through the UPR due to its universality and political nature. Recognizing the transnational dynamics of human rights issues and the transnational nature of the processes involved in the UPR does not, however, contradict the primary relevance of national situations.

Thus, the transnational interactions inherent to the UPR process set the stage for using the mechanism in a creative manner to bring human rights discussions to the national public sphere and get them on the political agenda. As a case in point, the Brazilian government's failure to address the human rights record of Equatorial Guinea when the latter was accepted in the Lusophone community prompted Conectas, a Brazilian NGO, to ask its government to raise those human rights issues in the context of the UPR of Equatorial Guinea. This was particularly effective considering that the demand was taken over by the press informing the general public in Brazil. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, the representative of CIFDAH pointed out that the UPR facilitates greater access to the diplomatic arena and access points conducive to greater opportunities to articulate opinions and be heard.<sup>132</sup>

The understanding of the UPR transnational dynamics should, therefore, inform national strategies of engagement by civil society and NHRIs, in particular with respect to making use of the UPR as a catalyst for public debate. In other terms, the UPR should be a transnational as much as a national process in the eye of social actors.

### 5.3 The UPR: a catalyst for public debate on human rights

At the outset of the third cycle of the UPR, the focus of the international community, civil society and NHRIs is on the implementation of the UPR recommendations. The focus on implementing recommendations needs to be in line with the fundamental objective of improving the human rights situation on the ground. All States are obligated to implement their accept-

ed recommendations, with the view of effectively complying with international human rights law and, when relevant, international humanitarian law.

However, implementation should always take place in consultation and partnership with civil society and NHRIs and the people concerned, be informed by the evolution of the national context and human rights situation. Implementation also should be embedded and articulated within the social, political and economic dynamics shaping the society in the concerned country. Otherwise, the implementation of UPR recommendations while ignoring the national context might lead to a limited, if not detrimental, ritualistic practice.

To some extent, the current emphasis on implementation reveals the failure of the UPR in that respect after eight years since its inception. This is particularly true in light of urgent and pressing human rights situations in many countries. While focusing on the implementation of recommendations is fundamental to the UPR, like other human rights mechanisms, such focus needs to be complemented by a broader understanding of the UPR.

Due to its specific characteristics, the UPR triggers a series of processes at the national level, including awareness-raising, dialogue and public debate on human rights, as illustrated throughout this study. The potential of the UPR to serve as a catalyst for public debate on human rights is the result of two convergent and reinforcing dynamics. On the one hand, the UPR generates a space for discussion and dialogue due to the requirement of broad consultation and participation. On the other hand, national civil societies' and NHRIs' creative and committed strategies of mobilization in relation to the UPR process directly shape the UPR process in the national context.

Regarding the latter, this study illustrates a variety of methods of awareness-raising, dialogue and public discussion initiated by both civil society and NHRIs while recognizing their specificities. In short, NHRIs tend to have better access to the State, opening avenues for dialogue and support for civil society participation in the UPR process, whereas civil society has broader leeway for creative engagement.

Overall, there is strong evidence that the UPR serves as a catalyst for public debate on human rights. This stems from the mechanism itself, particularly the requirement of participation and the corollary mobilization of civil society and NHRIs. Indeed, they are using the UPR as a tool for awareness-raising, dialogue and public discussion with a series of key national constituencies. Such participation goes beyond the executive branch, and includes primarily the general public, civil society, communities and specific groups, the media, the international

community and the legislative branch. In turn, public discussion and dialogue are necessary to anchor the UPR process and recommendations into concrete and context-sensitive policies and measures.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Participants to the workshop, questionnaires and interviews

#### International and regional networks

Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions  
Conectas  
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies  
Forum Asia on Human Rights and Development

#### National Human Rights Institutions

Danish Institute for Human Rights  
South African Human Rights Commission  
Commission of Human Rights of the Philippines  
Australian Human Rights Commission  
National Human Rights Commission in Bangladesh  
New Zealand Human Rights Commission  
Tanzanian Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance  
Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos de Chile

#### Civil society organizations

Annapurnapost (Nepal)  
Arab NGO Network for Development (Lebanon)  
Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (Australia)  
Le Centre d'Information et de Formation en matière de Droits Humains en Afrique (Burkina Faso)  
Centro de Capacitación Social (Panama)  
Centro de Estudios Estratégicos (Panama)  
Centro de las Mujeres Panameña (Panama)  
Colectivo Voces Ecológicas (Panama)  
Confederación Unión General de Trabajadores (Panama)  
Constitutional Lawyers Forum Nepal (Nepal)  
Convergencia Sindical (Panama)  
Coordinadora de Derechos Humanos del Paraguay (Paraguay)  
Conectas (Brazil)  
Forum Human Rights (Forum Menschenrechte) (Germany)  
Humanrights.ch (Switzerland)  
Mtwara Paralegal Center (Tanzania)  
People's Empowerment Foundation (Thailand)  
US Human Rights Network (United States of America)  
Tanzania Human Rights Defender Coalition (Tanzania)  
Universidad de Panamá, Facultad de Economía (Panama)

#### Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung offices

FES Nepal  
FES Panama  
FES Uruguay

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/RES/16/21. Annex. 1.C. 6. “The second and subsequent cycles of the review should focus on, inter alia, the implementation of the accepted recommendations and the developments of the human rights situation in the State under review.”

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Council 5/1. *Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council*. 2006.

<sup>3</sup> UPR Info. New UPR Modalities for the Second Cycle. 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Statement by the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) made in June 2016. Available at: <http://www.ishr.ch/news/towards-upr-which-accessible-strong-effective-and-protective-0>

<sup>5</sup> Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking (eds), 2015, *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Idem p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> ANND, 2016, *UPR and Civil Society. Compilation of Best Practices*. p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> OHCHR, 2015, *UPR News. Mainstreaming Human Rights*. Issue no.1. p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> A/RES/48/134, National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, General Assembly 1993.

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkmWSkrQAno>.

<sup>12</sup> Felice D. Gaer, 2007, *A Voice Not an Echo: Universal Periodic Review and the UN Treaty Body System*, Human Rights Law Review 7:1.

<sup>13</sup> Luis Alfonso de Alba, 2007, “Reviewing the Process: Challenges in the Creation of the Human Rights Council”, in *The First 365 Days of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, published by the Swiss government. p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Loulichki, Mohammed, “The Universal Periodic Review or the Promise of a New Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights”, in *The First 365 Days of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, published by the Swiss government. p 86.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Husak, 2007, “In Defence of the United Nations Special Procedures”, in *The First 365 Days of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, published by the Swiss government. p. 94.

<sup>16</sup> Surya P. Subedi, 2001, *Protection of Human Rights through the Mechanism of the UN Special Rapporteur*, in Human Rights Quarterly, Volume 33, Number 1, p. 204.

<sup>17</sup> Ben Schokman and Phil Lynch, 2012, “Effective NGO engagement with the Universal Periodic Review”, in Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking (eds), *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 144 – 145.

<sup>18</sup> Interview of Joshua Cooper, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eSbZ0JCWDk>.

<sup>19</sup> Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council, para 3 (m): “The universal periodic review should: (...) (m) Ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and NHRIs (...)”.

<sup>20</sup> Yves Lador, 2007, “The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations”, in *The First 365 Days of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, published by the Swiss government. p. 138.

<sup>21</sup> Idem, fn 19, para 3 (f).

<sup>22</sup> Idem fn 16, p. 226.

<sup>23</sup> A/HRC/RES/16/21, Review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council, Annex. I. B.

<sup>24</sup> A/HRC/RES/5/1, Institution building of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Annex, para 3 (m).

<sup>25</sup> Idem, para 15 (a).

<sup>26</sup> A/HRC/RES/16/21., Review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council, Annex, para 17.

<sup>27</sup> Idem, para 13.

<sup>28</sup> Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Practical recommendations for the creation and maintenance of a safe and enabling environment for civil society, based on good practices and lessons learned*. A/HRC/32/20. April 2011, p. 4, para 8.

<sup>29</sup> Idem, p. 4, para 9.

<sup>30</sup> Notably by UPR-info and the International Service for Human Rights.

<sup>31</sup> See the United Nations reports “Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights”. A/HRC/33/19. Adopted on 16 August 2016; in addition to previous reports on the same issue at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Actsofintimidationandreprisal.aspx>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2016-10-03/opening-remarks-rress-conference-palais-des-nations>.

<sup>33</sup> Web article by the ISHR. *UN and States must address continuing failure to prevent and ensure accountability for reprisals*, (13 June 2016) available at: <http://www.ishr.ch/news/un-and-states-must-address-continuing-failure-prevent-and-ensure-accountability-reprisals>.

<sup>34</sup> ISHR, 2016, *Ending reprisals against those who cooperate with the United Nations in the field of human rights*. pp 11 and 12.

<sup>35</sup> *Idem* fn 5, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Marisa Viegas e Silva, 2013, *The United Nations Human Rights Council: Six Years On*, in *International Journal On Human Rights SUR*, Vol 10, 97-114. No. 18; Edward R. McMahon, Kojo Busia and Marta Ascherio, 2013, *Comparing Peer Reviews: The Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Peer Review Mechanism*, in *African and Asian Studies* 12, 266-289.

<sup>37</sup> Leanne Cochrane & Kathryn McNeilly, 2013, *The United Kingdom, the United Nations Human Rights Council and the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review*, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 17:1, 152-177; Emma Hickey, (2013), *The UN's Universal Periodic Review: Is it Adding Value and Improving the Human Rights Situation on the Ground? A Critical Evaluation of the First Cycle and Recommendations for Reform*, in *ICL Journal Vienna International Journal on Constitutional Law*. Vol. 7. See also the following studies: UPR-info, 2012, *The Follow-up Programme, "On the road to implementation* and Danish Institute for Human Rights and the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs, *Universal Periodic Review First Cycle. Reporting Methodologies from the Position of the State, Civil Society and NHRIs*.

<sup>38</sup> This is a reference to the theory of social movement studies and the structure of political opportunities as applied to transnational protest. See Donatella della Porta, Hanspeter Kriesi and Dieter Rucht, 1999, *Social Movements in a Globalizing World*, Macmillan press.

<sup>39</sup> Putnam, Robert D., 1988, *Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the Logic of Two-level Games*, *International Organization* 42:3, pp. 427-460.

<sup>40</sup> Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 1999, *Transnational Advocacy Network in International and Regional politics*. ISSJ 159, UNESCO, pp. 89-101.

<sup>41</sup> Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 1998, *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*, Cornell University Press.

<sup>42</sup> Focused interviews were conducted with representatives of Conectas (Brazil), the German Forum for Human Rights, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, The New Zealand Human Rights Commission, the Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh and the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines.

<sup>43</sup> Presentation delivered at the annual international training session of the CIFEDHOP.

<sup>44</sup> Website of the New Zealand Human Rights Action Plan: [www.hrc.co.nz/your-rights/human-rights/npa](http://www.hrc.co.nz/your-rights/human-rights/npa)

<sup>45</sup> US Human Rights Network Website, <http://www.ushrnetwork.org/members/taskforce/upr-taskforce>.

<sup>46</sup> Questionnaire received from Conectas.

<sup>47</sup> Questionnaire received from the Centro de Estudios Estratégicos.

<sup>48</sup> Questionnaire received from Australian Human Rights Lawyer.

<sup>49</sup> Denmark was reviewed in January 2016.

<sup>50</sup> The Danish Institute for Human Rights, [www.humanrights.dk/about-us/the-council-human-rights](http://www.humanrights.dk/about-us/the-council-human-rights)

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GS4R3HIHyY&feature=youtu.be>.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdcMG7LCI00&feature=youtu.be>.

<sup>53</sup> Section 5 (2) (m) of the Human Rights Act 1993 requires the New Zealand Human Rights Commission to "develop a national plan of action, in consultation with interested parties, for the promotion and protection of human rights in New Zealand."

<sup>54</sup> Sarah Joseph, 2012, "Global media coverage of the Universal Periodic Review", in Hilary Charlesworth and Emmal Larking (eds), *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press. p. 147.

<sup>55</sup> *Idem*. p. 147.

<sup>56</sup> Questionnaire received from Conectas.

<sup>57</sup> *Idem* fn 54, p. 166.

<sup>58</sup> *Idem* fn 54, p.148

<sup>59</sup> *Idem* fn 54, p.154.

<sup>60</sup> *Idem* fn 54, p.154

<sup>61</sup> The podcast can be found at: <https://soundcloud.com/conectas/camila-asano-da-conectas>.

<sup>62</sup> The Burkina Faso national UPR coalition is composed by the *Mouvement burkinabè des droits de l'Homme et des peuples (MBDHP)*, the *Centre d'Information et de Formation en matière des Droits Humains en Afrique (CIFDHA)*, *l'Ecole, instrument de paix (EIP/Burkina)*, the *Commission épiscopale Justice et Paix*, de *l'Organisation démocratique de la jeunesse (ODJ)* and the *Syndicat burkinabè des magistrats (SMB)*.

<sup>63</sup> For press coverage, see <http://lepaysarchives.com/oldsite/?EXAMEN-PERIODIQUE-UNIVERSEL-DU>.

<sup>64</sup> *Idem*, fn 47.

<sup>65</sup> *Idem* fn 8, p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> "INSAN Coalition for Universal Periodic Review" was formed in December 2012 by a group of Jordanian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), media professionals and experts on human rights. The Coalition included the following CSOs: Phenix Centre for Economic and Informatics Studies, Da'am Centre for Training and Consultancy, Tamkeen for Human Rights and Legal Aid, Justice Centre for Legal Aid, Jordanian Women's Union, Human and Environment Observatory, Jordanian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, and Jordanian Labor Watch. Joining these CSOs are Mr. Moath Al Momani, lawyer, Mrs. Rania Al Sarayreh, Mrs. Nadeen Al Nimiri and Mr. Mohamed Shamma, Journalists. Source: joint submission to the 2nd UPR on Jordan.

<sup>67</sup> *Idem*, fn 8, p. 9.

<sup>68</sup> *Idem* fn 54, p. 165.

<sup>69</sup> Information collected from the representative of ANND, at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held in 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

<sup>70</sup> Questionnaire received from Conectas.

<sup>71</sup> Information collected from the representative of the Forum Asia on Human Rights and Development, at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held in 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

<sup>72</sup> Questionnaire received from FES Uruguay.

<sup>73</sup> The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering, <http://www.rdflwomen.org/eng/civil-society-launches-joint-reports-prepared-in-context-of-its-participation-in-upr-session-in-un-in-geneva/>

<sup>74</sup> For the purpose of illustration, the articles are cited in English, based on a free translation of the original version published in Portuguese. Links to the original texts are available at:

<http://site.adital.com.br/site/noticia.php?lang=PT&cod=81658>;

<http://site.adital.com.br/site/noticia.php?lang=PT&cod=70659>;

<http://www.ebc.com.br/noticias/internacional/2012/09/apos-aceitar-recomendacoes-da-onu-de->

[safio-do-brasil-e-cumprir-antigas;](http://www.redebrasilatual.com.br/temas/cidadania/2012/05/conselho-da-onu-recomenda-fim-da-policia-militar-no-brasil)

[http://www.redebrasilatual.com.br/temas/cidadania/2012/05/conselho-da-onu-recomenda-fim-da-policia-militar-no-brasil;](http://www.redebrasilatual.com.br/temas/cidadania/2012/05/conselho-da-onu-recomenda-fim-da-policia-militar-no-brasil)

[http://www.conectas.org/pt/acoefs/midia/noticia/conectas-na-midia-carta-maior-30-05-12;](http://www.conectas.org/pt/acoefs/midia/noticia/conectas-na-midia-carta-maior-30-05-12)

[http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/1098072-brasil-recebe-170-recomendacoes-da-onu-sobre-direitos-humanos.shtml;](http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/1098072-brasil-recebe-170-recomendacoes-da-onu-sobre-direitos-humanos.shtml)

[http://www.gajop.org.br/noticias\\_postagem.php?cod=435](http://www.gajop.org.br/noticias_postagem.php?cod=435)

<sup>75</sup> Information collected from the representative of the People Empowerment Foundation, at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

<sup>76</sup> Questionnaire from the Tanzania Human Rights Defender Coalition (THRDC).

<sup>77</sup> Human Rights Online Philippines, <https://hronlineph.com/2012/05/26/announcement-chrp-opens-humanrights-facebook-page-and-tweeter-account/>

<sup>78</sup> Interview with the representative of Forum Asia in Geneva.

<sup>79</sup> Information collected from the representative of the Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos, at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

<sup>80</sup> *Idem*, fn 78.

<sup>81</sup> Questionnaire received from Coordinadora derechos humanos del Paraguay.

<sup>82</sup> Questionnaire received from Convergencia Sindical.

<sup>83</sup> Questionnaire received from a consultant who worked for the Centrales de trabajadoras y trabajadores of Honduras.

<sup>84</sup> Centro de la mujer panameña, <http://www.centromujerpanama.org>.

<sup>85</sup> Questionnaire received from the Centro de la Mujer Panameña.

<sup>86</sup> Questionnaire received from Australian Lawyers for Human Rights.

<sup>87</sup> Yuyun Wahyuningrum, 2012, "Indonesia and the Universal Periodic Review: negotiating rights", in Hilary Charlesworth and Emmal Larking (eds), *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press. p. 259.

<sup>88</sup> Questionnaire received from Tanzania Human Rights Defender Coalition (THRDC).



<sup>89</sup> See fn 66.

<sup>90</sup> In French: <http://www.humanrights.ch/fr/droits-humains-suisse/epu/>; In German: <http://www.humanrights.ch/de/menschenrechte-schweiz/upr/>

<sup>91</sup> Post by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies: <http://www.cihrs.org/?p=18294&lang=en>

<sup>92</sup> In this regard, see Kate Gilmore, Luis Mora, Alfonso Barragues, and Ida Krogh Mikkelsen, 2015, *The Universal Periodic Review: A Platform for Dialogue, Accountability, and Change on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*, in *Health and Human Rights Journal*, vol 17, No. 2. pp. 167-179; Rita Izsák, 2015, *Minority Issues in the First Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), An analysis by the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues*, and Save the Children, 2014, *Child Rights Governance Universal Periodic Review: Successful examples of child rights advocacy*.

<sup>93</sup> Kate Gilmore, Luis Mora, Alfonso Barragues, and Ida Krogh Mikkelsen, 2015, *The Universal Periodic Review: A Platform for Dialogue, Accountability, and Change on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*, in *Health and Human Rights Journal*, vol 17, No. 2. p. 178.

<sup>94</sup> Questionnaire received from Australian Lawyers for Human Rights.

<sup>95</sup> Contribution submitted in writing by the Human Rights Commission in Philippines.

<sup>96</sup> Questionnaire received from the Mtawara Paralegal Center.

<sup>97</sup> Focused interview with the representative of German Forum for Human Rights.

<sup>98</sup> Focused interview with the representative of Conectas.

<sup>99</sup> Commonwealth, *Estimates*, Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislative Committee, 20 October 2015, 13-16, 26-30. At [http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/estimate/b2ac3d04-3b49-4dbc-b8f5-568935767ea9/toc\\_pdf/Legal%20and%20Constitutional%20Affairs%20Legislation%20Committee\\_2015\\_10\\_20\\_3922\\_Official.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#-search=%22universal%20periodic%20review%20%20legal%20and%20constitutional%20affairs%20legislation%20committee%22](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/estimate/b2ac3d04-3b49-4dbc-b8f5-568935767ea9/toc_pdf/Legal%20and%20Constitutional%20Affairs%20Legislation%20Committee_2015_10_20_3922_Official.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#-search=%22universal%20periodic%20review%20%20legal%20and%20constitutional%20affairs%20legislation%20committee%22)

<sup>100</sup> Idem fn 93, p. 178.

<sup>101</sup> Idem, fn 47.

<sup>102</sup> Contribution by the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh.

<sup>103</sup> The press coverage can be seen at: <http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/972997>; <http://www.albaladonline.com/ar/NewsDetails.aspx?pageid=363523>;

<http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=448324z%60>;

<http://www.almustaqbal.com/v4/Article.aspx?Type=np&Articleid=686579>

<sup>104</sup> Nathalie Baird, 2012, "The Universal Periodic Review: building a bridge between the Pacific and Geneva?", in Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking (eds), *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press. p. 211.

<sup>105</sup> Idem, p. 204.

<sup>106</sup> OHCHR, UPR News, 2015, "Mainstreaming Human Rights". Issue no1. August 2015. Page 3. The original name of the organization is "Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Direitos Humanos (IDDH)",. [www.http://iddh.org.br](http://iddh.org.br).

<sup>107</sup> Idem fn 28, p. 12, para 54.

<sup>108</sup> Idem, p. 13, para. 61.

<sup>109</sup> Takele Soboka Bulto, 2012, "Africa's engagement with the Universal Periodic Review: commitment or capitulation", in Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking (eds), *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press. p. 211.

<sup>110</sup> Idem. fn 81.

<sup>111</sup> OHCHR, Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/MDG/Pages/The2030Agenda.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/MDG/Pages/The2030Agenda.aspx)

<sup>112</sup> Idem fn 28, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Idem fn 28, p. 10.

<sup>114</sup> Idem fn 28, p. 8.

<sup>115</sup> Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking (eds), 2015, *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>116</sup> Questionnaire received from the Australia Human Rights Commission.

<sup>117</sup> Information collected at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

<sup>118</sup> Takele Soboka Bulto, 2012, "The effects of the Universal Periodic Review on human rights practices in the United States", in Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking (eds), *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press.p. 234.

<sup>119</sup> Information collected at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

<sup>120</sup> Idem, fn 116.

<sup>121</sup> Views collected at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

<sup>122</sup> Idem, fn 47.

<sup>123</sup> Questionnaire received from People Empowerment Foundation.

<sup>124</sup> Idem, fn 72.

<sup>125</sup> Idem.

<sup>126</sup> Questionnaire received from FES Uruguay.

<sup>127</sup> Idem, fn 97.

<sup>128</sup> Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking, 2014, "Introduction: the regulatory power of the Universal Periodic Review", in Hilary Charlesworth and Emma Larking (eds), *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. Rituals and Ritualism*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>129</sup> Bertrand Badie, 1999, *Un monde sans souveraineté. Les Etats entre ruse et responsabilité*, Editions Fayard.

<sup>130</sup> Donatella della Porta and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1999, *Social Movements in a Globalizing World: an Introduction*, in Donatella della Porta, Kriesi Hanspeter and Dieter Rucht (eds.), MacMillan, London. p 5.

<sup>131</sup> Inspired from della Porta and Kriesi original figure. Idem, p. 5.

<sup>132</sup> Views collected at the FES & CIFEDHOP Workshop on the UPR as a human rights awareness-raising process, held 19-20 April 2016 in Geneva.

