Promoting and strengthening the Universal Periodic Review
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UPR Info is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland. It aims to raise awareness of the Universal Periodic Review process and to provide capacity-building tools to all stakeholders, such as UN Member States, civil society, media, and academics.

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1. Introduction

2016 has been a significant year, impacting human rights and international relations in ways we are yet to fully grasp. We have entered an era of uncertainty, marred by attacks on minorities and groups at risks. The very notion of universal human rights is under siege. As a response, the international system and the United Nations (UN) should be used to buttress the values we believe in. In this context, the reviews of the last countries in the UPR’s second cycle mark a historic moment both in the development of human rights, and for the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms as a whole. What has been achieved through the UPR over the last nine years should not be underestimated. At UPR Info we have endeavoured to exploit every opportunity offered by this process, such as bringing stakeholders together to cooperate in the realisation of human rights implementation. Throughout 2016, with the support of our regional offices, we put our expertise to work by engaging with civil society and governments in no fewer than 18 countries: Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Finland, India, Kenya, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sweden, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, and Uganda.

Our UPR Info Africa Office was formally launched at a conference held in Nairobi in April. In Sierra Leone, in the same month, together with the Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDNSL) and the Core UPR Working Group, we organised a strategy workshop for civil society organisation (CSOs) on implementation of UPR recommendations. This was followed in August by a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue, with the Government of Sierra Leone, on how to effectively implement the recommendations. In Uganda, more than 100 CSO representatives gathered in Kampala, from 28 November to 2 December, to participate in a five-day workshop aimed at mobilising civil society engagement with the implementation process. Working in thematic clusters, participants developed implementation plans detailing their expectations from the Government and action strategies outlining how they could monitor and contribute to implementation.

Over the last two years, UPR Info has been working with the Burma/Myanmar UPR (a coalition of CSOs) Forum to kick-start the UPR follow-up phase. Two CSO workshops were held in May and June 2016 to provide members of the Coalition with strategic tools and knowledge, to effectively monitor and support the implementation of the recommendations. As a follow-up a CSO Coalition Building Workshop, attended by 90 members, was held in August to foster solidarity and discuss strategies for working together as an inclusive and coordinated coalition throughout the follow-up phase. Members of the UPR Forum then adopted a Declaration outlining the mandate, vision and membership criteria of the Burma/Myanmar UPR Forum. In Thailand, our cooperation with the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) continued in March when we organised an inclusive diplomatic dialogue between Thai local groups and diplomats on the country’s human rights situation.

This year UPR Info hosted two rounds of Pre-sessions, in Geneva, for the 25th and 26th UPR Working Group sessions, giving the floor to 98 CSOs and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), which spoke on the following countries: Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Ireland, Moldova, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.
2016 was also a fruitful year for UPR Info in terms of producing UPR publications, ranging from best practices to policy guidelines. In September, UPR Info published “Ensuring sustainable UPR Implementation: A call to action for States to strengthen the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review”. Launched at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) retreat in Evian, France, the publication emphasises key actions that States can undertake to ensure a successful third UPR cycle. In November, we launched our seminal publication, The Butterfly Effect: Spreading Good Practices of UPR implementation in Room XX of Palais des Nations at our event, “Ensuring sustainable implementation at the UPR”. The publication provides a robust assessment of the UPR’s ability to deliver on its promise: to strengthen human rights at the domestic level. Based on interviews with government officials, CSOs, and UN agencies, the publication takes stock of achievements and shortfalls of the mechanism to date. It shares good practices of implementation of recommendations from across the globe, as well as detailing how governments and civil society have structured their cooperation to sustain human rights progress. In December, we launched “UPR Info Pre-sessions: Empowering human rights voices from the ground.” This publication provides a comprehensive evaluation of the five years since the Pre-sessions’ inception, including feedback and best practices from national and international CSOs, NHRIs and States. It further acts as a guide for future participants – CSOs and States alike – as to how they can engage in, and benefit from advocacy through the UPR.

Finally, in an effort to start promoting and protecting human rights “close to home”, as Eleanor Roosevelt once said, we launched the Geneva-based initiative We Pay Our Interns. The initiative is a commitment by employers to pay their interns, and draws attention to the chronic situation of unpaid internships in international governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Charter enshrines the basic principles of adequate remuneration for interns, which should guide all international governmental and non-governmental organisations. On last count, 41 NGOs had joined the initiative; a number that we hope will continue to rise as more and more organisations say no to the exploitative practice of unpaid internships.

As the third cycle is about to start, UPR Info stands ready to engage in the next five years with the passion and commitment needed to ensure that the UPR remains a prominent and effective human rights mechanism that delivers sustainable human rights implementation in all countries.

Roland Chauville
Executive Director

Miloon Kothari
President
2. A Year at the UPR

Several challenges were faced in 2016, however the UPR mechanism concluded its second cycle with cautious optimism for the third. Regrettably, the last year saw several cases of reprisals directly impacting on the UPR process. One such example saw four Sudanese human rights defenders being prevented from travelling to Geneva to take part in the UPR Info Pre-sessions event. Despite the obstacles, the UPR remains the only international process that has a 100% participation rate by UN Member States and continues to have a real impact on the ground. As 2016 and the second UPR cycle drew to a close, attention turned to third cycle of examinations with a specific focus on the process of sustainable implementation. As stated by H.E. Mr. Choi Kyong-lim, President of the HRC, in November 2016, “Going forward, implementation is the key word for the third cycle.”

In this vein President Choi continued, throughout 2016, the work of his predecessor, the H.E. Mr Joachim Ruecker of Germany, on the topic of lessons learnt and better practices to prepare for the third cycle of the UPR. President Choi tasked the Ambassador of Latvia, H.E. Mr. Janis Karklins to hold a number of consultations with different experts and regional groups to gather a set of ideas in order to improve the methods of work of the HRC and of the UPR. Regarding the UPR, ideas focused on the UPR were aimed at using modern technologies to ease the communications process between the State under review (SuR) and Troikas, as well as recommending States (RS) with the Secretariat. There was a proposal for Troika members, with the support of the Secretariat, to automatically cluster recommendations which are exactly the same (i.e. ratifications), listing the names of all the recommending States following their recommendation. In the same vein, there was a suggestion to automatically split recommendations which call on a number of international treaty ratifications in the same recommendation.

In September, President Choi organised a HRC retreat in Evian to further discuss the outcomes of the consultations held by Mr. Karklins. On this occasion, UPR Info published a policy paper on “Ensuring sustainable UPR implementation”. The document contains 14 action points that States both the SuR and the RS can undertake to ensure the success of the third UPR cycle through a specific focus on implementation and reporting.

In parallel, there were a number of other UPR consultations and discussions convened throughout the year, such as lunches organised by Turkey and Canada. UPR Info also contributed to the dialogue by co-organising an event to mark the end of the second cycle and prepare the third, in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Switzerland,

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Costa Rica, Morocco, and the United Kingdom. The event, "Ensuring Sustainable Implementation at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)", hosted in Room XX of the Palais des Nations, was attended by over 60 Permanent Missions and approximately 150 people. The panel discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the UPR's two first cycles, as well as the challenges for the third cycle.

With the aim of strengthening reporting on implementation in the third cycle, the Office Of The High Commissioner For Human Rights (OHCHR) published the new technical guidelines for stakeholders’ written submissions, while also introducing a new document, "Matrices of recommendations of countries to be reviewed during the 3rd cycle of the UPR". The purpose of the matrices is for CSOs to collect precise and specific information on the level of implementation in the SuR of all received recommendations. The matrices also encourage stakeholders to identify "challenges or needs of technical cooperation" where recommendations have not been implemented.

Concerns over reprisals against those who engage in the UPR by, for example, travelling to Geneva for the Pre-sessions, the Working Group, and for plenary meetings were raised throughout the year as State and non-state actors agreed that the issue of reprisals must be addressed more effectively and more systematically. UPR Info invited four human rights defenders to participate at the Pre-Session of Sudan in March 2016. However, in an unprecedented incident in the Pre-sessions 5-year history, all four participants had their passports confiscated and were thus unable to travel. In his annual report published in August, entitled “Cooperation with the United Nations it’s representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights”, the UN Secretary General (SG) Ban Ki-moon expressed his concerns about reprisals against individuals and CSOs collaborating with the UN on human rights issues. He stressed “the absolute unacceptability of any act of intimidation or reprisal” against these people, and emphasised that States must take action to prevent reprisals. While the SG highlighted in his report multiple cases of reprisals in countries across the world, a significant emphasis was put on Sudan. Another case of reprisals around the UPR from Uganda was also included in the report.

2016 was also the year to discuss synergies between UPR and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as the two can foster a strong relationship through the implementation of recommendations and thus the achievement of SDG targets. Through different events, it was discussed how using SDG wording when drafting recommendations could ensure the realisation of the goals.

As with previous years, one of UPR Info’s key priorities was the close monitoring of trends in specificity of recommendations. The second cycle of the UPR finished with a strong representation of specific recommendations. To encourage this positive trend, UPR Info continued to share best practices of all stakeholders at the UPR.

While the numerous discussions held in 2016 around the strengthening of the UPR process did not lead to any change of modalities, the call to action now lies at the door of all UN Member States. With a clear focus on implementation, stronger recommendations and the potential for cross-fertilisation with SDGs, conditions are in place for a successful start of the third cycle.
2016 Facts and Figures

- UPR Info Africa Regional Office was launched in Nairobi
- We translated our website into Arabic
- We facilitated In-country Pre-sessions in Thailand and Uganda
- We supported the creation of national CSO coalitions in Myanmar and Thailand
- We launched 3 publications:
  - Ensuring Sustainable UPR Implementation
  - The Butterfly Effect: Spreading Good Practices of UPR Implementation
  - UPR Info Pre-sessions: Empowering human rights voices from the ground

- 60 diplomats trained on the UPR
- We participated in more than 50 training workshops and conferences
- 5 workshops held to help CSOs develop implementation strategies in Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda
- 3 letters of cooperation signed between governments and CSOs in Nepal, Niger, and Sierra Leone
Where we worked in 2016

UPR Info Offices:
Geneva, Switzerland; Bangkok, Thailand; and Nairobi, Kenya.

In-country activities:

Pre-sessions Programme:
25: Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Thailand.
26: Haiti, Moldova, South Sudan, Syria, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

We held Pre-Sessions on 20 countries, bringing together:

76 National CSOs
13 International CSOs
9 NHRI

90 Permanent Missions attended our Pre-Sessions
6 New Permanent Missions took part in our Pre-Sessions
89% Permanent Missions attended their own Pre-Session
3. Programmes

Pre-sessions

In 2016, UPR Info organised two series of Pre-sessions in April and October 2016, covering the penultimate and ultimate sessions of the second cycle of the UPR. The States discussed at the Pre-sessions were: Greece; Haiti; Hungary; Ireland; Moldova; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; South Sudan; Sudan; Suriname; Swaziland; Syria; Tajikistan; Tanzania; Timor-Leste; Thailand; Togo; Uganda; Venezuela; and Zimbabwe.

We had the honour to welcome distinguished guests to open our two series of Pre-sessions, namely the Chief of the UPR Branch at the OHCHR, Ms. Shahrzad Tadjbakhsh (April 2016), and the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Kate Gilmore (October 2016).

"This was the first time that local CSOs from my country were afforded the opportunity to lobby diplomats at the international arena. This was a hallmark event and an empowering experience."

Over the past year, the Pre-sessions have been increasing in popularity, cementing themselves as an integral part of the UPR process. Unfortunately, the renown of the advocacy platform also resulted in rare incidents of intimidation and threats against human rights defenders from certain countries. In April, four human rights defenders (HRDs) from Sudan were banned from travelling to Geneva to participate at the country’s Pre-session, one of whom was due to speak on the panel.2

Similarly, during October’s Pre-sessions, a serious fear of reprisals prevented local defenders from participating at the Pre-session of South Sudan.

"The Pre-sessions create a space to allow for everyone to come together – CSOs and States."

On a more positive note, UPR Info introduced its first ever advocacy training workshop open to all Pre-session participants ahead of the 26th session held in October. Over 40 human rights defenders attended the training, prompting UPR Info to decide to make the event a standing feature of future Pre-sessions.

The incident was particularly disappointing as it left a dark cloud hanging over South Sudan’s first ever UPR (having not yet received its independence during the first UPR cycle). In addition, scare-tactics were also used against civil society speakers from Venezuela, further illustrating the worrying trend of reprisals against human rights defenders in numerous countries. UPR Info prioritises above all other considerations the safety of its Pre-session partners. The organisation will continue to work closely with States, the OHCHR and the Human Rights Council to make sure that rigorous precautions are taken and investigation are carried out in any situation of potential threat.

To mark the end of the UPR’s second cycle and ahead of the third, *UPR Info* conducted a comprehensive analysis of the Pre-sessions impact to date. The resulting publication, “*UPR Info Pre-sessions: Empowering human rights voices from the ground*” takes stock of the five-year Pre-sessions programme (2012–2016), drawing on testimony from former Pre-session participants, including States, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), national and international CSOs. The publication was launched in December 2016 at a multistakeholder conference co-hosted by *UPR Info* and the Permanent Missions of Ireland and Switzerland. The event, “*Strengthening Civil Society Advocacy in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)*” brought together a timely discussion amongst States, civil society, and national human rights institutions. The panel consisted of former *UPR Info* Pre-sessions participants and key civil society actors who shared their country-specific experience of UPR advocacy in Kenya, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nepal and Niger.

Finally, looking to 2017 and beyond, *UPR Info* is planning to move the Pre-sessions to Palais des Nations to further boost the visibility and impact of the platform to support the advocacy of human rights defenders.

**Supporting CSO engagement**

Sharing with grassroots CSOs what is happening in Geneva is core to our work. We aim to bring the UPR to the national level and work to strengthen the skills of CSOs engaging with the UPR process, throughout the 4.5 year cycle. 2016 saw *UPR Info* engage in the following activities:

- we published numerous news articles and our newsletters addressing the process in Geneva and distributed it to our ever-growing list of subscribers (2,447 as of December 2016);
- we monitored the Pre-sessions, the UPR Working Group sessions, and the UPR Adoptions live on Facebook and Twitter.

*UPR Info* firmly believes in providing direct, in-person training for all stakeholders of the UPR. It is the most effective format through which *UPR Info* can share its knowledge of, and ensure effective engagement in, the UPR process. *UPR Info* participated in over 40 training workshops, conferences, and presentations focusing on the UPR process.

*UPR Info* provides extensive support for civil society requests for information. CSOs contact us on a regular basis with requests for UPR-related assistance. These request increased significantly in the period of the Pre-sessions and the UPR. We have provided assistance to CSOs by: making our resources more accessible (our website is now available in four UN languages); responding to direct inquiries; and liaising with the OHCHR, State delegations, and other CSOs. For the UPR to be an effective mechanism in monitoring human rights it is crucial that CSOs remain engaged and involved throughout the entire process.

The new gap, five years, between each UPR has made the implementation phase even more important. *UPR Info* works to ensure that CSOs are given the tools needed to work on UPR recommendations themselves whilst also keeping

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them informed of the new modalities, to remind them of the different deadlines, etc. *UPR Info* sent reminders throughout the year to CSOs about the ways in which they can engage with the UPR and more specifically the national consultations. We also encouraged CSOs to engage in advocacy at the national and international levels and to participate in our Pre-sessions. Final outcomes of the UPR (the “recommendations and responses to these recommendations” document) were sent with further information on how to follow up on UPR recommendations to hundreds of civil society organisations. Finally, we contacted all CSOs that *UPR Info* worked with during sessions 17, 18, and 19 to encourage them to engage in the follow-up process of the second cycle recommendations. We recommended that these CSOs complete mid-term reports on the UPR, and offered further guidance to those who wanted to engage in this practice.

**IN FOCUS**

In September 2016, *UPR Info* supported a two-day UPR Submission Workshop for over 100 people in India. By the end of the process, the Indian CSO coalition, Working Group on Human Right in India and the UN (WGHR), had drafted the UPR Joint Statement, which garnered 750 signatories. In addition to this support, *UPR Info* also facilitated the publication and dissemination of UPR factsheets, produced by the WGHR, ahead of the State’s third review in May 2017.

**Follow-up**

2016 saw Outcome Charters adopted in seven States.

![UPR Info's Gilbert Onyango opening the Supporting Implementation Workshop in Uganda, November 2016.](image)

Launched in 2011, the overarching objective of our Follow-up Programme is to facilitate cooperation between the Government and CSOs in the implementation phase. Indeed, constructive partnership between national actors is the only way to ensure that implementation of recommendations results in an improved human rights situation at the domestic level. Anchored in the accumulated expertise gathered from assessing implementation between 2011–2014, we launched in-country activities in 2015. The ultimate aim is to bolster civil society and other stakeholders in monitoring and implementing recommendations. To accomplish this, we employ a two-pronged approach:

1. A CSO strategy workshop takes place in the aftermath of the review in which CSOs outline their expectations on the Government in the implementation phase, and detail how civil society can contribute to realisation of recommendations. Civil society strategy workshops, held in 2016, were in Myanmar, Niger, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, and Uganda.

![CSOs engaging in UPR discussions in Sierra Leone, April 2016.](image)

2. A Multi-stakeholder dialogue is conducted after the adoption of the UPR Working Group report to facilitate discussions between the Government and CSOs on how to compliment each other’s implementation efforts. Upon request of the Government, a technical training is provided...
by UPR Info and other partners to the line ministries sharing good practices of UPR implementation. Multi-stakeholder dialogues were held in Nepal, Niger, and Sierra Leone in 2016. Additional dialogues are foreseen to take place in Uganda and Togo in 2017.

Moreover, UPR Info continued its track record of publishing studies that take stock of the state of the UPR. Grounded in 45 interviews with UPR actors from all continents of the globe, "The Butterfly Effect: Spreading Good Practices of UPR implementation" contains a plethora of examples of human rights improvements brought about by the UPR, and demonstrates tools and techniques used by stakeholders to fully utilise all opportunities presented by the process. To date, it is the most comprehensive study on the impact of the UPR on the ground.

A new chapter of the Follow-up Programme commences in 2017, in which UPR Info will expand the scope of its support to CSOs and Governments through additional stages of the process. This project will see our assistance extended to CSO submission workshops, organisation of In-country Pre-sessions, and Mid-term Reporting workshops.

Enhancing State’s Capacity

UPR Info believes that States are the driving force of the UPR. They are ultimately responsible for the functioning of the mechanism, and States need to deliver real advancements in human rights on the ground in every country across the world throughout the third UPR cycle. The success of the UPR relies not only on the States under Review, but also on the Recommending States. Throughout the year, and across its various programmes (such as the Pre-sessions and the Follow-up), UPR Info engaged with both Recommending States and States under Review to ensure their effective participation in the UPR, and deliver human rights results.

This year, UPR Info embarked on more training for national governments, including by travelling to Finland and Sweden, to increase the capacity of the Sates at the UPR.

IN FOCUS

The training provided by UPR Info to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Sweden, opened by the Ambassador-At-Large for Human Rights, involved all geographical desks of the MFA. Over 25 government officials attended and took part in training and an interactive session focused on how to improve information-sharing between embassies, capital, and Permanent Missions in Geneva, and how to make informed and effective recommendations.

IN FOCUS

States attending the “Seminar on the role of Recommending States”, October 2016.

In October, UPR Info held its annual training; “Seminar on the role of Recommending States” at the Palais des Nations. This seminar, the third of its kind, gave UPR Info the opportunity to address the main challenges that the UPR faced after the end of the first cycle, namely, the quality of recommendations. Since initiating these seminars UPR Info has seen the specificity of UPR recommendations from the Recommending States increase.

“Ms. Shahrzad Tadjbaksh, Chief of the UPR Branch of the OHCHR, thanked UPR Info and commended the organisation for their work, including the Recommending State Seminar which she considers to be a useful opportunity for recommending States to learn how to engage effectively in the UPR process.
**Strengthening the UPR**

Several issues came to light regarding the UPR in 2016, mainly regarding proposals to alter the mechanisms modalities ahead of the third cycle. *UPR Info* took a proactive approach to these discussions, in order to add a voice of experience to the proceedings. Having worked extensively with multiple UPR stakeholders since 2008, *UPR Info* was in an excellent position to enhance the various consultations regarding the methods of work of the HRC and of the UPR. From contributing to meetings hosted by Turkey and Canada, to publishing and presenting the paper, *Ensuring sustainable UPR implementation*, in Evian, France, *UPR Info* has worked tirelessly throughout 2016 to ensure the best practices from the first and second cycle are carried into the third. As 2016 and the second UPR cycle drew to a close, *UPR Info* hosted the event, “Ensuring Sustainable Implementation at the UPR”, in Room XX of the Palais des Nations. This event gave UPR stakeholders the opportunity to share their experiences of the UPR and desires for the third cycle, and worked to reiterate the importance of effective implementation and the need for clear reporting procedures at the UPR. Through engaging in these discussions and working to provide States with fora in which to discuss and share effective modalities.

Another issue that we have been working on for several years is the precision of recommendations. The former half of the second cycle had had a low percentage of precise recommendations: from 2012 to 2014 (sessions 13–20), the average was 32.4%, whereas the first cycle’s average was 34.5%. During 2016, the level of precise recommendations significantly improved, reaching 39%. Our annual seminar for Recommending States, in October 2016, focused largely on the drafting of recommendations, thus training Mission staff on why and how to make S.M.A.R.T recommendations at the UPR.

2016 also saw *UPR Info* engage in two large-scale analysis programmes, one to identify and share best practices of UPR implementation, and the other, to assess the impact of advocacy conducted through the Pre-sessions of the UPR.4

We made three statements over the three sessions of the HRC in 2016 on the following issues: the importance of not elongating further the period between each review and ensuring a stronger impact of stakeholders on the ground; to suggest technical measures to improve efficiency in the UPR process; and to encourage States to prioritise implementation and reporting.

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4 Both accessible via the *UPR Info* website; *UPR Info* Pre-sessions: Empowering human rights voices from the ground and The Butterfly Effect – Spreading Good Practices of UPR Implementation
4. Timeline of Activities 2016

On 8-9 February 2016, UPR Info and Chulalongkorn University organised a two-day CSOs Coalition Building Workshop to ensure Thai civil society can effectively engage in Thailand’s 2nd UPR cycle with a coordinated approach. The workshops concluded with the creation of the ‘Thai CSOs Coalition’ for the UPR comprising of 56 human rights organisations and the National Human Rights Commission.

Human Rights Council President Chok Chianglam organised, on 1-2 September, a seminar in Evian, France, to discuss the efficiency of the HRCC. At the occasion, UPR Info published and presented a policy paper: “Ensuring sustainable UPR implementation.” The document outlines 14 action points that States, either under review or making recommendations, can take to ensure the success of the UPR cycle through a specific focus on implementation and reporting.

UPR Info organised on 3-4 August an inclusive multi-stakeholder national dialogue on the implementation of UPR second cycle recommendations. The event brought together different representatives to ensure all national stakeholders are engaged with the necessary knowledge and tools for maximising cooperation in the implementation phase of the UPR.

UPR Info hosted a seminar on 19 October, at which over 50 Permanent Missions human rights experts were present. This event ensured the Permanent Mission staff are equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to successfully engage in the 28th Session of the UPR Working Group and beyond. The practical aspect of UPR participation and the sharing of best practices.

UPR Info held Pre-Sessions on Haiti, World capacitation and Sudan, Syria, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe. Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms Kate Gilmore opened the event. Over 500 CSO participants were natural disasters.

UPR Info Africa Office was launched in Nairobi on 19 April. In 2016, it gradually implemented various activities in Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda.
4. TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES 2016

May/June

UPR Info facilitated two CSO Strategy Workshops in May and June on the implementation of the UPR recommendations received by Myanmar during its second UPR. The workshops were designed to provide members of the UPR CSO Coalition with strategic tools and knowledge to effectively monitor and support the implementation of the recommendations.

June

UPR Info organised a workshop for CSOs in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, which was attended by 40 participants. The objective was to disseminate the UPR recommendations, develop an advocacy strategy, and engage in dialogue with the Government of Tanzania.

November/December

UPR Info launched its seminal publication, “The Butterfly Effect: Spreading Good Practices of UPR implementation” in Room XX of Palais des Nations at the event: “Ensuring sustainable implementation at the UPR” on 10 November. The publication provides an initial assessment of the UPR’s ability to deliver on its promise to strengthen human rights at the domestic level. Based on interviews with government officials, CSOs, and UN agencies, the publication aims to highlight the achievements and shortfalls of the UPR mechanism to date.

UPR Info co-hosted the event, Strengthening Civil Society Advocacy in the UPR, with the Permanent Missions of Ireland and Switzerland, on 13 December to launch its newest publication, UPR Info Pre-sessions: Empowering human rights voices from the ground. The aim of the publication is to take stock of the five-year Pre-sessions Programme, drawing on testimonies from former Pre-session participants. Part 1 evaluates what the Pre-sessions have accomplished to date, and how they can be improved and Part 2 serves as a guide for future participants as to what they can expect and gain from participation at the Pre-sessions.

UPR Info, together with the Human Rights Network Uganda (HURINET), CODEHUG, Uganda, DefendDefenders, and Lutheran World Federation Uganda organised, on 28 Nov - 2 Dec, the CSO Workshop to develop implementation plans and action strategies for UPR Recommendations. The objectives were to brief national CSOs on Uganda’s UPR and outline an implementation plan in which they could contribute. The workshop was part of a broader project aimed at accelerating the partnerships between UPR stakeholders to ensure inclusive and sustainable implementation of UPR recommendations.
5. Regional Offices

**UPR Info Africa**
The African Office implemented different and various activities in Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda, including in partnership with the Follow-up Programme. UPR Info Africa also supported Ethiopian UPR stakeholders to help them commence discussion around the development of an implementation framework, and trained Burundian CSOs on the UPR process.

**Burundi**
- **CSO workshop, November, 2016.** Following an invitation by CCPR Centre, UPR Info conducted a training for Burundi CSOs, held in Uganda. Over 20 CSOs participated in the event.

**Cote d’Ivoire**
- **Mid-term Report Workshop, November, 2016.** This two day workshop, at UPR Info Africa’s Office in Nairobi, Kenya, aimed at strengthening the capacity of CSOs form Cote d’Ivoire in drafting UPR Mid-term Reports. The event provided participants with a recap on the UPR mechanism and with multiple practical exercises, through thematic groups, to kick-start the reporting process.

**Ethiopia:**
- **Reporting at Midterm workshop, May, 2016.** In preparation for Ethiopia’s UPR second-cycle mid-term report, due in late 2016, Vision Ethiopian Congress for Democracy (VECOD) and UPR Info hosted a day-long roundtable in May. The event brought together 15 representatives of government, civil society, the media and other stakeholders in Addis Ababa. The participants discussed their desire for greater cooperation between the Government of Ethiopia and other stakeholders in implementation initiatives. The objective of the roundtable was two-fold: to ensure the continued and meaningful participation of civil society in the UPR process; and to carve out expanded space for civil society to engage the State on broader issues such as civic space and democratic reform.

**Kenya**
- **CSO and State Implementation Strategy Workshop, May, 2016.** The Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, UPR Info Africa and Kenya National Commission on Human Rights organised a one-day validation workshop for the 2nd Cycle UPR recommendations implementation matrix. The workshop had in attendance members from government ministries and civil society organisations. A final matrix for UPR implementation was adopted in June, making Kenya one of the best examples of stakeholder cooperation in the UPR process.

**Somalia**
- **Implementation Strategy Workshop, December, 2016.** This two-day workshop for Somali CSOs, hosted in Kenya, aimed at the development of implementation frameworks for recommendations received at Somalia’s UPR in January 2016.

**Uganda**
- **Pre-submission Workshop, March, 2016.** Workshop, held in Kampala, brought together 17 participants from different sub clusters. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the
progress the thematic groups had made thus far in developing and finalising their respective reports in preparation for the next UPR Review.

- **In-Country Pre-session, August–September, 2016.** *UPR Info*, together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; Uganda HURINET; Defend Defenders; and the Lutheran World Federation organised a workshop attended by over 80 participants comprising of over 20 members of the diplomatic corps. The meeting provided an opportunity for civil society actors to conduct national advocacy via in-country embassy representatives prior to the Geneva pre-session held in October 2016.

- **Writing Workshop on UPR Mid-Term Reporting, February, 2016.** *UPR Info Asia* held this workshop with the CSO UPR Coalition COMANGO.

- **UPR Info Asia** has been working with the Burma/Myanmar UPR Forum since June 2015, as part of its strategy to support local communities to engage in the UPR process. The aim is to build the capacity of the coalition to ensure local communities are at the centre of Myanmar 2nd UPR cycle.

- **CSO Strategy Workshop 1, May–June, 2016.** Held in Bagan, Myanmar, from 31 May–2 June this workshop focused on implementation of UPR recommendations.

- **CSO Strategy Workshop 2, June, 2016.** Held in Mae Sot, Thailand, this workshop was attended by 40 members of the UPR Forum based along the border areas of Thailand-Myanmar. UPR implementation plans were developed on issues related to: torture, impunity, refugees, IDPs, statelessness, ethnic minorities, women and armed conflicts, land rights, right to education, migrant workers and rights of the child.

- **Thailand**
  
  The *UPR Info Asia* Office in Bangkok continued to implement a variety of activities since its establishment in 2015. The formation of the Thai CSOs Coalition for the UPR enabled local communities from different regions of Thailand, experiencing similar challenges, to meet each other and build a roadmap for CSOs to work together on human rights, equality and creating a better society for the years to come.

**Malaysia**

- **Training Seminar on the UPR, March, 2016.** A workshop was held for the Lao People in Udon Thani, Thailand and aimed at defining a

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**UPR Info Asia**

Over the last year *UPR Info Asia* has worked with CSOs, CSO coalitions, and NHRIs to facilitate effective engagement in the UPR in Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, and Thailand.

**Laos**

- **Training Seminar on the UPR, March, 2016.**
solidarity. From the development of UPR Advocacy Factsheets, to supporting the Coalition’s lobbying efforts both at the country level and in Geneva during UPR Info’s Pre-sessions, the next steps for UPR Info Asia were: (1) to raise awareness during Thailand 2nd UPR on 11 May 2016; and (2) to seize the momentum to kick-off the UPR follow-up phase.

- **CSO Coalition Building Workshop, February, 2016.** UPR Info Asia and Chulalongkorn University organised a two-day CSO coalition-building workshop entitled, “Working Together to Foster Solidarity”. This aimed to ensure Thai civil society can effectively engage in Thailand’s 2nd UPR cycle by following a coordinated approach. The workshop facilitated Thai local groups to come together as “one strong and powerful voice” by forming the “Thai CSOs Coalition for the UPR” comprising human rights organisations across sectors including: human rights defenders; land rights activists; women leaders; youth; indigenous peoples; sexual minorities; religious minorities; and vulnerable communities.

- **Live Webcast of Thailand’s 2nd UPR, 11 May, 2016.** The Thai CSOs Coalition for the UPR in support with UPR Info Asia, Justice for Peace Foundation, iLaw, Amnesty International Thailand, Forum-Asia, ICJ, co-organised the broadcasting of live webcast of Thailand’s 2nd UPR, at the Black Box Café in Bangkok, Thailand.

- **CSO Evidence Gathering Workshop, November, 2016.** UPR Info Asia, the Thai CSOs Coalition for the UPR and the Rights and Liberties Promotion Department of the Ministry of Justice co-organised an event aimed at engaging communities from the Southern region to monitor the UPR implementation phase while developing credible evidence to hold their government into account. Over 50 regional participants engaged at the event.
6. Organisation

Executive Board
The Executive Board is in charge of setting the organisation’s goals. It is composed as follows:

- Miloon Kothari (India) – President
- Kamelia Kemileva (Switzerland) – Secretary
- Saida Manieva (Kyrgyzstan) – Treasurer
- Julien Bonnet (France) – Board Member

Secretariat
The Secretariat is in charge of implementing the Executive Board’s decisions and of ensuring the daily functioning of the organisation.

UPR Info would like to thank all those who also contributed to the work of UPR Info throughout 2016:

Willy Buloso – Programme Manager
Tessa Cerisier – Programme Coordinator
Supicha Nasungchon – Administrative and Finance Officer
Francesca Piccin – Programme Manager
Emilie Pradichit – Asia Regional Director
Prempreeda Pramoj Na Ayuttaya – Human Rights Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator

The work of UPR Info would also not have been possible without our internship programme. 2016 saw three graduates join the UPR Info team, in Geneva, to whom we wish to extend a special thanks:

Kimberley Mills (Switzerland)
Sara Bertotti (Italy)
Silvia De Benito Ruiz De Azua (Spain)

The We Pay Our Interns initiative, founded by staff at UPR Info reached 41 partners organisations.
7. Finances

The total budget in 2016 for our three offices (Geneva, Nairobi, and Bangkok) was 1,192,148 CHF, an increase of 57% compared to 2015.

UPR Info’s activities were supported by 15 donors in 2016. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to each of them for making our work possible and thereby ensuring that the UPR is an effective tool to advance human rights.
**UPR Info donors in 2016**

- Canton of Geneva, Service de la Solidarité Internationale
- City of Geneva
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Government)
- Irish Aid
- European Union
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom
- Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
- Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
- Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations in Geneva
- Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva
- Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations in Geneva
- Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
8. Looking Forward

With the 3rd cycle of the UPR officially beginning in the spring 2017, UPR Info is set to encounter many milestones in the year ahead. Building on the reflective nature of 2016, UPR Info will develop and strengthen new and existing projects to support the next phase of the UPR.

With the adoption of the new three-year theory of change, in 2017, UPR Info will continue working tirelessly around four main strategies:

- Strengthen the UPR;
- Ensure that UPR reviews reflect concerns of populations;
- Ensure sustainable State engagement in the implementation phase;
- Strengthen CSOs’ and CSO coalitions’ capacities, strategy and financial sustainability.

Stemming from these strategies, activities and programmes will develop and expand to further meet the needs of the multiple stakeholders in the UPR. Significant developments will come in the form of:

- Relocating the Pre-sessions to the Palais des Nations; to cement the event as an integral stage in the UPR process and draw more attention from the international diplomatic community;
- Publishing an updated guide to the UPR for civil society; as the 3rd cycle will inevitably bring changes to the UPR processes this publication will consolidate all guidelines for CSOs engaging in the UPR into one document. UPR Info has increasingly seen the greater impact CSO coalitions have at the UPR, therefore this publication will also share information on building strong coalitions;
- Expand the In-country Activities UPR Info organises and support: in order to improve the process throughout the five-year cycle, and emphasising the significance of effective reporting at Mid-term, UPR Info will expand the Follow-up Programme.

As the UPR mechanism keeps turning UPR Info will continue to promote and strengthen the mechanism to ensure the impact on the human rights situation on the ground keeps growing. This will be a task for 2017 and beyond.
Promoting and strengthening the Universal Periodic Review

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