

## Project Outcome Report

### CSO strategy workshop on implementation of UPR recommendations

7-9 December, 2015  
Rwanda



On 7-9 December, 2015, *UPR Info*, together with l'Association Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Connaissance des Droits de l'Homme (ARPCDH); and la Maison de droits (MDD) organised a workshop dubbed “*CSO strategy workshop on implementation of UPR recommendations*” that was held at Our Lady of Fatima Pastoral Centre in Musanze Town, Rwanda. The purpose of the workshop was to equip CSOs in Rwanda with information on, and skills to utilise the UPR Working Group recommendations that would, when implemented, advance human rights priorities; and ensure better coordination among Rwandan NGOs and human rights defenders. Specifically, the workshop was intended to:

- Improve the CSOs' knowledge of the UPR process;
- Raise awareness of UPR recommendations made to Rwanda;
- Empower civil society representatives; and
- Define CSOs activities for the next 4 years.

Main activities that were undertaken during the strategy workshop were to:

- Discuss, develop and draft a **tentative implementation plan**, meant to be shared with other NGOs and Government representatives;
- Discuss, develop and draft a tentative **action strategy for NGOs**, meant to be shared with other NGOs;
- Discuss, develop and disseminate an **outcomes charter**.

The workshop is part of a broader project meant to make use of the many opportunities offered by the UPR process. A second step is planned for May, 2016 (that is, after the formal adoption of the UPR report that will take place in Geneva in March, 2016). The said meeting in May, 2016 will bring Government representatives into the process. A third step, in early 2018, will focus on the drafting of a civil society mid-term report.

The meeting that took place from 7-9 December, 2015 was facilitated by *UPR Info* and attended by 39 participants representing 30 CSOs working on diverse issues. A local representative of the Ministry of Justice attended the workshop during two days. The workshop took three days. On the first day, participants were debriefed on Rwanda's UPR that took place at the Human Rights Council in Geneva in November, 2015. This included connecting the UPR process with other UN human rights mechanisms. Finally, participants were introduced on how to develop an implementation plan. After the said presentations, participants were divided into 6 thematic groups to discuss and write the implementation plan. The groups included women and gender; justice; civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; rights of the child; other vulnerable groups. The groups presented their respective implementation plans on the second day after which they were introduced to how to develop an action strategy. Thereafter, they continued working in their respective groups to discuss and draft the same. The discussions were finalised on the third and final day when the groups made their presentations in plenary by outlining the strategies they were going to use to ensure that the UPR recommendations are implemented. The presentations were followed by discussion on the draft Outcomes Charter.



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

During the three-day workshop, the participants scrutinised all the UPR recommendations that were made to Rwanda. These comprised of 50 recommendations that were outrightly accepted, 104 recommendations that the Rwandan delegation accepted as they were considered as already being implemented; and 81 that were noted. The status of the 104 recommendations is however yet to be clarified. Apart from these, the participants also discussed ways in which they could coordinate, communicate and collaborate with each other. To this end, the primary intended outputs and outcomes of the workshop were achieved.

## Table of Contents

1. Conceptual background .....	5
1.1. A multifaceted and long-term strategy .....	5
1.2. First workshop .....	5
1.3. Second workshop .....	6
1.4. Mid-term report .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
2. Outputs and outcomes .....	7
3. Lessons learned .....	12
4. Challenges encountered & responses .....	12
5. Follow-up activities .....	12
6. Annex .....	13
6.1. Agenda .....	13
6.2. List of Participants .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
6.3. Outcome charter .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
6.4. Implementation Plan Template .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
6.5. Action Strategy Template .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>
6.6. Thematic cluster divisions .....	<b>Erreur ! Signet non défini.</b>

## 1. Conceptual background

The most important measure of success of the UPR mechanism is whether or not the recommendations that the State under Review receives are implemented. Data from *UPR Info's* publication, *"Beyond promises: the impact of the UPR on the ground"*, indicates that, in the first cycle, 48% of recommendations triggered action by mid-term, that is 2.5 years after the UPR.

But it is important to always remember that the Government is the main actor responsible for the implementation of the recommendations. However, given the wide reach of UPR recommendations, national stakeholders must cooperate in order to ensure that the said implementation is as sustainable and effective as possible. Such cooperation is the vision that guides *UPR Info's* project *"Building CSO coalitions and empowering human rights defenders through the UPR"*, of which this CSO Strategy Workshop is part.

### 1.1. A multifaceted and long-term strategy

To ensure effectiveness during the implementation period, it is important for the preparation to begin well before the UPR session takes place in Geneva. It is in this regard that *UPR Info* always identifies and thereafter first sends information to national civil society stakeholders at least one year before the said UPR session to explain to them the modalities of the UPR and the need for them to prepare adequately. Secondly, *UPR Info* holds pre-session meetings in Geneva. This usually takes place one month before the UPR session. These pre-sessions help members of the civil society to meet with the Permanent Missions in Geneva. It provides an opportunity and helps them maximise their lobbying efforts. Upon arrival in Geneva, CSOs attend training seminars, hosted by *UPR Info*, to learn more about the UPR, the pre-sessions, and lobbying. Lately, *UPR Info* has facilitated in country pre sessions with Embassies within the various capitals.

### 1.2. First workshop

After the UPR session of a given country, *UPR Info* organises a **CSO Strategy workshop** (or the first workshop) in the said country. These meetings seek to empower civil society, particularly by:

- providing CSOs with information about the UPR framework and process;
- familiarising CSOs with the UPR recommendations that their country received;
- supporting the creation of a CSO coalition on the UPR, if one does not already exist.

During the three-day workshop, CSOs work together to develop and complete an **implementation plan**, which identifies ways in which the UPR recommendations should be implemented. CSOs also work on an **action strategy** in which they identify the activities that they can undertake to ensure that the recommendations are implemented. CSOs then have several months before the Adoption of the Working Group Report to actualise their ideas. With regard to Rwanda, the UPR was held in Geneva in November, 2015. This was followed by this meeting that was held in Rwanda from 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> December, 2015. Note that the formal adoption of the report of the Working Group of the Human Rights Council will take place in Geneva in March, 2016. *UPR Info* will co-organise a second workshop in Kigali May, 2016 (see chapter 1.3 below).

With regard to the actual process during the Adoption of the Working Group Report at the UN in Geneva, the Government has 20 minutes to present information as to whether it accepts or notes the recommendations (that is if it had not already responded to the recommendations earlier). The Government also addresses how it intends to implement the said recommendations. But given the short amount of time that the Government has to speak on the floor, it is important that CSOs and Government take part in a more comprehensive dialogue after the formal Adoption of the Working Group Report. The exact number of recommendations that will be finally accepted by the Government of Rwanda will be clarified at a later stage, but no later than the Adoption of the Working Group Report.

### 1.3. Second workshop

It is important to keep the momentum going after the Adoption of a country's Working Group Report. To this end, *UPR Info* and its partners usually organise a **Coordination workshop** (or second workshop) within 3 months of the said adoption. On the first day of this workshop, CSOs debrief on the results and challenges faced during the preceding months. CSOs also work together to update the implementation plan and action strategy, as well as prepare for monitoring of the human rights situation in the said country. The second day is called "dialogue-day" and it brings

together Government officials, UN agencies, and representatives of embassies in the country. The session provides an opportunity for CSOs and the Government to share ideas, plans, experiences and best practice. With regard to Rwanda, plans for this second workshop to be held in Kigali in May, 2016 are under discussion.

## 2. Outputs and outcomes

As already noted, Rwanda's CSO strategy workshop on the implementation of UPR recommendations was held over a period of three days (see Agenda in Annex). The meeting was held at Our Lady of Fatima Pastoral Centre in Musanze Town, Northern Rwanda which is almost 90 km from Kigali. The reason for this was to ensure minimal interruption of and maximum concentration by participants. The meeting was attended by 39 participants representing 30 CSOs working on diverse issues. Of these, 31 were men while 8 were women. An official of the Ministry of Justice based in Musanze attended days 2 and 3 of the meeting.

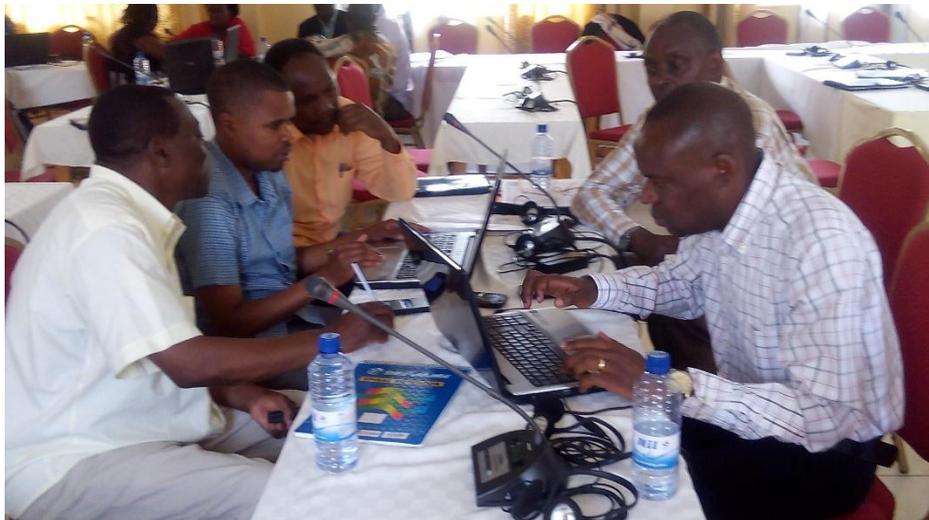
The meeting was officially opened on **Day 1** by Mr. Thaddée Barisebya from Association Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Connaissance des Droits de l'Homme (ARPCDH). The remarks by Mr. Barisebya were followed by an introduction by Mr. Andrews Kananga of the Legal Aid Forum who in his remarks noted the important role that NGOs play in the UPR and the importance of them working together to ensure the success of the UPR. In conclusion, he asked that the documents that will be developed at the meeting should cover all areas and be disseminated widely.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Jean-Claude Vignoli from *UPR Info* emphasised the need for CSOs to constructively cooperate with the Government as it holds the primary responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations. He reminded the participants on Rwanda's journey in the UPR, and in particular that the Rwandan delegation to the Human Rights Council Interactive Dialogue kept comparing and benchmarking the country with other African countries. Mr. Vignoli noted that most of the recommendations that were made to Rwanda were on matters relating to justice; the Ratification of the Convention on Enforced Disappearance; and human trafficking. Mr. Vignoli reminded participants that there should be no discrimination or distinction between men and women or any other person or group regardless of their choices in life and their physical status. He underlined the importance of Rwandan NGOs to work together. He informed the participants that two human rights defenders attended the pre-session that was organised by *UPR Info* in Geneva in

October 2015 before Rwanda's UPR that was held in November, 2015. He concluded by setting out the objectives of the meeting.

There was also a question as to why CSOs should work on the noted recommendations, to which the participants were informed that 19% of noted recommendations had triggered action anyway two years after the UPR of a country, as outlined in the UPR Info's publication *Beyond Promises*. Rwanda government did change its mind on two recommendations previously noted in its first UPR; the discussion between CSOs and government has to continue, in a cooperative manner.

The opening ceremony was followed by presentations by Mr. Gilbert Onyango, *UPR Info's* Africa Regional Representative which included an introduction on how to develop an implementation plan; and sharing on best practices and insights on how to draft implementation plans. After the presentations, the participants were divided into 6 thematic groups namely women and gender; justice; civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; rights of the child; other vulnerable groups, to discuss and write the implementation plan. Herein below is the Justice Group at work.



The participants continued with the discussion on the implementation plan on the morning of **Day 2**. This was followed by a plenary session where each of the 6 groups presented on at least two recommendations that they had worked on. In their presentations, the groups introduced the goal to be achieved; the action that they expected the Government to take in order to implement the recommendation; the

indicators or data to track progress of implementation; and the Government body responsible for implementing the recommendations. Each group received feedback on their presentations. Participants were reminded to carefully craft the activities and develop SMART indicators and the need to undertake more research on the recommendations while finalising the matrix. They were urged to carefully consider how to coordinate within the thematic groups and outside them on cross-cutting issues. Finally, the participants were urged to view the UPR not as a one-off event, but as a continuous and cyclical process.

After the above mentioned presentations and plenary session, the participants were once again introduced by Mr. Onyango on how to develop action strategies based on the recommendations that were made to Rwanda. After the presentations, the participants retreated once again to their groups to continue working on the said action strategy that was to take 4 years. For each recommendation that they had prioritised, participants identified the action or activities that they could undertake; the resources needed to accomplish the action; the potential partners that could be involved; the timeframe needed to carry out the activities; the potential risks; and the possible ways of mitigating the risks. The group discussions continued during the morning of **Day 3**. Thereafter, the participants came back to plenary to share their work.

At the end of this session, *UPR Info* introduced the “Group Organisational Worksheet” to prompt CSOs to continue working together (see Annex). The Worksheet asked the groups to identify a coordinator; the next meeting date; and the recommendations that could not be addressed during the workshop. The groups thus made plans to continue working together and also underlined the importance of including more NGOs in the process, notably those that were not present during this strategy workshop.



After the presentations, *UPR Info* facilitated the discussion on the draft Outcomes Charter. Some of the issues that elicited heated debate were issues of vulnerable groups, especially minorities, abortion, and the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. After long deliberations, the Outcomes Charter was adopted with CSOs agreeing that they will pursue the following

- (i) The protection and guarantee of fundamental rights of the human person;
- (ii) The reduction of poverty, including in rural areas;
- (iii) The improvement of access to equal justice for every citizen;
- (iv) The continuation of policies that are geared towards a total and complete equality between men and women;
- (v) The strengthening of economic support to vulnerable populations as identified in the report of the UPR Working Group and reaffirmed orally by the Minister of Justice in Geneva during the UPR;
- (vi) The protection and access to justice for children;
- (vii) The improvement and strengthening of freedom of expression;
- (viii) The strengthening and cohesion of civil society in Rwanda, simplification of registration, and as was indicated by the Minister of Justice in Geneva: *'NGOs are part of our nation, the more we have, the better the nation will be'*

## Main Outputs and Outcomes

- 1 implementation plan drafted
- 1 action strategy drafted



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

- 1 press release and radio broadcast
- CSOs empowered with a 4-year strategy
- CSOs more aware of the UPR framework and how to cooperate with the Government
- CSOs familiar with the UPR recommendations
- CSOs created new partnerships
- CSOs made concrete plans to continue working together on the UPR recommendations

### 3. Lessons learned

- The capacity of the existing CSOs is still very low which may necessitate some capacity building.
- Holding the workshop outside of the capital had advantages and disadvantages.
  - Advantage: Participants remained focused and present even when the meeting went overtime. Their participation is of higher quality when the workshop is outside of the capital.
  - Disadvantage: Some invited participants came late. It is also more expensive.
- The implementation plan and action strategy matrices are useful tools for CSOs in planning their continued UPR engagement.
- Rapporteurs are key to advancing the group exercises.
- The assistance of the local partners in interacting with the groups during the group exercises, and in providing feedback on the implementation plan and action strategy, allows the discussion and feedback session to be more detailed.

### 4. Challenges encountered & responses

- The participants did not have adequate information to fill in part of the matrix, and lack of information about actions undertaken by the Government of Rwanda
- The non-specificity of the recommendations presents a challenge when it comes to defining or developing activities and indicators
- Some specific issues do not meet with unanimity amongst NGOs. Further meetings and discussions should be organised to ensure NGOs can discuss critical issues

### 5. Follow-up activities

A dialogue-day between the government and CSOs should be organised in May 2016. But it is highly recommended to the NGOs meet on several occasions to discuss the UPR before the said event.

## 6. Annex

### 6.1. Agenda

#### Day 1 (7 December)

<b>9:00 – 9:30</b>	General Introduction
<b>9:30 – 10:30</b>	Debriefing on the UPR <i>Objective: Give an overview to the participants about the UPR of Rwanda and its results</i>
<b>10:30 – 10:45</b>	<i>Coffee break</i>
<b>10:45 – 12:30</b>	The next opportunities in the UPR framework <i>Objective: To explain what are the modalities of the UPR for the next four years, to introduce the workshop activities in more detail.</i>
<b>12:30 – 13:00</b>	Discussion with participants
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<i>Lunch break</i>
<b>14:00 – 15:00</b>	Introduction to writing the implementation plan <i>Objective: Provide detailed instructions and examples for writing the implementation plan</i>
<b>15:00 – 17:00</b>	Participants divide into groups to begin writing implementation plan

#### Day 2 (8 December)

<b>9:00 – 10:30</b>	Groups continue to write the implementation plan
<b>10:30 – 10:45</b>	<i>Coffee break</i>
<b>10:45 – 12:30</b>	Continued: Groups write the implementation plan
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<i>Lunch break</i>
<b>13:30 – 14:45</b>	Introduction to writing the action strategy

*Objective: Provide detailed instructions and examples for writing the action strategy*

**14:45 – 17:00** Participants write the action strategy

**Day 3 (9 December)**

**9:00 – 11:00** Participants work in thematic groups to plan and discuss the action strategy

**11:00 – 11:15** *Coffee break*

**11:15 – 12:30** Participants work in thematic groups to finalise the implementation plan and the action strategy

**12:30 – 13:30** *Lunch break*

**13:30 – 15:30** Participants come back together; Group Rapporteur presents implementation plan and action strategy; discussion with all participants

*Objective: To allow the participants to receive feedback from the bigger group and to share ideas*

**15:30 – 17:00** Concluding presentation and discussion; participants adopt the outcome document

*Objective: To remind the participants of the UPR framework and encourage them to concretise their plans in regard to the ideas that they outlined*



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

## Contact

---

---

### UPR Info

*Rue de Varembé 3  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland*

---

Website:

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



Phone:

+ 41 (0) 22 321 77 70

Fax:

+ 41 (0) 22 321 77 71

*General enquiries*

[info@upr-info.org](mailto:info@upr-info.org)



<http://twitter.com/UPRInfo>



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