2011 concluded the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). While some Reports of the Working Group were left for adoption in March 2012, the last 49 reviews were successfully conducted to reach the unprecedented record of the United Nations to examine the human rights situation of all countries in the world.

UPR Info concluded this first cycle by closely following the completion of the Human Rights Council (HRC) review in March 2011 and its follow-up decision in June, by organising a highly attended celebration of the first cycle in October and by launching ground-breaking tutorials on the UPR process. Finally, in order to prepare for the second cycle, we started a new project on the Follow-up to the UPR recommendations. The project has produced and published 36 assessments of the implementation of recommendations in countries at mid-term.

Through those different activities, UPR Info has developed its capacity in terms of offline activities.

On the organisation side, we are proud to announce the election of a new President. Former acting High Commissioner Bertrand G. Ramcharan has been appointed President of UPR Info in January 2011. We also established an Advisory Board composed of five members from the academic, civil society and governmental spheres.
In 2011, our website received 65’742 visits from 185 countries. This represents an increase of 34% in comparison with 48’929 visits in 2010. We are quickly reaching the universality that we have been aiming for. This demonstrates, more than ever, the need for getting information on the UPR process.
UPR Info has three programmes: UPR awareness and monitoring, Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Capacity-building and Follow-up.

1. UPR Awareness Raising and Monitoring Programme

1.1. Gathering and clustering all documents on the UPR

In order to facilitate users’ access to the documents, we uploaded over 2’300 documents on our website for the 49 countries reviewed at sessions 10, 11 and 12. Those documents comprised the national reports, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) compilations of the United Nations (UN) information and summaries of stakeholders’ information, non-governmental organisations’ (NGOs) individual submissions, the advanced questions, the Working Group Reports and their Addenda, the UN press releases, as well as oral and written statements by NGOs.

1.2. Monitoring the process

A wide diversity of aspects of the UPR was covered in 85 news articles published in 2011: the UPR modalities, States’ review, the HRC review, and UPR Info’s activities.

Our newsletter has continued to grow during 2011. In total, nine newsletters were sent in 2011. The number of subscribers had increased steadily to reach about 1,200 at the end of the year. For each newsletter, we interviewed a prominent actor of the UPR process. These included, inter alia, Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations and facilitator on the UPR at the HRC review, Ms. Perina Sila, member of the delegation of Samoa under review in May, Ms. Kasha N. Jaqueline, 1000th subscriber to our newsletter.
and LGBT activist in Uganda who later in the year received the prestigious Martin
Ennals Award, Prof. Hillary Charlesworth working on the analytical study on the UPR,
Ms. Lucia Nader, Executive Director of Conectas, an NGO working actively on
Brazil’s second UPR, and Ms. Marlene Alejos, Human Rights Officer at the Office of
the High Commissioner for Human Rights who spent her sabbatical at UPR Info to
produce a study on voluntary pledges made by States within the UPR process.

We also did a live coverage of session 12 by reporting the issues raised and the
recommendations made through Facebook and Twitter. It is now possible for
everyone to follow every UPR review through our two social media pages.

1.3. Participating actively in the 2011 HRC Review

The review of the HRC was initiated in October 2010 and continued in 2011. UPR
Info monitored the following meetings:

- Informal consultations: January 2011
- Organisational meeting: 3 February 2011
- Second session of the Open-ended Working Group: 7-24 February 2011
- Informal consultation on the follow-up to the Review on the UPR: 27 May 2011
- Second informal consultation on the follow-up to the Review on the UPR: 10
  June 2011
- Third informal consultation on the follow-up to the Review on the UPR: 15
  June 2011

In particular, during the second phase of the HRC Review in early 2011, UPR Info
followed up on the status of proposals put forward by the Joint NGO Contribution to
the UPR which was submitted to the First session of the open-ended Working Group
on behalf of 37 NGOs from Geneva and abroad to contribute to the debate on the
UPR part. After the Ambassadorial retreat and the informal consultations in January
2011, UPR Info compiled an assessment overview of the status of proposals
contained in the Joint NGO Contribution. This overview was disseminated to all
NGOs that endorsed the Contribution in October 2010.
UPR Info then initiated an oral statement on 18 March 2011 at the 16th Session of the HRC in order to raise concerns about minimal results of the outcome of the review: no significant changes were agreed upon. Although the statement put forward some criticism, it proactively called for the HRC “to improve the mechanism by doing [and] continue, through the second cycle, working on strengthening the UPR in order to ensure transparent and meaningful national consultations, improved opportunities for civil society and thorough assessments of implementation of UPR recommendations.” The statement was endorsed by 28 NGOs from Geneva and abroad.

Following the HRC review, UPR Info developed a two-page document listing all the changes brought to the UPR modalities by the HRC Review.

1.4. Organising an event to celebrate the completion of the first UPR cycle

On Thursday 13th October 2011, UPR Info organised an event to celebrate the completion of the first UPR cycle. The event was organised in the HRC premises at the Palais des Nations. This celebration, co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland, the Kingdom of Morocco and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, aimed at highlighting the human rights achievements of the first cycle, as well as the challenges and opportunities expected in the second cycle. More than 250 people attended the event; such impressive presence demonstrated the interest of States and civil society actors in the UPR process.

The opening speeches were given by Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, and H.E. Ambassador Laura Dupuy-Lasserre, President of the HRC. A panel of experts representing different actors involved in the UPR process – States, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), NGOs and Treaty Bodies – then shared experiences during the last four years and expressed hopes and expectations for the second cycle.

1 Available here: http://www.upr-info.org/IMG/pdf/new_upr_modalities_second_cycle.pdf
The main ideas which came out of the discussion included:

- Consider Parliament engagement with the UPR process;
- Give clear responses to recommendations (accepted/rejected);
- Ensure that all recommendations are taken into consideration during the follow-up, including the rejected ones;
- Recommendations should be more precise (effective recommendations are precise, practical, constructive, forward looking, implementable and time-bound);
- Recommendations should complement those of treaty bodies and special procedures by calling on ratification of treaties or withdrawal of reservations;
- Create a comprehensive system to track implementation of recommendations, with appropriate indicators;
- Produce mid-term reports;
- Ensure that States report on the status of implementation of recommendations and provide explanations to those, which still have not been addressed;
- Cooperate with the OHCHR, Special procedures, Treaty bodies, and the United Nations specialised agencies and funds so that they continue providing recommendations and technical assistance;
- Cooperate with Treaty bodies to implement common recommendations;
- Treaty bodies should consider rejected UPR recommendations during their constructive dialogues with States;
- Include stakeholders’ consultation outcomes in the national report;
- Give an official role to NGOs in monitoring the implementation of recommendations;
- Extend the participation in the HRC plenary adoption also to those NGOs which do not have ECOSOC status.
2. CSO Capacity-Building Programme

2.1. Providing technical assistance

Through emails, phone calls and meetings, we have provided technical assistance to over 200 NGOs, NHRIs, academics and States from notably the following countries: Australia, Austria, Denmark, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Ireland, Moldova, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Swaziland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe. The assistance consisted in, inter alia, information on the modalities of the process, deadlines for submission of information, advice on how to engage in the follow-up, modalities to attend the review at the UN, etc.

2.2. Organising a training in Uganda

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP), in partnership with UPR Info, carried out a training workshop for twenty five human rights defenders from Uganda and Tanzania from the 23rd to the 26th of August 2011.

The training aimed to:

- Provide participants with an understanding of how to engage with the UPR and with the relevant skills to do so;
- Advance the development of action plans by human rights defenders for engaging in the UPR process and thereby advocating for the protection and promotion of human rights in the region;
- Facilitate the sharing of good practices and experience in terms of engagement with international mechanisms and notably the UPR.

The training contained the following sessions: presentation of the UPR process and its different stages, presentation of the points of engagement for CSOs, analysis of the human rights concerns of participants, analysis of the major issues in Uganda and Tanzania and the region and development of strategic plans.
UPR Info notably facilitated the sessions on the Introduction to the UPR process, civil society engagement with UPR process and the Reviewing and analysing of stakeholders’ country reports.

2.3. Participating in numerous trainings and conferences

UPR Info delivered over 20 presentations at trainings and conferences in 2011.

UPR Info was invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Morocco to participate in a national consultation held in Rabat on 4 December 2011. It was an opportunity for UPR Info to share the best practices in the area of national consultations, and advise both the State and attending CSOs on how to collaborate within the UPR framework.

UPR Info also participated in the “Regional Seminar on UPR follow-up and implementation in the Caribbean” organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in June 2011. There we focused on the NGO engagement in the follow-up phase.

Finally, UPR Info intervened in both the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programme of the OHCHR, and explained the NGO involvement in the UPR process.
2.4. Updating the Database and developing Statistics tools

In the course of 2011, we updated the database with sessions 8, 9, and 10, totalling 6464 recommendations.

The database remains the most sought after feature of our website. It is continuously used by all actors for such purposes as lobbying work by NGOs, training activities by international organisations, and academic research.

The database received approximately 12'000 visits from 140 countries and territories.

Following the launch of our statistics feature on our database in December 2010, we developed new detailed statistics on the participation of each State under Review and Recommending State.

The statistics on States under Review allow the user to select one specific State under Review and look into the specific information through tables and graphs such as the number of recommendations made to the State under Review by each regional group and organisation, as well as the number of recommendations accepted and rejected by the reviewed State. The statistics on Recommending States allow the user to select one specific Recommending State and access the number of recommendations made to each State under Review and the number of recommendations made on each issue. The last feature particularly facilitates the work of NGOs in their lobbying as they can quickly identify, for each recommending State, the issues they have raised most at the UPR and therefore know which issues they will be interested in making recommendations on.
2.5. Producing tutorials

Our objective to constantly facilitate understanding of the UPR process led us to produce new training tools for different actors. We thus developed three tutorials explaining the UPR from different perspectives: the modalities for the second and subsequent cycles, the role of States under Review and the role of NGOs. These tutorials are aimed at all stakeholders such as States, CSOs, academics, parliamentarians, media, and UN agencies. They consist of slides and videos that last for about 30 minutes. A small test concludes each tutorial.

These three tutorials are also available as an off-line version free of charge. While the tutorials are currently in English only, other languages are planned as the interest of having them in French and Spanish is being continuously expressed.

3. UPR Follow-up Programme

3.1. Studying Responses to recommendations

These documents, listing all the recommendations received and the responses given, were developed for each State reviewed during session 6, 7 and 8. We also published a methodology explaining how we categorize each response².

3.2. Launching a new Follow-up Project

A new and innovative project was launched in 2011 with the support of the Royal

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² Available at the following address: [http://www.upr-info.org/-Recommendations-.html](http://www.upr-info.org/-Recommendations-.html)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. This project, called “UPR Follow-up” aims at providing information on the implementation of UPR recommendations in between reviews in order to provide mid-term information, and to also facilitate the assessment at the second cycle.

In this project, we ask the State under Review and the CSOs which participated in the first round to provide comments about the status of implementation of the recommendations received at the first review. Those comments are then compiled into a “Mid-term Implementation Assessment” and sent to different stakeholders.

36 MIAs have been published in 2011 on 4 countries from session 2, 16 countries from session 3 and 16 from session 4. A total of 449 NGOs and 36 States were contacted from session 2 to 4. 23 National Human Rights Institutions were invited to participate as well.

The Programme covered a total of 3082 recommendations, and 52% of them were commented upon by stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>commented: 1597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not commented: 1485</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UPR Info developed the Implementation Recommendation Index (IRI), in order to show the implementation level of the recommendation achieved by the State.

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3 The Programme’s documents are available at the following address: [http://followup.upr-info.org](http://followup.upr-info.org)
Among the 1597 recommendations commented upon, *UPR Info* can say that 55% were not implemented, 28% were partially implemented, and 12% were fully implemented (1% of the comments were not clear enough to assess the recommendation).

![Recommendation status](chart.png)

In just over six months, the project has already produced very interesting results:

- The participation of both national and international NGOs is constantly increasing: 30% of the NGOs took part in session 2 and 3 and we are expecting 40% for session 4;
- States are reminded of their commitments in the UPR framework and encouraged to take action;
- “Civil society Follow-up kits” have been sent to CSOs, providing them with explanations about the follow-up of the UPR and its continuous nature;
- NGOs have formed new coalitions or re-established previous ones in order to provide their comments on the recommendations (Canada, Chad, China, Chile, New Zealand, Nigeria, etc.);
- NGOs that had not taken part in the UPR process have discovered the mechanism due to the Follow-up Programme, and are expected to submit a report for the second UPR cycle;
Stakeholders are prepared for the next review in advance; collected data will be used to submit reports at the next UPR.

The importance of the project is due to the fact that there is no other way to assess the mid-term implementation of recommendations using information by all stakeholders. The information it provides is used not only by States, NGOs, and NHRIIs, but also by other actors, including academics and media. Furthermore, the success of the Programme has already been acknowledged by various States and NGOs. In more detail, some of the former used Mid-term Implementation Assessments (MIAs) in order to evaluate the first UPR Cycle, whilst some of the latter, which had abandoned the UPR process, re-engaged in it after they were contacted by UPR Info.
PR Info elected a new President in January. Former Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bertrand G. Ramcharan, will be President for a period of two years. Dr. Ramcharan was acting High Commissioner for Human Rights from August 2003 - July 2004. During his three decades with the United Nations, Dr. Ramcharan served in the Centre for Human Rights as Special Assistant to the Director, as the Secretary-General’s Chief Speechwriter, as Director of the Office of the Special Representative for the Secretary-General in UNPROFOR, as Director of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, as political adviser to the peace negotiators in the Yugoslav conflict, and as a Director in the United Nations Political Department, focusing on conflicts in Africa.

UPR Info is very pleased with this election and believes that his long standing career in human rights will be an inspiration to our work.

Advisory Board

UPR Info also established an Advisory Board in charge of providing the Executive Committee and the Secretariat with advice, expertise and strategies on the activities of the organisation in order to better fulfil its goal: to promote and strengthen the Universal Periodic Review.

The current members are:

- Anita Goh (France) - NGO Group for the CRC
- Marianne Lilliebjerg (Denmark) - Amnesty International
- Professor Edward R. McMahon (United States) - University of Vermont
- Katharina Rose (Germany) - International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions
- Micheál Tierney (Ireland) - Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations in Geneva
Saida Manieva, our consultant from Kyrgyzstan who was in charge of our activities on the HRC review, left the organisation after completing her mandate at UPR Info. She successfully undertook her tasks and was then hired by the OSCE. Saida will continue volunteering with us to draft the handbook for CSOs to be released in 2012. Additionally, UPR Info is now composed of two permanent staff; Jean-Claude Vignoli, joined the organisation in June 2011, as new Programmes Director. Jean-Claude holds a Master in International Relations from the Graduate Institute of International Relations (Switzerland). He is mainly in charge of the Follow-up Programme. Prior to this, he was deeply involved in communication strategy and tools development, areas which he will continue to work on. Jean-Claude is a former member of the Executive Board.

Five interns from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Italy, and the United States worked at UPR Info during 2011. They undertook numerous tasks and did invaluable work on the website, the database and the follow-up programme.

**Secretariat**

- Roland Chauville – Executive Director
- Jean-Claude Vignoli – Programmes Director
- Saida Manieva – Consultant
- Mercedes Aguerre – Intern
- Fernando Bissacot – Intern
- Elisa Cattaneo – Intern
- Maria Paulina Gomes Gomes – Intern
- Azim Pradhan – Intern
Executive Board

- Bertrand G. Ramcharan – President
- Waqas Ali Saqib – Executive Secretary
- Begum Bulak – Treasurer
UPR Info’s activities to strengthen CSO participation in the UPR were supported by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations in Geneva and the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva. The activities in relation to the HRC Review were supported by the Open Society Foundation - Budapest. The Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway financed the follow-up programme. The tutorials were produced with the support of the Federal Foreign Ministry of Germany. We are very grateful for the trust they have put into our work and would like to warmly thank them.
2012 marks the beginning of the second cycle. This cycle will be decisive for the success of the UPR process. The way the HRC will assess the implementation of recommendations and react in cases of non-implementation will determine the credibility of the mechanism. UPR Info will be following very closely the developments taking place at the 13th and 14th sessions and will report on trends, events and changes in modalities.

The second cycle will offer UPR Info opportunities to develop new projects and new ways of engaging in the UPR process. In March, we will organise a “pre-session” of the 13th session of the UPR Working Group. This “pre-session” will consist of 14 meetings between Permanent Missions and CSOs: one per each State to be reviewed in May. The aim will be to give opportunities to civil society to share with States delegations their concerns as well as potential questions and recommendations for the review. Upon successful completion, those “pre-sessions” will be organised two months prior to each Working Group session.

The Follow-up Programme will continue to grow. We will publish Mid-term Implementation Assessments on States reviewed during sessions 4, 5, 6 and 7. The increase in number of CSOs engaged in those sessions will benefit the Programme and result in more recommendations on which we can expect comments from those actors. The key challenge of the Programme will be to secure better State and NHRIs’ participation.

Finally, we will also aim at changing the website into a more powerful and user friendly technology.
UPR Info is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland. Its aim is to both raise awareness on the UPR process and provide capacity-building tools to its different actors, such as UN Member States, NGOs, NHRIs, media, academics and civil society in general.

To this end, UPR Info collects information and documents on each review, provides detailed explanations and videos about the process and the role of each actor, publishes a monthly newsletter on the mechanism, conducts analyses of human rights issues raised during the process, looks into responses given to recommendations by States, publishes reports on the implementation of recommendations by countries at mid-term and manages an online database of all UPR recommendations.

UPR Info is the first NGO entirely dedicated to the UPR. Since the inception of the mechanism in April 2008, it has developed a unique expertise on the process itself and on facilitating civil society engagement. Its website, available in English, French and Spanish, as well as Russian and Arabic in a basic version, has received over 200’000 visits from all regions of the world.
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