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

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Introduction

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) aims to improve human rights in all United Nations Members States through a multi-stage process of sustained engagement. The mechanism has proven itself as an indispensable platform from which the voices of marginalised people are amplified throughout the international system. The aim is for States to effectively implement the received recommendations to the benefit of rights holders, and in so doing constantly improve the standard of human rights within the country.

The first and second UPR cycles (2008–2016) produced 57,686 UPR recommendations, with a 73% acceptance rate. Studies, changes in national laws, and further ratification of international instruments have shown that the UPR has triggered concrete results in the improvement of human rights.¹

Over the past decade, UPR Info has dedicated its work to both monitoring the UPR, and successfully facilitating the engagement of multiple stakeholders in the process. UPR Info is uniquely positioned to provide to States, National Human Rights Institutions, parliamentarians, and civil society organisations (CSOs) with information, knowledge, and capacity-building tools to ensure meaningful and results-orientated participation. From this exclusive vantage point, UPR Info works to effect change at the beneficiary and policy level.

In 2017, UPR Info continued to support all UPR stakeholders in its strategic areas of engagement: raising awareness about the UPR mechanism; building capacity of UPR stakeholders; developing knowledge materials; improving its database to support the monitoring of UPR recommendations; and working at the policy level to strengthen implementation, and to ensure that the voices of all segments of society are heard.

UPR Info is a non-profit, international non-governmental organisation with Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The organisation is comprised of a Secretariat of six permanent staff members in Geneva, and three staff in its Africa regional office in Nairobi, Kenya. In addition to its permanent staff, the organisation also recruits paid interns throughout the year.² The Executive Board is comprised of five members, who provide direction and support to the organisation.³

UPR Info works to promote the universal advancement of human rights for all segments of society through the UPR mechanism, by fostering participatory and inclusive dialogue between all national actors.

² UPR Info is the proud initiator of the “We pay our interns” initiative launched in March 2016. http://wepayourinterns.org/ UPR Info provides its interns with a minimum of 1,500 CHF per month.
In 2017, UPR Info facilitated 43 training workshops, conferences, and presentations focusing on the UPR process, bringing together participants ranging from high school students to State representatives, UN staff and CSO representatives.

**Enhancing State capacities**

- We trained more than 80 government officials from 6 countries.
- We held a seminar on the UPR for Recommending States, training approximately 30 Representatives of Permanent Missions.
- We worked with States to develop the Joint Statement of 64 States.

**Top issues raised at the UPR Sessions of 2017**

- Women's rights
- International instruments
- Torture
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of association

**62% of female speakers at the UPR Info Pre-sessions**

**We made added 2461 recommendations to our database**

**UPR Info Database**

**We published 11 newsletters and 62 news articles**

**We made 3 statements at Item 6 General Debate (34th to 36th HRC regular sessions)**
In-country Programme

Armenia, Botswana, Cambodia, Czechia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Morocco, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom

Pre-sessions Programme

Pre-session 27: Algeria, Bahrain, Brazil, Ecuador, Finland, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom

Pre-session 28: Argentina, Benin, Czechia, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Ukraine, Zambia

Pre-session 29: Botswana, Burundi, France, Israel, Mali, Romania, Serbia, United Arab Emirates
1. UPR Info’s Programmes

1.1 Pre-sessions Programme

Pre-sessions: UPR Info’s Pre-sessions provide CSOs with a strategic advocacy platform to address the human rights issues affecting their country. This programme prioritises the voices of national actors and marginalised groups and ensures that a wide variety of human rights issues are discussed prior to the review in Geneva. The Pre-sessions bring together CSOs and Recommending States to influence the recommendations that will be made at the subsequent UPR Working Group Session.

The UPR Info Pre-sessions are the largest human rights advocacy platform on the UPR. The Pre-sessions fill an engagement gap, where civil society would be otherwise limited to submitting written reports to the OHCHR. Rather, the Pre-sessions allow CSOs and National Human Rights Institutions to present the human rights situation of their country, and to directly advocate to State delegations ahead of the UPR Working Group session. The aim of the Pre-sessions is to ensure that the recommendations that will be made at the Review are context-specific and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound). The Pre-sessions further promote discussion of all human rights, including civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

In 2017, UPR Info organised three series of Pre-sessions in April, October and December. We had the honour to welcome our distinguished guest Mr. Gianni Magazzenni, Chief of the UPR Branch at the OHCHR to open the Pre-sessions.

Since 2017, the Pre-sessions are being hosted at the United Nations’ Palais des Nations. This change in venue has boosted the visibility and impact of the platform, as well as crystallising the Pre-sessions as recognised step in the UPR process. We have noticed a significant and consistent increase in the participation of the permanent missions, now reaching 33 States on average per session. In 2017 alone, 76% of States under Review attended their own Pre-sessions, 69 different permanent missions attended the Pre-sessions, 12 of which were attending it for the first time.

The level of participation of national CSOs has reached a record 88%, with an overall participation of 62% of women on the panel. Pre-sessions are now widely recognised and have become an integral part of the UPR process.
Participants of the Pre-sessions benefit from training on the UPR and on strategic advocacy. The general training is open to all civil society participating or attending the Pre-sessions. Additionally, UPR Info has set in place a more tailored country-specific training for the civil society that is part of our In-country programme (ICP) and for civil society that benefits from a grant to participate in the Pre-sessions. In 2017, UPR Info has organized:

- 3 general trainings in English
- 1 general training in Spanish
- 4 country specific trainings for countries part of our In-country programme (French and English)
- 3 country specific trainings

UPR Info has introduced trainings in English, French and Spanish to increase the understanding of the UPR process and provide to participate strategic advocacy skills. The aim of the training is to prepare the CSOs to make quality interventions at the Pre-sessions, and to teach them how to fully utilize the advocacy platform even in the case that they are not speakers. Through this preparation, the goal is to influence the recommendations that States make at the UPR and enable CSOs and NHRIs to work on their implementations.

Overall, within the Pre-sessions framework UPR Info has built the capacity of over 200 human rights defenders.

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“The Opportunity you provided me will definitely boost my confidence and skills to play a more effective role as human rights activist.”

Center for Social Justice, Pakistan

“I would like to thank you for everything for the UPR Pre-Session of Japan. It was my first Pre-Session to attend and I found it extremely helpful for my advocacy.”

IMADR, Japan
Pre-sessions

3 series of Pre-sessions 27, 28 and 29

- 35 States reviewed
- 18 international CSOs
- 12 NHRI
- 152 national CSOs (88% of all speakers)
- In total, this year, 69 different permanent missions attended PS
- 33 (avg.) permanent missions in attendance per State Pre-session
- 76% of States under Review attended own Pre-session
- 62% of female speakers
1.2 Supporting multi-stakeholders participation at the UPR

Capacity Building: *UPR Info* is a centre of excellence for the UPR and seeks to share its expertise with all UPR stakeholders, such as: governments; parliamentarians; CSOs; NHRIs; UN agencies; journalists; and academics, to support their engagement in all phases of the UPR process.

In addition to training workshops and publications, *UPR Info* provides world-wide access to the UPR mechanism through its online resources; [www.upr-info.org](http://www.upr-info.org) is a one-stop-shop for all UPR related issues. The website contains all UPR documents, organised by State and by UPR Session, guidelines for engagement, studies, analyses of impact, and examples of best practices.

*UPR Info* undertook numerous activities in the following areas to meet the aims of this project:

1. Supporting CSO participation;
2. Enhancing State capacities;
3. Sharing knowledge;
4. Developing the database and statistics tools; and
5. Strengthening the UPR process.

**Awareness-raising:** *UPR Info* works to raise awareness about the UPR and contributes through policy dialogue to strengthen the UPR mechanism.

Supporting CSO participation

A significant component of *UPR Info*’s work is to engage civil society on events and developments related to human rights and the UPR in Geneva, to help shape and strengthen their work at the national level. *UPR Info* also firmly believes in providing direct and tailored in-person training for all UPR stakeholders adapting strategies and best practices to the relevant focus areas.

In this regard, *UPR Info* was active in the following areas:

**Outreach to CSOs**

- *UPR Info* published 62 news articles and 11 newsletters addressing the UPR process in Geneva and distributed it to our ever-growing list of subscribers (2,714 as of December 2017).
- *UPR Info* live monitored the 27th and 28th UPR Working Group Sessions; and Adoptions at the Human Rights Council of UPR Sessions 26 and 27.

**Strengthen CSO engagement**

- *UPR Info* participated in 43 Geneva-based training workshops, conferences, and presentations focusing on the UPR process;
- *UPR Info* delivered tailored advocacy trainings to CSOs ahead of the *UPR Info* Pre-sessions. Human rights defenders from: Ghana; India; Mali; Morocco; Philippines; and Sri Lanka benefited from country-specific advanced training sessions.
- *UPR Info* ran in-country workshops in: Botswana; Cambodia; Czechia; Ghana; India; Kenya; Lebanon; Morocco; Somalia; Sri Lanka; Sweden; Switzerland; and Togo. The workshops aimed at building capacity of UPR stakeholders (Government, CSOs, NHRIs) on the UPR Mechanism, supporting their advocacy work and assisting them drafting UPR implementation plans, including mid-term engagement.
**Encourage CSO coalitions**

- *UPR Info* incorporated CSO coalitions more prominently in the training it provided to human rights defenders, and where possible acted as an intermediary for CSOs looking to establish coalitions and working partnerships with other organisations.

**Human rights defenders**

*UPR Info* trained human rights defenders representing different groups of society, minorities and indigenous people on effective UPR advocacy strategies. In this regard, it notably trained human rights defenders from Bahrain and Hong Kong, as well as Palestinian women’s advocates. *UPR Info* also facilitated sessions with partners organisations in Geneva: International Service for Human Rights (ISHR); Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme; and Indigenous Peoples’ Centre for documentation, research and information (DOCIP).

**Youth and Students**

*UPR Info* seeks to empower students and youth advocates to engage with and throughout the UPR process. In this regard, *UPR Info* facilitated several tailored advocacy trainings throughout the year focused on amplifying the youth perspective. In particular, *UPR Info* worked with the University College London, the European Youth Forum, and the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) to promote the UPR as an important and accessible advocacy platform.

**Enhancing State capacities**

For the UPR to be an effective mechanism for the enhancement of human rights, all stakeholders must be empowered to use the process effectively. *UPR Info* works proactively with States throughout the UPR cycle to support sustainable engagement.

**Seminars for Recommending States**

- **April: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

In the lead up to Sri Lanka’s third UPR in November 2017, *UPR Info* was invited by the Government of Sri Lanka to share good practices on drafting the National Report, and what to expect from the UPR itself. The seminar also emphasised the importance of involving CSOs in the process. 18 members of Sri Lanka’s Inter-ministerial human rights Committee (NMRF) participated at the event. As a result of the training, the Government included a dedicated chapter on civil society concerns in the
National Report of Sri Lanka, establishing it as a good practice in this regard. The seminar contributed to the organisation of national consultations with civil society across Sri Lanka. It was the first time the government engaged with the public to actively seek their views on a UPR National Report.

**September: Stockholm, Sweden**

*UPR Info* conducted two tailor-made UPR seminars for the Government of Sweden to discuss the country’s UPR performance. The first focused on Sweden as a Recommending State and the second looked at Sweden from the perspective of a State under Review. The first session brought together 25 participants from six geographical desks. *UPR Info* recapped on the recommendations previously made by Sweden at the UPR and elaborated on how the Geographical desks could further strengthen future recommendations to be more action-oriented and specific. The second seminar gathered 20 participants from the inter-ministerial human rights committee. The inter-ministerial committee was introduced to the key building blocks of a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up, including the advantages of a public database that tracks implementation of all human rights recommendations that a State receives.

**October: Geneva, Switzerland**

*UPR Info* held its annual Geneva-based seminar for Recommending States, training approximately 30 Representatives of Permanent Missions on the UPR. The event was an opportunity for newly-arrived diplomats to build their capacity and knowledge of the process, including how to draft SMART recommendations. Meanwhile, the more experienced representatives also benefitted from the session by learning about latest data and trends, as well as contemporary best practices.

**October: Prague, Czechia**

The aim of the seminar was two-fold: 1) to prepare Czechia’s State Delegation for the third UPR of Czechia as the State under Review; and 2) to reviewing its performance as a Recommending State and identify ways to strengthen their engagement. The State delegation was composed of the ministries of foreign affairs, interior, health, labour and social affairs, justice, education and youth, as well as the governmental office for human rights. Participants were trained on the UPR through an interactive session giving the delegation a chance to familiarise themselves with the Geneva-based procedure, including their approach and responses.

**Improve State Reporting**

In March 2017, during the 34th session of the Human Rights Council, *UPR Info* delivered a statement in it “strongly encourage[d] States to report orally during the Item 6 General Debate, one year after their review, on a selected number of recommendations, and not wait for the mid-term point.”.

*UPR Info* worked with States to develop the Joint Statement of 64 States, made at the 34th session of the Human Rights Council. All 64 States committed to write and publish UPR mid-term reports, or “through another alternative process” namely the Item 6 General Debate, thereby updating the international community on the progress made on the implementation of received recommendations.
Knowledge Sharing

Working with stakeholders across the globe, UPR Info’s website is key to enabling free-flowing, up to date information on the UPR reaching all parties. It is often the first contact point for many wanting to engage further in the UPR process.

- UPR Info gathered and published all information on the UPR, such as the documentation for the reviews, webcasts, analyses of the process, handbooks, etc. on our website, totalling over 3,000 uploads.
- UPR Info developed a “Subscribe” function on our site to enable stakeholders to receive notifications when relevant documents are updated (290 subscribers as of December 2017).
- UPR Info undertook a small website redesign, including: rewriting several pages; updating key information so the site was fit for purpose for the 3rd UPR Cycle; changing the layout of aspects of the site; and improved the explanations and information shared with all stakeholders on how best to participate in the UPR process.
- UPR Info updated the translations across the entire website in Arabic, French, and Spanish (to match the updates described above) and began the process of developing documentation in Russian.
- UPR Info published ‘The Civil Society Compendium: A comprehensive guide for civil society organisations (CSOs) engaging in the Universal Periodic Review’ to ensure effective use of the UPR by CSOs. The Guide is now available in Arabic; English; French; Russian; and Spanish.
- UPR Info translated its publication “UPR Info Pre-sessions: Empowering human rights voices from the ground” in Spanish. The publication is now available in English, French and Spanish.

Developing the database and statistics tools

UPR Info’s Database of Recommendations holds all UPR recommendations and provides analysis tools and statistics to enhance the monitoring of implementation.
UPR Info’s database is world-renowned. It is the most comprehensive and up to date database of UPR recommendations. It is used internationally and by all UPR stakeholders to monitor recommendations.

- **UPR Info added 2,461 recommendations** to the database.
- **UPR Info** developed its database with external partners to ensure it could contain data from the 3rd UPR Cycle, including adding several elements to improve monitoring and reporting practices of all UPR stakeholders.
- **UPR Info** began a review of all action coding from Cycle 1 and 2 to improve the accuracy of the classifications. This ensures that the database continues to be fit for purpose with a strong methodology to support our classification of third cycle recommendations.
- **UPR Info** updated the database with the recommendations made during Session 26 and edited the statistics page accordingly.

### Strengthening the UPR Process

Over the last 10 years, **UPR Info** has positioned itself as an expert organisation that works to ensure a robust and accessible UPR process. To accomplish this objective, **UPR Info** seeks to strengthen the engagement of all stakeholders, who in turn can utilise the UPR to effect positive change on the ground.

- **UPR Info** monitored the UPR process in Geneva and took the floor during each Human Rights Council Item 6 General Debate (in March, June, and September) to address UPR achievements, trends, and to encourage best practices. In 2017, **UPR Info** encouraged States to report on five recommendations one year after their review; to strengthen the implementation of the UPR recommendations; and to create synergy between the Sustainable Development Goals and UPR to ensure that development is accompanied by human development and social progress.
- **UPR Info** closely followed and promoted new procedures and tools published by OHCHR to encourage engagement in the 3rd UPR Cycle, such as the Matrices of Recommendations.
- **UPR Info** worked with the OHCHR, States, CSOs, parliamentarians, NHRIs, and others to ensure all stakeholders could develop their capacity for engagement in the UPR. This included engaging in a State-led discussion on the contribution of parliaments to the work of both the HRC and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
- **UPR Info** engaged in policy dialogues to strengthen the implementation of UPR recommendations to ensure that the UPR mechanism brings change to people's lives. In this regard, **UPR Info** joined a group of NGOs in addressing a letter to OHCHR requesting an assessment of the implementation of the UPR recommendations. Following this initiative, the UN’s High Commissioner of Human Rights is now issuing letters to all countries reviewed during the 3rd UPR cycle inviting them to draft human rights actions plans and to set up national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up. To continue supporting this initiative, **UPR Info** organised in November 2017 a dialogue with Geneva-based human rights NGOs and the OHCHR to determine how to further strengthen the monitoring of the implementation of UPR recommendations. **UPR Info** also organ-
ised a dialogue with CSOs to assess the interest and need to better financially support local and national CSOs in the implementation of UPR recommendations.

1.3 In-country Programme

Introduction

A key priority of UPR Info is to strengthen UPR efforts at the domestic level. The objective is to support governments, civil society, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and other actors to collectively engage throughout the full cycle of the UPR. In this vein, UPR Info expanded the scope of its national engagement in 2017, adopting a new and innovative approach to support UPR activities. The In-country programme (ICP) was thus introduced as the successor of UPR Info’s former Follow-up Programme.

Structured as a continuum of activities, the ICP is designed to foster robust national human rights follow-up systems; nationwide civil society UPR coalitions; and meaningful partnerships between the government, CSOs, and the NHRI. Specifically, the programme is comprised of five interlinked steps, offering a unique opportunity for participants to enhance their knowledge about the UPR, and to fine-tune their strategies. Each step is carefully designed in close cooperation with national partners to address concrete needs at the national level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>WHAT?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>CSO submission workshop</td>
<td>To enhance the quality of CSO submissions and SMART UPR recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>In-country Pre-session</td>
<td>To replicate the Geneva-based Pre-session at the national level in order to amplify the voice of CSOs. The national Pre-session provides a platform for exchange between the diplomatic community and local CSOs on human rights concerns and action-oriented recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>CSO strategy workshop</td>
<td>To share the outcomes of the review with national CSOs, and to draft a follow-up matrix outlining how CSOs can support the government in implementing recommendations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>National multi-stakeholder dialogue on UPR implementation</td>
<td>To gather representatives from the government, civil society and independent institutions to discuss the necessary building blocks for an inclusive and sustainable approach to implementation of UPR recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Mid-term workshop</td>
<td>To support civil society and the government to take stock of implementation halfway between one review and the next, with a view towards introducing solutions to overcome gaps in implementation.</td>
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The ICP is jointly coordinated by staff at UPR Info’s headquarters in Geneva and its Africa regional office, based in Nairobi, Kenya. UPR Info Africa offers strategic support for national UPR partners across the region. In addition, UPR Info works with a number of national focal points across Asia to support in-country activities.
Human rights in **ASIA**

**UPR Info** engaged in numerous countries across Asia through its Follow-up programme. The organisation has scaled up its engagement in the region since the introduction of the In-country Programme.

In order to reach more partners across the region, a **system of National Focal Points** (NFPs) was developed. NFPs are integrated in partner organisations and offer more flexibility to meet the increased demands that **UPR Info** receives. The NFPs are key actors in the national UPR process as they possess expert knowledge of the local human rights landscape. As such, they are best equipped to address the specific and diverse needs among UPR stakeholders in the countries where they operate. In 2017, NFPs worked in India and Sri Lanka, and the potential to expand the system will be considered for 2018.

**Sri Lanka: Step 1, 2 & 3**

**February**

**Step 1: CSO Submission Workshop**

The workshop was organised ahead of Sri Lanka’s 3rd UPR with a view to contribute to a coordinated approach by national CSOs. The purpose of the workshop was two-fold;

1. to seek consensus among diverse grassroots organisations to submit a joint CSO submission; and
2. to establish a national UPR coalition.

Achievements:
- CSOs agreed to submit a **joint CSO report**;
- CSOs agreed to develop thematic **UPR Advocacy Factsheets**; and
- CSOs agreed to continue discussions to establish a **nationwide CSO coalition** to sustain their UPR engagement

**September**

**Step 2: In-country Pre-session**

Two months before Sri Lanka’s 3rd UPR, In-country Pre-sessions were organised in Sri Lanka and India. The aim was to brief resident and non-resident diplomats covering the human rights situation in Sri Lanka on the concerns and suggested recommendations of local CSOs prior to the review.
Achievements:

- **20 States briefed** on human rights concerns of national civil society, and received their suggested UPR recommendations;
- **21 UPR Advocacy Factsheets** developed;
- Sri Lankan CSOs obtained a better understanding of how to conduct **strategic UPR advocacy prior to and after the review**;
- Resident and non-resident diplomats positioned to give relevant input into the **phrasing of UPR recommendations**; and
- **UPR Info** advanced its efficiency in providing **hands-on technical support to national CSOs in-country prior to the review stage**.

**November**

**Step 3: CSO strategy workshop**

In the immediate aftermath of Sri Lanka’s second UPR, **UPR Info** and the **Civil Society Collective in Sri Lanka** organised the CSO UPR workshop to debrief participants on the recommendations the country received. The participants were then able to start developing a CSO-suggested implementation plan and a civil society action strategy for UPR recommendations.

Achievements:

- **Translation** of all third cycle UPR recommendations to Sinhala and Tamil;
- Joint participation of the **Human Rights Commission (NHRI)** and CSOs to discuss UPR implementation;
- Drafting of **five thematic CSO-suggested implementation plans**;
- Drafting of **five thematic CSO action strategies**;
- Identification of entry points for **CSO involvement in the implementation process**; and
- Adoption of an **Outcome Declaration** containing civil society priorities in the UPR.

**India: Step 3**

**August**

**Step 3: CSO strategy workshop**

The event was organised against the backdrop of India’s third UPR. The activity sought to share information with civil society on the recommendations received, and to identify strategies for implementation.

Achievements:

- Increased awareness and technical knowledge about India’s third UPR amongst national civil society;
Representative and inclusive dialogue including marginalised groups;

Drafting of six thematic CSO-suggested implementation plans;

Drafting of six thematic CSO action strategies;

Adoption of UPR roadmap identifying immediate actions for civil society follow-up;

Commitment to replicate the UPR workshop at the state level; and

245 live screenings organised by civil society across the country to monitor the adoption of India’s UPR report

Armenia: Step 5

October

Step 5: CSO Mid-term Workshop

Together with OSF Armenia and UNDP Armenia, UPR Info co-organised a series of activities in Armenia to equip CSOs to support implementation and hold the Government accountable for their human rights commitments. Following its second UPR in January 2015, the National CSO mid-term workshop provided a timely exercise to reinvigorate the UPR momentum in Armenia. The event gathered a cross-section of civil society representatives, including seasoned human rights defenders, newcomers and representatives from UNDP, UNICEF and the EU Delegation.

Achievements:

- Assessing implementation of all recommendations Armenia received in the second cycle;
- Laying the foundation for a joint CSO mid-term report;
- Identifying entry points to the UPR for journalists; and
- Introducing the UPR to newcomers.
Human rights in **AFRICA**

*UPR Info Africa* went from strength to strength in 2017, responding to an ever-increasing demand from different countries to receive UPR support. The *UPR Info Africa* team has been facilitating UPR activities both as part of the In-country Programme, and also region-specific requests. The following is an overview of *UPR Info* activities facilitated across Africa.

**Ghana: Step 1 & 2**

![Ghana map](image)

**March**  
**Step 1: CSO submission workshop**  
The Ghana CSO submission workshop was organised ahead of the country’s UPR to enhance cooperation and collaboration among CSOs and further, to promote coordination among national CSOs. To this end, the meeting was to reinforce participants’ advocacy skills through enhanced knowledge of how to draft influential CSO UPR submission. It further sought to map out an advocacy strategy for Ghanaian CSOs to ensure that they utilise all entry points for engagement with the UPR.

**Achievements:**
- CSOs developed and submitted **10 CSO reports** containing SMART recommendations;
- Increased number of local grassroots CSOs submit reports and participate in the process for the first time;
- CSOs incorporated data and statistics to support their reports;
- A submission was made on Natural Resources/Extractive industries sector which are ordinarily left out of human rights treaty monitoring processes;
- Ghanaian CSOs now have a better understanding of the UPR and how they can engage with the mechanism throughout the cycle; and
- CSOs agreed to develop thematic UPR **Advocacy Factsheets**.
September

Step 2: In-country Pre-session

Two months before Ghana’s 3rd UPR, UPR Info, together with the Ghana Human Rights NGOs Forum and KASA Initiative, organised the In-country Pre-session and Diplomatic Dialogue. The objective of the meeting was to provide a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue between members of the diplomatic community and national CSOs. During this exchange, civil society were able to share on their priority human rights concerns to be raised in Ghana’s UPR.

Achievements:
- **33 States briefed** on human rights concerns of national civil society and received their suggested UPR recommendations; and
- **21 UPR Advocacy Factsheets** developed.

Togo: Step 4

June

Step 4: Multi-stakeholder dialogue on UPR implementation

In 2016, UPR Info had co-organised a CSO UPR Strategy Workshop to debrief national CSOs on Togo’s second cycle recommendations and to support the development of CSO suggested implementation plans and actions strategies. The multi-stakeholder dialogue in June 2017 built on the engagement of previous UPR activities and aimed to pave the way for sustainable implementation inclusive of all national UPR stakeholders.

Achievements:
- **73 national UPR stakeholders** including government ministries, parliamentarians, the NHRI, civil society, and the OHCHR, met to discuss inclusive UPR implementation; and
- Six thematic groups presented their respective CSO-suggested implementation plans and action strategies: Justice; Children; CPR; ESCR; Child rights; and Marginalised groups.
Morocco: Step 3

June

**Step 3: CSO strategy workshop**

The event was organised against the backdrop of Morocco’s third UPR. The activity sought to share information with civil society on the recommendations received, and to identify strategies for implementation. Civil society worked on a thematic basis to ensure tailored implementation strategies.

Achievements:

- **Increased awareness and technical knowledge** about Morocco’s third UPR amongst national civil society;
- **Representative and inclusive dialogue** including grassroots and rural organisations, and minority groups;
- **Drafting of five thematic CSO-suggested implementation plans**;
- **Drafting of five thematic CSO action strategies**;
- **Adoption of an Outcome charter**, committing civil society to supporting UPR implementation;
- **Adoption of UPR roadmap** identifying immediate actions for civil society follow-up; and
- **Expansion of the membership** of UPR Group Morocco

Somalia: Step 4

July

**Step 4: Multi-stakeholder dialogue on UPR Implementation**

In December 2016, *UPR Info* organised a meeting with Somali CSOs titled “Workshop for Somali CSOs on the development of implementation framework for UPR recommendations”. On the back of this meeting, *UPR Info* Africa organised in July 2017 the multi-stakeholder dialogue on the Universal Periodic Review. The meeting sought to support the effective implementation of the UPR Recommendations, while promoting cooperation between government officials and CSOs.
Achievements:

- **24 national UPR stakeholders** including State and civil society representatives met to discuss inclusive UPR implementation.

![Uganda: Step 4](image)

**Uganda: Step 4**

**August–October**

**Step 4: Multi-stakeholder dialogue on UPR implementation**

In 2016, *UPR Info* co-organised a CSO UPR Strategy Workshop to debrief national CSOs on Uganda’s second cycle recommendations and to support the development of CSO suggested implementation plans and action strategies. This was followed in 2017 with two multi-stakeholder dialogues on implementation of UPR recommendations. The first meeting focused on economic, social and cultural rights, and the second on civil and political rights.

**Achievements (CPR cluster):**

- Adoption of a **Workshop Charter** for follow-up and implementation of UPR recommendations relating to CPRs for the next 5 years;

- Relevant Government stakeholders were introduced to **possibilities for collaboration** with CSOs for implementation of the UPR recommendations relating to CPRs;

- A **timeline** was established to monitor CSO progress in implementing their respective action items set under the finalised UPR outcome charter; and

- CSOs agreed to submit a **UPR mid-term report**.

**Achievements (ESCR cluster):**

- Establishment of **thematic sub-groups** responsible for contributing to the implementation of relevant recommendations corresponding;

- Commitment to facilitate multi-stakeholder meetings to **track implementation**; and

- Commitment to conduct capacity-building seminars targeting local government representatives to raise awareness on UPR recommendations.
Botswana: Step 2

September
Step 2: In-country Pre-session

Two months before Botswana’s 3rd UPR, UPR Info together with the DITSHWANELO – The Botswana Centre for Human Rights, organised the In-country Pre-session and Diplomatic Dialogue. During the interactive meeting, national civil society representatives shared with the diplomatic community the SMART recommendations they sought to have reflected at Botswana’s UPR.

Achievements:
- 34 CSO representatives were trained on the UPR;
- Increased desire among the CSOs present to commence and continue engaging with the UPR process; and
- 7 States briefed on human rights concerns of national civil society and received their suggested UPR recommendations;

Kenya: Step 5

October–December
Step 5: CSO Mid-term workshop

Kenyan civil society organisations came together to take stock of what had been implemented since the country’s second review in 2015. The participants used a data collection tool to assess the level of implementation of UPR recommendations. The collective evaluation was approached on a thematic basis, with organisations working together across three thematic groups: CPRs; ESCRs; and group rights.

Achievements:
- CSOs commenced the process of drafting the Kenyan CSO Mid Term Report;
- The process reaffirmed the partnership between a broad and diverse array of national CSOs; and
- Kenyan CSOs developed an innovative data collection tool that seeks to assess whether a recommendation has been fully or partially implemented.
Feedback from ICP participants:

The UPR workshop has been very central to our aspirations as a forum. Unlike before, it has brought us together as a group to collectively come up with the best strategy to monitor the Government’s implementation programme. We are also being tasked with value-addition: what can we – civil society – bring to the table.

Mr. James Nkuubi, Human Rights Network Uganda (HURINET)  
Step 3: CSO UPR strategy workshop, Uganda.

We proudly say that this is an interesting and valuable workshop. We thank UPR Info for giving us the opportunity to represent the disabled community of Sri Lanka. This workshop has addressed the rights of persons with disabilities which are marginalised. More workshops and sessions are needed to address the issues faced by the disabled community to give them a platform from which to change the current situation.

Nisha Sharif, V for Rights and Kasun Satanarachi, The Disability Organisations Joint Front  
Step 3: CSO UPR strategy workshop, Sri Lanka.
We organised **14** in-country workshops covering all steps of ICP. These events brought together more than **500** participants in **10** countries.

**Step 1**
- In-country Pre-sessions in Botswana, Ghana, India, and Sri Lanka

**Step 2**
- CSO submission workshops in Ghana and Sri Lanka

**Step 3**
- CSO UPR strategy workshops in India, Morocco, and Sri Lanka

**Step 4**
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues on UPR implementation in Somalia, Togo, and Uganda

**Step 5**
- National CSO mid-term workshops in Armenia and Kenya
2. Organisation

Executive Board
The Executive Board oversees the realisation of the organisation’s goals. It is composed as follows:

- Miloon Kothari (India) – President
- Kamelia Kemileva (Switzerland) – Secretary
- Saida Manieva (Kyrgyzstan) – Treasurer
- Professor Edward R. McMahon (United States) – Board Member
- Julien Bonnet (France) – Board Member

Secretariat

Mona M’Bikay
Executive Director

Hans Fridlund
Programme Manager

Aoife Hegarty
Programme Manager

Nargiz Arupova
Programme Manager

Anna-Thérèse McGivern
Programme Officer

Gilbert Onyango
Africa Regional Director

Fredrick Kinama
Finance and Administrative Officer

Koffi Leon Kouame
Programme Officer

Roland Chauville
Former Executive Director

Jean-Claude Vignoli
Former Director of Programmes

Tenar Lorente
Junior Programme Officer
Changes in 2017

Departures:
- Jean-Claude VIGNOLI: Director of Programmes – 31 July 2017
- Roland CHAUVILLE: Executive Director – 31 October 2017
- Tenar Lorente: Junior Programme Officer – 31 December 2017

Arrivals:
- Nargiz ARUPOVA: Pre-sessions Programme Manager – 1 July 2017
- Maria VALENTA: Finance and Administrative Officer – 15 August 2017 (temporary appointment)
- Mona M’BIKAY: Executive Director – 1 September 2017
- Koffi KOUAME: ICP Programme Officer (UPR Info Africa) – 11 September 2017

Changes:
- Aoife HEGARTY: 1 July 2017
  Pre-sessions Programme Manager → ICP Programme Manager
- Anna-Thérèse MCGIVERN: 1 August 2017
  Junior Programme Officer → Programme Officer
- Tenar GOMEZ: 15 August 2017
  Intern → Junior Programme Officer (temporary appointment)

The work of UPR Info would also not have been possible without our internship programme. 2017 saw 2 graduates join the UPR Info team in Geneva:
- Sarah Lucek (Switzerland-Madagascar)
- Anna Delaney (Ireland)

The We Pay Our Interns initiative, founded by staff at UPR Info, reached 47 organisations. In 2017, the following organisations joined the Charter of We pay our interns:
- European Institute of Peace (EIP)
- Internet Society (ISOC)
- World Vision International (WVI)
- Fondation Eduki
- European Center for Electoral Support (ECES)
The total budget for all our projects in 2017 was 1'074'975,04 CHF.
We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to each of our donors for making our work possible and thereby ensuring that the UPR is an effective tool to advance human rights.
**UPR Info donors in 2017**

- Canton of Geneva, Service de la solidarité internationale
- City of Geneva
- Irish Aid
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom
- Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden
- Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
4. Way Forward

In 2018, UPR Info intends to strengthen its UPR Stakeholders Programme by further engaging with civil society organisations, States, National Human Rights Institutions and parliamentarians, who play a key role in the UPR process. States under Review have the primary responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. National Human Rights Institutions by their very mandate play a catalyst role in bringing together the Government and the civil society to monitor and promote human rights. Meanwhile, parliamentarians ensure an oversight of public policies by verifying that national legislation complies with the State’s human rights obligations.

UPR Info will continue to share knowledge materials on its website to inform about the UPR and the human rights situation in countries reviewed. It will also continue to strengthen its database to allow all UPR stakeholders to use this tool to monitor UPR recommendations.

The Pre-sessions Programme will further encourage the participation of national civil society organisations representing all segments of society and covering diverse human rights issues affecting the country. It will continue to encourage the participation of National Human Rights Institutions to support their engagement in the UPR process. The Pre-sessions will also promote the participation of children and youth to ensure that their voice is heard and reflected in the UPR recommendations.

The ICP Programme will continue to support national stakeholders in the different stages of the UPR process throughout 2018. Activities will be implemented in 13 countries: Armenia; Cambodia; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ghana; India; Ivory Coast; Jordan; Kenya; Mongolia; Morocco; Nepal; Somalia; and Sri Lanka. UPR Info will also consider how to draw even more effectively on the expertise of NFPs.

At the Policy level, UPR Info will continue to advocate to strengthen the UPR mechanism, with a focus on: ensuring meaningful participation of all actors in the UPR process; establishing follow-up and monitoring mechanisms; and the development of basket funds to support the engagement of civil society in the UPR process. UPR Info will raise awareness about the participation of human rights defenders in the UPR process and condemn acts of reprisal and intimidation.

On the Strategic level, UPR Info will be developing a gender equality strategy to ensure that a gender-based approach is mainstreamed across all its programmes. The organisation will also strengthen its monitoring, evaluation and learning system to improve the delivery of its work. Finally, UPR Info will further fine-tune its approach to operationalise the Sustainable Development Goals.