

4th CYCLE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW NATIONAL REPORT – GUIDANCE NOTE

Focus and documentation of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

1. The basis, principles and objectives of the universal periodic review as originally set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 were reaffirmed in resolution 16/21.
2. The review will continue to be based on the three documents identified in paragraph 15 of the annex to Council resolution 5/1, namely: the national report, the compilation of UN information and the summary of stakeholders' submissions.
3. Resolution 16/21 further provides clarification on the **focus and documentation** to be used during the review:
 - The review should focus on, inter alia, the implementation of the accepted recommendations and the development of the human rights situation in the State under review. As such, States are encouraged to focus their contribution on assessments of implementation of past recommendations from previous cycles and impact thereon.
4. Decision 17/119 provides general guidelines for the preparation of information under the UPR.¹

National reports – moving towards the fourth cycle

In addition to the above resolutions, decisions, and the general guidelines, States are strongly encouraged to refer to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while reporting on the progress made in the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations, as interlinkages between human rights and the SDGs have increasingly been recognized.

This is in line with the Secretary-General's "The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights", whereby he stated that human rights permeate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that SDGs are underpinned by economic, civil, cultural, political and social rights, as well as the right to development.

States are invited to make full use of human rights mechanisms, including UPR, and their outcomes, to contribute to SDG implementation, particularly at the national and local levels.

Below is a suggested format of the national report that could be used by States in preparing their submission:

Suggested format of the national report

A/ Process for the preparation of the report: *[Corresponds to para. A of the guidelines as included in Chapter II, 2 of HRC decision 17/119]*

¹ See Annex 1.

- methodology used,
- description of the national follow-up process including whether a standing coordinating body for implementation and reporting, i.e. national mechanism for implementation, reporting, and follow-up (NMIRF)², has been set up,
- information on the inter-institutional consultations held in preparation of the report and review, including with the following institutions/entities and their contribution :
local and regional governments and judiciary,
- information on the contribution made by parliament, including the parliamentary human rights body, to the drafting of the national report as well as consultations held with it during the drafting process,
- Information on any broader consultations held, including with NHRIs and civil society.

B/ Implementation of recommendations from the previous cycles³: *[Corresponds to paras B, C, D and E of the guidelines]*

[Under each section, insert sub-headings by theme on the basis of thematically clustered recommendations, for example, on the basis of clusters used by national human rights action plans, on the basis of clusters used by OHCHR for its UPR documents as reflected in Annex 2]

1/ Full implementation of recommendations:

- reporting on any full implementation of recommendations and impact

2/ Partial implementation of recommendations:

- reporting on steps taken to implement supported recommendations – identify remaining actions, time-frame, resources, actors, remaining challenges and measures to overcome them, including on specific technical cooperation needs

3/ Pending recommendations

- reporting on recommendations for which implementation is still pending – identify reasons for the delay in implementation, challenges, steps considered/taken to overcome them

4/ Noted recommendations

- reporting on consideration/steps towards the implementation of noted recommendations, if any – States might wish to report on any steps which might have been taken to address noted recommendations

C/ Status of implementation of voluntary pledges, including those made in the context of the HRC membership *[Corresponds to para. D of the guidelines]*

² NMIRF should be composed of concerned Ministries, State entities and open to the NHRIs and NGOs and involve the three branches of the Government – not only the executive, in the finalization of the report.

³ For guidance on how to thematically cluster the recommendations, see Annex 2.

D/ New and emerging issues, including advances and challenges in that regard [*Corresponds to paras. B and F of the guidelines*]

E/Challenges which would require the support of the international community [*Corresponds to para G of the guidelines*]

Annex - States are strongly encouraged to annex to their national report a table of recommendations, ideally thematically clustered, including a column providing a self-assessment of the status of implementation of each recommendation. States may also wish to note that to assist in this task, the OHCHR will make such tables available on the individual country pages of the UPR website, in advance of the relevant 4th cycle sessions: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>

Practical suggestions

- States are encouraged to refer to the tentative deadline and set an internal reverse timeline identifying the various steps for the compilation of information, identification of the format of the report, drafting of the sections of the report, consultation process, finalization and clearance process before final submission to the Secretariat.
- References to the mid-term report – if submitted- should be made. States are encouraged to use information compiled in the midterm report in order to facilitate the preparation of the national report.
- States are encouraged to share details on the national processes and systems for follow-up and reporting on human rights recommendations, i.e. NMIRF and on systems for SDG implementation and reporting.
- States are encouraged to include a separate section detailing the contribution of parliament, including and especially the parliamentary human rights body, to the implementation of UPR recommendations received during the previous cycles.
- States are encouraged to include a separate section on the contribution also from the judiciary as well as local and regional governments.
- The report should focus on measures and steps taken to implement previous recommendations. It should thus focus on the period elapsed since the previous review.
- When referring to the recommendations, their clear identification is encouraged – recommendations number, document number, relevant cycle.
- Voluntary pledges and commitments could be clearly identified.
- The use of human rights indicators that may have been defined by the State – preferably as part of its follow-up action plan – is encouraged to assess the impact of implementation of the recommendations, and to use in the reporting.

- States could use categories such as “fully implemented”, “partially implemented”, “in the process of implementation”, “not implemented yet”.
- When a recommendation has been fully implemented, details on how the action has been completed and assessment on impact on the ground should be provided.
- When a recommendation is in the process of implementation, details on the level of implementation - steps and measures already taken together with steps and measures to be taken in the future- should be provided. Time-frame, actors, resources, indicators could be identified.
- When a recommendation is partially implemented or not implemented yet, explanation could be provided, indicating any challenges, difficulties faced and/or needs for technical assistance.
- Information and assessment could be substantiated by data. Information submitted to other UN human rights mechanisms could also be used to categorize the reporting by States.
- Developments, changes, new and emerging issues should be included in separate section unless they form part of the explanation of the delay/challenges/difficulties faced to implement recommendations.
- States are respectfully encouraged to refrain from including bilateral and/or political matters and disputes in the report.

Technical guidelines

- Length: the report should not exceed 10,700 words. This word limit includes paragraph numbering and the standard UN report cover page. In order to meet the word limit, States are kindly requested to ensure that the body of the report is within approximately 10,630 words.
- Format: the document should be submitted in Word Format.
- Table of contents: It is not obligatory to include the table of contents. If included, it will form part of the word count.
- Tables and charts: They should have a heading and be numbered. They should also be submitted in a format that can be imported by Word.
- Use of endnotes: Endnotes/footnotes could be used to provide references and relevant links to the information included in the report. They are not for the substantive text. They are not part of the 10,700 words word-count and would not be translated.
- Annex: Annexes could be used to provide additional information. The thematically clustered recommendations or list of abbreviations/acronyms could be submitted as annex. Annexes do not form part of the word count and would not be translated.
- Numbering of paragraphs and pages: For ease of reference, paragraphs and pages should be numbered.

- Language: the report should be submitted in one of the six official languages of the United Nations.
- Editing: reports are not edited.

When to submit the national report

Tentative deadlines are included in the calendar of the cycle as posted on the OHCHR website – <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx> For States considered at the early session of the year, the deadline is usually set for October of the previous year. For States considered at the April-May session, the deadline is usually set for January-February of the same year. For States considered at the October-November session, deadline is usually set for July-August of the same year.

Final deadlines –corresponding to approximately 13 to 12 weeks prior to the session- are communicated by formal correspondence once the dates of the sessions are confirmed.

Where and how to submit the national report

The report should be submitted in Word format and sent by email to ohchr-uprstates@un.org. The Secretariat can guarantee the processing of a report only if submitted in Word and to the correct email address. A document submitted in hard copy or PDF format cannot be processed. A submission to a different recipient would unnecessarily delay the submission of the report.

Distribution of the national report

The national report is posted on the official OHCHR website, UPR page corresponding to each country under consideration. The report is published along the other two background documents prepared by the OHCHR. The reports can only be accessible and downloaded once they are available in the six official UN languages. This usually takes place four weeks prior to the beginning of the session.

Decision 17/119 – Guidelines of the national report

- A. Description of the methodology and the broad consultation process followed for the preparation of information provided under the universal periodic review;
- B. Developments since the previous review in background of the State under review and framework, particularly normative and institutional framework, for the promotion and protection of human rights: Constitution, legislation, policy measures, national jurisprudence, human rights infrastructure including national human rights institutions and scope of international obligations identified in the “basis of review” in resolution 5/1, annex, section IA;
- C. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground: implementation of international human rights obligations identified in the “basis of review” in resolution 5/1, annex, section IA, national legislation and voluntary commitments, national human rights institutions activities, public awareness of human rights, cooperation with human rights mechanisms ...;
- D. Presentation by the State concerned of the follow-up to the previous review;
- E. Identification of achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints in relation to the implementation of accepted recommendations and the development of human rights situations in the State;
- F. Key national priorities, initiatives and commitments that the State concerned has undertaken and intends to undertake to overcome those challenges and constraints and improve human rights situations on the ground;
- G. Expectations of the State concerned in terms of capacity-building and requests, if any, for technical assistance and support received.

Guidance on thematic clustering

The below sections aim at providing examples to States in the way in which the information provided in the national report may be thematically organized. The below listing could be amended as appropriate. States are invited to provide the official paragraph number of the recommendations on which they are providing information on the state of implementation.

A. Cross cutting issues

1. Equality and non-discrimination
2. Right to development
3. Environmental issues
4. Human rights and counter-terrorism

B. Civil and political rights

1. Right to life, liberty and security of the person
2. Administration of justice, including impunity and the rule of law
3. Fundamental freedoms and participation in public and political life
4. Prohibition of all forms of slavery
5. Right to privacy and family life

C. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

1. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work
2. Right to social security
3. Right to an adequate standard of living (*text could include information on poverty, food, housing, water and sanitation and land*)
4. Right to health
5. Right to education

D. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women
2. Children
3. Persons with disabilities
4. Minorities and indigenous peoples
5. Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons
6. Stateless

E. Specific regions or territories