



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

26 June 2024

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Bangladesh by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 44th session in November 2023. As the final outcome report on the review of Bangladesh was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 55th session, I have taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/bd-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

His Excellency
Mr. Mohammad Hasan Mahmud
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Bangladesh



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The adoption of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children 2018-2030 and the pledge to eliminate child marriage by 2041 are welcomed. It is crucial to ensure implementation, including through the amendment of relevant laws.

Bangladesh's hosting of Rohingya people and the reiteration of its commitment to respect the principle of non-refoulement are commended, particularly given the current challenging context in their country of origin. It is important to improve the conditions of refugees in the camps, including enhanced access to livelihoods and education, and to allow their freedom of movement.

The steps taken to reform the labour sector are welcomed. The Government is encouraged to take further measures, including through amendments to the Labour Act, to protect workers' freedom of association, intensify labour inspection, improve work conditions particularly for women, establish a minimum wage, and address acts of anti-union discrimination, unfair labor practices and violence against workers, particularly women and children.

Bangladesh is strongly encouraged to expand democratic space so that human rights defenders, journalists, political parties, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTIQ+ communities and the population at large can participate in public life freely. This would include taking measures to guarantee the independence of the National Human Rights Commission and of the judiciary to ensure accountability for human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Furthermore, laws that regulate online and offline space, including the Cyber Security Act, should be in full compliance with international human rights law and should not result in criminalization of freedom of expression and judicial harassment of dissenting voices.

Bangladesh is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the parliament, the judiciary, the National Human Rights Commission, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is further encouraged to establish a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report in about two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Bangladesh may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2026, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
26 June 2024