



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

COURTESY TRANSLATION

9 October 2024

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of the Congo by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 45th session in January-February 2024. As the final outcome report on the review of Congo was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 56th 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/cg-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. Jean-Claude Gakosso
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie, and Congolese Abroad of the Congo



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

The ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and various ILO Conventions is a welcomed development.

The efforts of the Congo to promote sustainable socio-economic development, including through the adoption of the National Development Plan 2022–2026, and national legislation to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including women - such as the Mouebara Act No. 19-2022 on combating violence against women -, children, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities are also noteworthy.

As raised during the review, Congo is urged to guarantee the enjoyment of the rights of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in line with international standards. Congo is also encouraged to take necessary measures to ensure that members of the security forces or law enforcement, who have allegedly committed human rights violations, are brought to justice in full transparency. Efforts also need to be undertaken to revise the penal code in accordance with the provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and ensure the impartial investigation and prosecution of all cases of allegations of torture.

Congo is encouraged to further efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women, including patriarchal gender stereotypes and intersectional forms of discrimination against women, as well as to curb trafficking in persons. Access to health and education services should be guaranteed to all. Furthermore, priority should be given to the fight against corruption, as well as to enhancing environmental conservation efforts, particularly in addressing climate change impacts. Congo is also encouraged to take action to combat discrimination, hate speech, social stigmatization and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Congo 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 implementation, 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](#)), as well as in line with the government's pledges under Human Rights 75 initiative.

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 Congo 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
9 October 2024