

Pre-UPR consultation toolkit: strategies for civil society advocacy, research & coordination



Pre-UPR* consultations provide a valuable opportunity for civil society to come together to discuss effective strategies to engage in the UPR process. The following represents a non-exhaustive list of activities to be considered during pre-UPR consultations supported by CIVICUS.

Create a civil society UPR coalition

Where appropriate, establishing a dedicated civil society UPR coalition can help to avoid duplication of efforts, facilitate information sharing and ensure coordinated and targeted advocacy and research throughout each stage of the UPR process. The creation of a UPR specific CSO coalition can be crucial to ensuring civil society can leverage all available resources and expertise of civil society at the national and international levels.

Outreach to the international community

The consultation can be used as a space to create an outreach strategy with the international community, including in-country embassies, donor agencies, MFAs, and UN bodies. Doing a mapping of diplomatic contacts, including issues they raised during the previous UPR cycles, will help to focus civil society engagement with these institutions to ensure they will raise targeted and relevant recommendations during the UPR examination at the UN Human Rights Council.

Develop civil society UPR submissions

Since its inception, over 50 separate human rights issues have been raised during the UPR. The consultation provides an opportunity to discuss how civil society groups will jointly or unilaterally make UPR submissions (2815 words for individual, 5,630 for joint). The consultation can be used to assess the State's level of implementation of recommendations received during the 2nd UPR cycle, and coordinate who and how human rights issues and recommendations will be raised.

Raise awareness about the UPR

A common concern about the UPR is that it is a process that "stays in Geneva." The consultation provides a forum to discuss tactics to engage the general public and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the upcoming UPR examination. Using a wide range of media outlets, including TV, print media, radio, civil society can conduct outreach to the general population. Civil society can also organise public viewing sessions of the UPR webcast and other public campaign events with a range of constituents.

Engage with the government

UN HRC resolution 5/1 encourages states to conduct a national consultation including with civil society, to prepare their own national UPR report. The CSO consultation provides an opportunity to develop a campaign to ensure that the State holds a timely and inclusive consultation with CSOs. In addition, CSOs can develop written information to the State to ensure that a range of human rights issues are included in the State report and request the State to make the report available for comment.

Follow-up at the UN Human Rights Council

During the consultation, civil society can also develop a strategy to directly engage with the UPR process at the UN Human Rights Council. Civil society can consider organising an advocacy mission to the UN HRC, attend the UPR examination, delivering a statement during the UPR adoption and or organising a UN HRC side event. Civil society can also consider an outreach strategy to engage with diplomatic missions at the UN Human Rights Council to advocate for inclusion of specific recommendations.

^{*}The UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is the principal international mechanism to facilitate the examination of a country's human rights record every 5 years.