



## NGO and NHRI Guide to Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a new mechanism under which the Human Rights Council will examine the human rights situation in every State. Each State will be examined once every four years.

### Basis of the review

The review will be based on:

1. Information provided by the State under review.
2. A compilation of relevant information from the UN human rights system, including reports of treaty bodies and special rapporteurs.
3. A summary of information provided by other relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and NHRIs.

The compilation and summary of other information will be prepared by the OHCHR.

### Review Process

The UPR will be conducted in one working group composed of all 47 member States of the Human Rights Council. The working group will allocate three hours to the consideration of each State, and half an hour to the adoption of a report on that State. The report may include conclusions, recommendations, and voluntary commitments made by the State. The reports will then be adopted by the plenary of the Human Rights Council. NGOs and NHRIs may attend the review by the working group, but it is unlikely that they will be allowed to participate in the dialogue. However, NGOs and NHRIs will be able to make general comments before the adoption of reports by the plenary of the Human Rights Council.

### Information provided by the State

Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1 encourages States to prepare the information they will provide under the UPR through a broad consultation process at the national level with all relevant stakeholders. National NGOs and NHRIs should therefore lobby for full involvement in the preparation of this information.

The State may choose to deliver its information orally or in writing. Both State reports (where they exist) and the OHCHR summaries of other information must be received by the secretariat six weeks before the UPR. NGOs and NHRIs will not therefore be

able directly to address issues raised in State reports unless they are submitted early or made public at the national level prior to submission.

## **Preparation and Submission of Information by NGOs and NHRIs**

In addition to contributing to the preparation of State information, NGOs, NHRIs and other relevant stakeholders can submit their own information and reports to the OHCHR. Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1 does not impose any limitations on the types of NGOs that may make submissions. However, while the text was being debated, a number of States expressed the view that only submissions from NGOs with ECOSOC status should be included. It is vital to ensure that the first UPR focuses on human rights rather than procedural issues. NGOs without ECOSOC status should therefore consider making a joint submission with another NGO which does have this status. This would leave the door open for the widest possible participation in the future. Anonymous submissions will not be considered.

The OHCHR will compile information received from NGOs, NHRIs and other stakeholders into a 10-page summary. It is therefore important that NGOs and NHRIs clearly identify the principal issues they want the Human Rights Council to raise with States. This can be done either by preparing short submissions specifically for the UPR, or by providing short summaries with the original reports included in an annex. As each State will be examined under the UPR every four years, the information submitted should cover only the last four years.

The OHCHR has published detailed guidelines for NGO submissions on the Human Rights Council Extranet page, which can be accessed at [http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/upr/noteNGO\\_041007.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/upr/noteNGO_041007.htm). These guidelines encourage NGOs to limit their submissions to 5 pages.

The first UPR is scheduled to take place from 7 to 18 April 2008. The following sixteen States will be considered at the first UPR:

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Algeria        | Indonesia      |
| Argentina      | Morocco        |
| Bahrain        | Netherlands    |
| Brazil         | Philippines    |
| Czech Republic | Poland         |
| Ecuador        | South Africa   |
| Finland        | Tunisia        |
| India          | United Kingdom |

The deadline for receipt of NGO and NHRI submissions for this first group of countries is 20 November 2007. It is vital that NGOs and NHRIs wishing to use this new mechanism submit information before the deadline, both to ensure a comprehensive and substantive discussion, and to tap the full potential of the UPR.