

Universal Periodic Review: information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders' written submissions

*The information contained in this document is intended for the use of all relevant stakeholders, as referred to in section II below. Insofar as the guidelines concern the substance of submissions, the document is of **advisory nature**, and should not be interpreted as restricting the stakeholders' own assessment as to what should be included in it.*

*However, please note that some guidelines concerning the form of the submissions as well as deadlines (sections IV and VII) are **binding**, i.e. submissions which do not respect the guidelines provided for in these sections, will a priori not be considered.*

For general information on the Universal Periodic Review, please refer to the [Handbook for Civil Society](#).

I- Background on Universal Periodic Review

a. Basic documentation

1. In its resolution [16/21](#), the Human Rights Council reaffirms 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](#), and further provides clarification on the focus and documentation to be used during the review.
2. One of the principles mentioned in this resolution provides that the “UPR should ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#) of 15 March 2006 and Economic and Social Council resolution [1996/31](#) of 25 July 1996, as well as any decisions that the Council may take in this regard”.

b. Structure of the review

3. The universal periodic review is based on three documents¹:
 - Information prepared by the State concerned, which can take the form of a national report;
 - A compilation prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the information contained in the reports of treaty bodies, special procedures, including observations and comments by the State concerned, and other relevant official United Nations documents, which shall not exceed 10 pages;
 - **Additional, credible and reliable information provided by other relevant stakeholders** which should also be taken into consideration by the Council in the review. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will prepare a **summary** (which shall not exceed 10 pages) of such information based on the written submissions. This summary should contain, where appropriate, a separate section (included in the maximum 10 pages) for contributions by the national human rights institution of the State under review that is accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles. Information provided by other

¹ Identified in paragraph 15 of the annex to Council resolution 5/1

accredited national human rights institutions will be reflected accordingly, as well as information provided by other stakeholders.

II- Who is a stakeholder?

4. Stakeholders, which are referred to in Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, include, *inter alia*, NGOs, national human rights institutions, human rights defenders, academic institutions and research institutes, regional organizations, as well as civil society representatives.
5. Different stakeholders may also provide joint submissions.

III- Content of the written submissions

a. Scope

6. In its decision 17/119, the Human Rights Council adopted the following General Guidelines for the preparation of information under the Universal Periodic Review, from which the stakeholders may wish to draw from for the preparation of their submission (guidelines especially relevant for stakeholders are **highlighted**):
 - (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 para. 8 below);
 - (c) **Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground: implementation of international human rights** (identified in para. 8 below), 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.

b. Practical guidelines

7. While there are no strict requirements on the style of the written submissions, the below instructions should be observed when preparing a submission;

8. Relevant stakeholders should keep in mind that the review is based on:
 - (a) The Charter of the United Nations;
 - (b) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
 - (c) Human rights instruments to which a State is party;
 - (d) Voluntary pledges and commitments made by States, including those undertaken when presenting their candidatures for election to the Human Rights Council; and
 - (e) Applicable international humanitarian law.
9. The second and subsequent cycles of the review (2012 and onwards) should focus on, inter alia, the implementation of the accepted recommendations and the developments of the human rights situation in the State under review. Consequently, relevant stakeholders are encouraged to include in their contributions information on the follow-up to the preceding review.²
10. Furthermore, stakeholders are strongly encouraged to provide written submissions that:
 - (a) Are specifically tailored for the UPR;
 - (b) Contain credible and reliable information on the human rights situation in the State under review, including information on the follow-up to the preceding review and on developments since the last review;
 - (c) Highlight main issues of concern and identify possible recommendations and best practises
 - (d) Cover the period elapsed since the last review;
 - (e) Do not contain manifestly abusive language.
11. While referring to information attributed to United Nations bodies/agencies and/or mechanisms in their submission, stakeholders should refrain, to the extent possible, from listing all treaties ratification, concluding observations and recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies and/or the special procedures of the HRC or reports by UN bodies/agencies, as the latter are reflected in the UN compilation prepared by OHCHR.
12. First-hand information should be given priority. Second-hand information should be referred to in footnotes/endnotes, and only if necessary.
13. To the extent possible, recommendations made by stakeholders to the State should be linked to the themes addressed in the subparagraphs of the submission.
14. Annexes to the submissions should not include pictures, maps, organizations' annual reports, States' reports or reports from other organizations.

IV- Form

Submissions, which do not respect the below guidelines (paragraphs 15-22), will not be considered

a. Length and format

15. Written submissions should not exceed 2815 words in the case of individual submissions, to which additional documentation can be annexed for reference. Submissions by coalitions of stakeholders should not exceed 5630 words.

² For reference see annex for Resolution 16/1

16. Information included in footnotes/endnotes will not be taken into consideration in the word/page limits but will not be taken into consideration for the summary either.
17. For ease of reference, paragraphs and pages should be numbered.
18. Written submissions should be saved as a Word document only.

b. Identification of the stakeholder

19. Written submissions should be clearly identified. Consequently, the cover page of the submission should clearly identify the submitting stakeholder(s) (letterhead, name and acronym, logo, webpage, etc.).
20. It is important that stakeholders include in the body of the email used to send their submissions the relevant contact details (name of the contact person; postal and email addresses; telephone number, etc.) A paragraph describing the main activities of the submitting organization/coalition, as well as date of establishment, especially for those organizations which interrelate for the first time with the UN, would be also welcomed.
21. The cover page will not be counted within the word/page limits.

c. Language

22. Written contributions should be submitted in UN official languages only, preferably in English, French or Spanish.

V- Methodology

23. Stakeholders are encouraged to consult with one another at the national level for the preparation of the UPR submissions. Joint submissions by a large number of stakeholders are encouraged, when the stakeholders focus on issues of similar nature.

VI- Confidentiality

24. The UPR mechanism does not provide for confidentiality and is conducted on the basis of public documents. Submissions which respect the abovementioned guidelines, as originally received, will be made available on-line on OHCHR's website, including the name of the submitting stakeholder.
25. Consequently, reference to individual cases should be made only if the safety and well-being of all relevant individuals concerned will not be jeopardised by such a reference.

VII- When to submit written contributions

26. Deadlines for stakeholders' submissions will be posted on the OHCHR UPR [webpage](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx) (at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>), indicatively ten to eight months before the review.

27. Stakeholders should note that written submissions to OHCHR should be sent indicatively at least five months before the relevant session of the Working Group on UPR.
28. **Please note that submissions received after specified deadlines will not be considered.**
29. Written submissions should be final; in principle, it will not be possible to accommodate revisions.

VIII- Where and how to submit written contributions

30. Stakeholders' submissions should be sent to uprsubmissions@ohchr.org only.
31. While stakeholders are discouraged from faxing or mailing a hardcopy of their submission to the OHCHR secretariat, they may do so in the case of repeated technical difficulties with electronic mail to: +41 22 917 90 11.
32. OHCHR secretariat will confirm electronically receipt of your message and submission.
33. Each electronic submission and relevant e-mail message should refer to **one country only**. In the **e-mail message** accompanying the submitted documents kindly include: In the title of the e-mail message: the name of the (main) stakeholder submitting the contribution, the kind of contribution (individual and/or joint), the name of the reviewed country and indicate the month and year of relevant UPR session, e.g., "*Women's coalition – joint UPR submission – Ecuador – June 2012*" or "*National Human Rights Institution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (EHRC) – UPR Submission - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – June 2012* ;

IX- Further information

- OHCHR UPR [webpage](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx) (at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>)
- Chapter VII of *Working with the United Nations Human Rights Programme: A Handbook for Civil Society*. (available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Pages/Handbook.aspx>)
- Or at:

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