



# Child Rights Governance

## **Universal Periodic Toolkit**

A guide for country programs



**Save the Children**

## What is the Universal Periodic Review?

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a new inter-governmental human rights review within the Human Rights Council in Geneva. It offers real opportunities to child rights organizations seeking to raise the political profile of children and non-implementation of child rights obligations by governments in a global setting.

The Human Rights Council is a body within the UN system made up of 47 States responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. The Council was created by the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 to strengthen government accountability for human rights. In order to do this it created the Universal Periodic Review to examine the human rights records of all states and was given the power, through a two-thirds majority vote, to suspend the membership of a Council member that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights.

The Universal Periodic Review assesses the extent to which governments are meeting their obligations to protect, respect and fulfill human rights, including child rights, in their countries.

- It is **universal**. All governments of the world will be reviewed by the UPR process. This is important because it prevents accusations of political bias in focusing on certain 'problem states'. It also encourages the view of human rights as commitments that are realized progressively over time and that all governments can and should do more no matter who they are.
- It is **intergovernmental**. The defining feature and perhaps its greatest strength is the fact that governments review other governments. Unlike the other treaty body reports, such as the UNCRC which involve panels of experts, UPR reports are reviewed and debated by other states. This makes it potentially very influential as most governments do care how others governments perceive them.
- It is **periodic**. Countries will be reviewed every four years. This creates momentum and allows states to be reviewed on the basis of their progress since the last UPR.
- It is **action-oriented**. The focus of the UPR is on achieving improvements in human rights situations on the ground. The review is focused on recommendations to states on what needs to change as well as best practice that can be shared by others.

The Human Rights Council will review the human rights obligations based on the following three reports:

1. Information **provided by the State** under review. This can be presented written or orally, provided that in written form it does not exceed **20 pages**.

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2. A compilation by OHCHR of relevant information from the UN human rights system, including reports of treaty bodies (including CRC concluding observations) and special rapporteurs. This document is limited to **10 pages**.

3. A summary of information compiled by OHCHR from submissions **by other relevant stakeholders, including NGOs** and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). This summary must not exceed **10 pages**. One of our objectives is that our submissions which must not exceed 5 pages if a Save the Children only submission or 10 pages if in coalition will hopefully form part of this NGO summary.

A group of **three state representatives** (called a Troika) will be selected by drawing lots from the members of the Council. They will **facilitate each review**, including the **preparation of the report of the working group**. The Troika's will be made up of member State representatives from different regional groups. There will be 48 different troikas each year – one for every State under review.

The UPR is **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 an hour to the adoption of a report** on that State in the following UPR session in the Human Rights Council a few months later.

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.** The outcome report will include **two sets of recommendations**: the ones that enjoy the support of the State reviewed, and those which do not (accompanied by comments from the State concerned)

## Why is it so important for Save the Children to get involved?

All States so far have submitted their State reports on time and have actively engaged in the examination of other states. The UPR has turned out to be highly political and a very efficient advocacy and programming tool.

For relatively little work we can get a huge impact at the national level. For only 10 pages (if in coalition) we have an opportunity to influence government policy and practice and move children further up the political agenda. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

### **It is our responsibility**

The UPR is a state led Human Rights review and without the involvement of civil society the only information on the reality of human rights on the ground will come from the state or OHCHR's compilation of treaty body and special rapporteur reports. We as civil society have a vital role as a watch dog to hold governments accountable for their legal obligations to children. We understand the realities on the ground and are more likely to have up to date information that can help to produce a more comprehensive picture of the situation for children in the countries within which we work. From a child rights perspective we also have a responsibility to make sure that children's rights are presented as part of human rights and are not forgotten. If we as Save the Children don't engage it is possible that governments won't be held accountable through the UPR for their responsibilities to children.

### **It enables us to push children up the political agenda**

We know that the major problem for the realization of children's rights is not a lack of resources but a lack of political will. The Universal Periodic Review is a very public and politically oriented review. It is conducted by states in front of states in an interactive dialogue. The process has proven to be very lively and state participation is high. Issues such as birth registration, quality education, child labor, trafficking, child mortality and malnutrition are human rights issues and governments can be made to answer to them as well as pressured to accept recommendations to tackle them.

### **It gives us an opportunity for constructive dialogue with the state on its child rights obligations**

In preparation for submission of its report the state has an obligation to involve civil society in its consultations. Civil society can highlight gaps in implementation and propose solutions. Often governments lack good quality disaggregated data and civil society can help them to identify hidden problems such as inequity, discrimination and abuse of disabled children, child marriage rates etc. Experience has shown us so far that governments are taking this seriously and once recommendations have been accepted states are asking donors and civil society for capacity building in order to implement these new obligations to the Human Rights Council.

### It gives us a framework for national and international advocacy

Whether governments accept or reject recommendations a framework of advocacy for the next four years has been established. If they accept we must hold them to their promises and if they reject specific recommendations we can continue to lobby them to reconsider. The UPR is a publicly documented review. The sessions in Geneva are recorded and all documentation including the state report, civil society reports and concluding recommendations are online. All questions and issues raised by other governments are captured and are public records. Once reports have been submitted civil society can organize press releases, events and awareness raising campaigns to bring the UPR process and government responses to the attention of citizens in the country.

### It builds the capacity of child rights coalitions

Often child rights coalitions are created for alternative reporting to the UNCRC but between reports either become dormant or disband altogether. This review process can maintain momentum for the coalition as a whole. It provides for increased opportunities for networking across civil society. This can be particularly crucial for small national NGOs who can feel unable to engage on their own. The chance to join coalitions within the human rights community can be crucial for them particularly in countries with very few child rights advocates.

### Because it works

Recently the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) carried out an interesting study. They found that in the last session of the UPR 82% of child rights recommendations were accepted by governments that is up from 65% when the review started two years ago. Out of the 18% that were not accepted only 10% were rejected and the others are pending. The impact of accepted recommendations on the ground have yet to be documented fully but what is clear is that removal of UNCRC reservations have been positively impacted by the UPR particularly in UK and Mauritius.

How can child rights

## NGOS and Advocates get involved

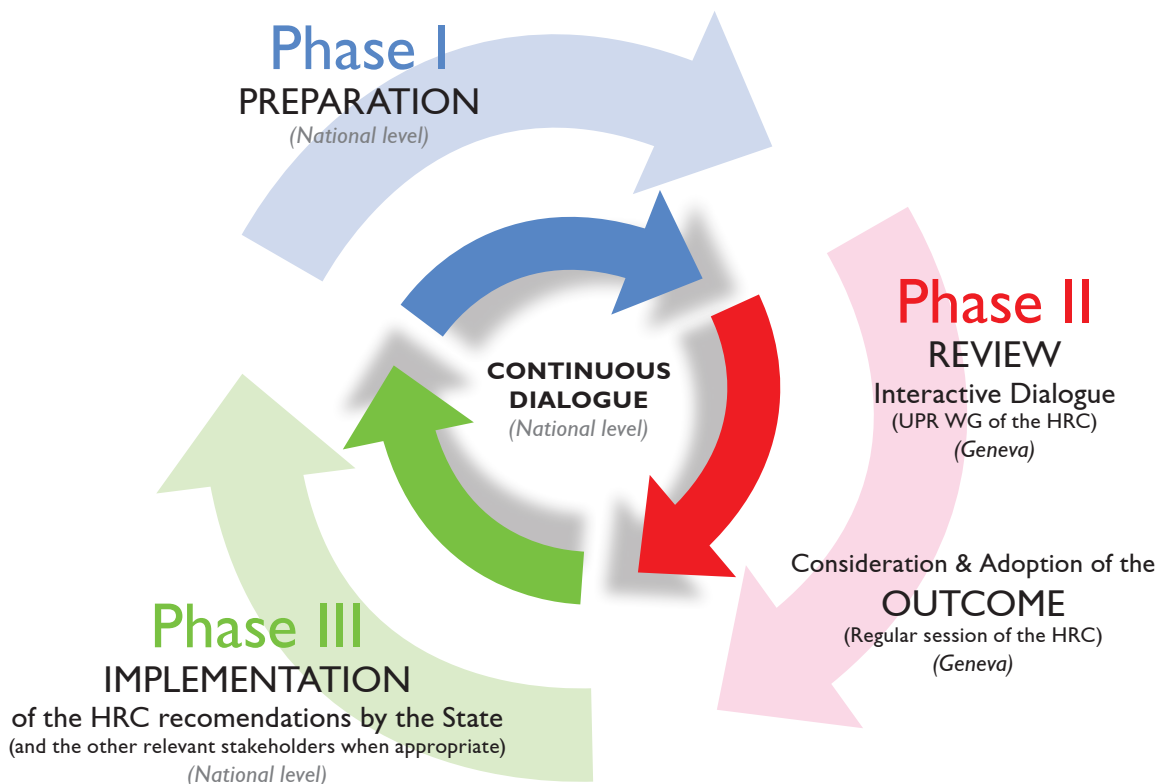




Foto: Save the Children

- **Find out who is doing what.** Speak to your civil society contacts and find out which civil society organizations are submitting reports. If possible find out what the focus issues will be in their report. If possible encourage coordination and ideally joint reports through a coalition. Contact the government and find out which department is reporting it is usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Justice. Find out the governments timetable in preparing its state report and encourage the state to consult civil society.
- **Join forces.** If you can get civil society organization with similar interests together and agree to produce a joint submission and joint work plan moving forward on UPR advocacy. If a child rights coalition already exists then that would be the natural place to start but if it doesn't this can be the first step in creating one. It is particularly important for larger NGOs to facilitate the participation of smaller NGOs who without such a coalition may lack the time and resources to engage.
- **Be open.** Tell the state that you as civil society will be reporting and are keen to engage in the preparation of their report. There is no possibility of confidential reporting in UPR.
- **Start early.** Save the Children has produced reports in coalition in 10 weeks but the ideal way to approach this process is with plenty of time. The Danish Centre for Human Rights recommends that state led consultation with civil society should happen 10-12 months before the review date.
- **Expand engagement beyond Child Rights Coalition – engage in Human Rights Coalitions also.** Save the Children has experienced that engagement in the broader Human Rights Society UPR Coalitions in a country, can create additional and effective possibilities for impact on the final outcome and add new synergies for lifting child rights violations into other important national and international human rights processes.
- **Analyse your governments past behaviour in the UPR process.** It is likely that your government has been part of a Troika reviewing another state. Find out as much as you can about its involvement in the Troika whether it pushed certain issues, sent high level representation, took the process seriously etc. In addition it is worth researching and finding out whether your government have made any recommendations to other governments or asked any questions during their review. This can highlight areas of interest for your government for example Tanzania has made a number of recommendations encouraging civil society consultation by the states under review. Civil society in Tanzania could then use those quotes to ask for a high level of consultation in the drafting of Tanzania's report in 2011. All the information on state involvement and participation can be found on the [upr-info.org](http://upr-info.org) website.



### Case study

*In Nepal – Save the Children engaged in a historic process. By providing technical assistance to I 38 Human Rights Organization and by financing the first National Human Rights UPR Consultation for all these organizations, we were also able to lift child rights violations effectively into the broader Human Rights agenda within the country. This process also impacted very positively towards the interest of the government in Nepal and created fruitful synergies with a number of embassies and UN missions in Geneva.*

## Involvement in the State Report Preparation

NGOs need to insist that the state in preparing its own report involve as many citizens and civil society organizations as possible. Civil society can also ask states to run an awareness raising campaign on the UPR to bring it to the attention of the public and media.

We as a child rights community should try to convince the state to include some of our concerns in their report. The deadline for NGO submissions to the OHCHR in the UPR process is **before** the government deadline. Therefore we can share our reports with the government and seek to influence their report in line with our recommendations. We can also encourage the Government to use the data we cite in our report to ensure an accurate and comprehensive review of child rights in the country. The Government unlike our report will be concentrating on the whole range of human rights and therefore it is essential that we as civil society are very focused as to what the most important child rights issues are and that we have very clear recommendations that Governments can engage with.

Different countries have consultation civil society in different ways and at different stages

## State Led Consultations with Civil Society

Republic of **Korea** held consultative meetings with NHRI, NGOs and experts after they had produced the first draft. The government set up an online survey to gather public opinion on the draft.

In **Bahrain** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew up a plan of action before it started drafting to identify the different stages of preparation and opportunities for stakeholders to participate, provide input and take part in each of the steps in the process.

The Government of Guatemala worked together with the OHCHR country office in consulting members of civil society and training them on how they could participate in the UPR process.

In **Tonga** the consultations took place with capacity constraints but briefings and preparatory work were undertaken with government ministries and agencies, including the Tonga Police, the Tonga Defence Service as well as with most of the 49 civil society organizations that are members of the Civil Society Forum of Tonga. Discussions were held with the Chief Justice, the Minister for Justice and Attorney General, the Solicitor-General and the Tongan Law Society. In addition the Tonga Chamber of Commerce was consulted as was the Tonga Media Council. By the end of the consultation process the civil society as a whole publicly approved the National Report.


## The NGO submission

In addition to influencing the governments report civil society has the opportunity to submit its own UPR reports (alternative reports) to the UPR process. This is an important role for civil society and we should aim to engage with this process in every country within which we work. Without civil society reports the realities of children's lives may not be represented in the review process.

In order to have as much influence on the OHCHR summary document and ultimately the final outcome document as possible we need to write our submissions in a way that makes them **relevant** and easy for states to read and use. Our reports must be **focused** on the key child rights issues, **action oriented** and **persuasive** with clear, concise and have strong concrete **recommendations**.

Save the Children (and partners) have managed to get many of our recommendations included but some countries we have had more success than others and that is linked to the quality of the reports submitted.

## The Basics

- Email submissions to the OHCHR at: [uprsubmissions@ohchr.org](mailto:uprsubmissions@ohchr.org)
- Title of email: name of the organisation - whether it's an individual or joint submission - name of the country under review - no. of UPR session, month and year e.g. Save the Children – individual submission – Nepal – 14th Session, October 2012
- Format: Word document only (no PDF files), Times New Roman, font 12.; paragraphs and pages must be numbered; extensive use of footnote is discouraged
- Language: OHCHR prefers submissions to be written in UN official languages, preferably in English, French or Spanish.
- Page Limit: Individual submissions must be no longer than 5 pages, joint submissions can be up to 10 pages. Annexes can be attached with no page limit but they should not include pictures, maps or annual reports or reports from other organizations.
- Check the OHCHR website for up to date deadlines on NGO submissions. Note it is much earlier than state deadlines. Late submissions (even by one day) will not be accepted!  
 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NewDeadlines.aspx>
- NGO's are advised to address the concerns and recommendations by using the relevant headings – in line with the headings developed by the secretariat of the OHCHR. It's not required to use all the headings but strongly advised to apply the relevant ones. They include:
  1. Background and Framework
    - i. Scope of international obligations; Constitutional and legislative framework; Institutional and human rights infrastructure; Policy measures:
  2. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
    - i. Implementation of international human rights obligations; Equality and non-discrimination; Civil and political rights; Economic social and cultural rights

## Some key points to remember:

- **Identify the main issues.** This is a short report (5-10 pages). The key to success is being clear in your focus. You can't discuss all child rights issues in your country in a meaningful way in the page limit that you have. Decide the top child rights issues in the country, and prioritize. This isn't the UNCRC report which must cover all rights. The important thing for the UPR is prioritization. In our experience so effective lobbying has focused on 3- 4 child rights issues.

A useful **exercise** in a coalition meeting is to split the group into small groups and ask each group to discuss for 45 minutes their top 3 or 5 child rights issues in the country. Try to get people to think outside of their sectors and divide the groups to get as a mix of expertise. Ask each group to come back and present their prioritized and reasons. Then once all groups have done that identify whether there were any areas of agreement and if not give each participant a number of votes (if you want 3 areas in the report you give them three votes) the coalition as a whole then votes for the areas of focus for the UPR report.



- **Use up-to-date data as evidence.** Once you have chosen your issues make sure in the couple of paragraphs in the report that set out the problem you include evidence and reliable data. Don't depend on opinions such as 'in our experience quality education is a problem' but use statistics that show teacher: pupil ratios, levels of illiteracy and drop out, water and sanitation facilities, teacher training standards etc. If you as an organization don't have the information do some research to find out what the most recent UNICEF report says, check out national academic institutions studies, speak to other civil society organizations in case they have data and if data is impossible to find such as in sexual abuse cases then raise that as a problem in the UPR report itself as something that the government needs to prioritise.
- **Spend time on writing your recommendations.** These are possibly the most important part of your report. The UPR is action orientated. Your report should state not just the problem but how that problem needs to be fixed. The recommendations should ask the government to start do certain things or continue to do certain things to deal with the problems you have highlighted. Only so many recommendations will make it into the final list. Remember the OHCHR takes all NGO submissions and produces a summary of 10 pages to ensure we feature in those 10 pages we need to make sure our recommendations are relevant, action orientated and monitorable.

It is essential that we don't produce endless amounts of recommendations in our report. If we have 3 issues we should have only 9 recommendations and if we have five issues then 15 recommendations are more than enough. If we can reduce the number of recommendations and still say what we need to say then we should do that.

What makes a good recommendation? When writing recommendations it is important to keep four things in mind:

1. They must **relate to the problem.** In other words the recommendation if carried out must solve the problem (at least in part) that we have raised. That might sound obvious but it is something some reports fail to do.
2. They must be **specific.** The 3 W's. **Who** do you want to do **what** and by **when?**
3. They must be **measurable.** Do not just ask governments to 'improve' or 'increase.' We can't measure that. We need to ask for specific increases by X amount.
4. They must be **realistic but ambitious.** This is particularly important in setting time deadlines. If all your recommendations are for six months after the review that's not realistic on the other hand don't give too long to governments if something needs to be done quickly.

## Examples of good action oriented recommendations

### Sierra Leone

We urge the government to improve the birth registration mechanism in accordance with Article 7, UN CRC, by improving access and services, exempting costs for registration for all children under 12 months of age and making registration facilities available within a reasonable geographical distance in all areas of the country by April 2012.

### Tanzania

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Governments in Tanzania and Zanzibar should establish social protection mechanisms such as safety nets in emergency situations and regular cash transfers targeting children under the age of two in the poorest families, by 2013.

### Zimbabwe

The Government of Zimbabwe should abolish corporal punishment through a constitutional provision by December 2012.

## Three types of recommendations – nuances in language

### 1) Urgent action:

As NGOs we have a tradition to urge immediate action from states. In the UPR process we should continue to do so, and include timelines for our demands.

However in order to make states pick up our suggested recommendations we might also need to balance our approach with different types of recommendations.

### 2) “Consider” recommendations:

Encouraging states “to consider” a specific action can make it more likely that governments will accept recommendations than the “calls for urgent action”. This nuance is important our ultimate goal is that governments accept our recommendations and those recommendations result in concrete changes for children.

### 3) Encourage states to continue good work

Recommendations encouraging states to continue good work for children i.e. follow up on a National Plan of Action or continue to support a specific thematic issue financially, are also recommendations that have proved effective.

As NGOs this means that we need to challenge our own perception of recommendation language.

To learn more:



[www.upr-info.org](http://www.upr-info.org) Article: Analytical assessment of the UPR 2008-2010

## What can NGO'S do

once they have submitted their report to make sure it has influence in the review session in Geneva?

### Lobbying embassies in the State under review

Unlike the reporting to the UN treaty bodies, including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, those who examine and are examined in the Human Rights Council, are not necessarily the human rights experts, but politicians, diplomats and other state representatives. They may therefore not have experience dealing with human rights violations on a daily basis.

Many states depend on information from their embassies and representatives in the country under review. The embassies are therefore highly interested and dependent on updated information on human rights violations on the ground in the country where their embassies are present, and NGO's are in most cases more than welcome to submit information. As a matter of fact this is a golden opportunity for NGO's to share valuable information with the embassies and input is normally highly appreciated.

The embassies are usually asked by their Capitals to provide relevant input and questions to the review **approximately two months before the date of the review in the Human Rights Council in Geneva.**

This implies that NGO's must start lobbying the embassies in due time (after NGO's submission are submitted) to be able to influence the states question, concerns and recommendations at the crucial embassy level.

**NB!** Most states normally only raise 2 – 4 issues regarding other states. If we as NGOs want to impact this, we need to be able to prioritize efficiently among the concerns and recommendations we are highlighting to the embassies. If they decide to raise the issue of children's human rights, each state will mostly likely only pick one or two of our recommendations. It's worth while doing some research on what specific areas of children rights are of particular interest to the given state the embassy is representing, before approaching them with our prioritized concerns and recommendations. **In addition to this, it is also very important to know that States will in principle only be able to address concerns and recommendations on issues already covered by the State under review.** Ideally the lobbying should wait until the State report has been made public but in practice this is not always possible as there might be delays in the publications of these on the website of the OHCHR etc.

### **Lobbying states at capital level**

INGO's with offices in many countries will also have an opportunity influence the concerns and recommendations at capital level if this is done within the right timing as capitals receive the information from the embassies. But to be able to impact at capital level, NGO's need to provide information through contacts at the Ministries in due time before the internal deadlines for providing input may vary from Ministry to Ministry and from country to country. NGO's will not automatically be informed about these procedures. Some States may also choose not to respond to NGO correspondence, but nevertheless use the information we provide in their examination of the State under review.

### **Lobbying missions in Geneva**

When the states have compiled the country specific information from their embassy in the country under review, they forward suggestions of issues of concern and recommendations – and sometimes also suggestions for written advance questions – from their capital to their permanent representative at the missions in Geneva. The missions in Geneva are the ones who conduct the review in terms of orally raising concerns and suggest recommendations to the State under review during the UPR session in the Human Rights Council. The missions in Geneva are also involved in the preparation of possible advance written questions to the State under review.

Our office in Geneva has carried out detailed analysis on which governments are most likely to raise child rights issues during the UPR process. Geneva Office can help country programmes to compile a list of their key recommendations from their NGO submission and identify which states should be approached with which recommendations in order to have the best chance of influencing the UPR review of the state under review. For example if Slovenia has a particular interest in violence the Geneva Office could take a recommendation on violence against children from the NGO submission from Zimbabwe and ask Slovenia to raise that in Zimbabwe's interactive dialogue session.

The most successful lobbying and impact is when our messages and concerns of child rights violations and recommendations to embassies at country level, are efficiently coordinated with lobbying of Ministries of Foreign Affairs at the capital level and the UN mission in Geneva

## Do NGO'S have a role

during the interactive dialogue in the human rights council?

NGOs may attend the review in the Human Rights Council and listen to the "examination", but NGOs will not be allowed to take the floor at this stage. That is why it is so important that we have asked other governments who can speak in the review session to raise our recommendations and questions see pg 11 for more details.

However NGOs have the possibility to hold parallel events during the session of the Working Group to create increased awareness around child rights violations in countries under review. These side events can coincide with the days of the interactive dialogue. Please note that arranging a Side Event at the Human Rights Council is a time consuming process and must be planned in due time and coordinated with the Save the Children Geneva office.

## What can NGO'S do after

the oral examination in the UPR session in the human rights council and until the final outcome documents is adopted in the next human rights session?

When a State has been examined in the Human Rights Council during the UPR session, they will be presented with a written list of the concerns and recommendations raised by the other States, a list which is prepared during the review by the Troika and the Secretariat of the OHCHR.

The State is then expected to explicitly express which of these recommendations they will accept and which recommendations they will not accept before the final outcome document is adopted in the next UPR session in the Human Rights Council some months later. Most states choose to flag which recommendations they need more time to consider and which recommendations they accept immediately.

While the State is considering the recommendations before the next UPR session in the Human Rights Council, the NGOs should use these months actively in influencing the State in their choices.

So far this has been a rather closed process within governments, but **by using our informal channels in the most effective way, we have a potential of great impact also in this process. We should meet with the government, hold press events and try to lobby as much as possible for the government to accept the child rights recommendations.**

NGOs can also use the months in between the two UPR sessions to prepare a statement in order to take the floor during the plenary before the adoption of the outcome in the following UPR session in the Human Rights Council. Even if these statements will not be able to influence the UPR outcome document and recommendations, it can be an important voice and part of the written documentation of the Human Rights Council which can be useful in the advocacy work on the follow up of the recommendations at national level.

*Please note that UPR sessions are public, non-confidential and broadcasted by a public webcast, which for some countries may imply a risk analysis.*

## If it is too risky for NGO'S

### to engage in the UPR-the possibility of quiet diplomacy

Unlike the treaty body reporting, including the reporting process to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UPR submissions and sessions are **not confidential**. Both the plenary UPR session and the following UPR session in the HRC a couple of months later, where the final outcome document is adopted, are broadcasted by webcast.

There may therefore be countries where Save the Children is present where it's considered too risky for local staff on the ground to engage in the UPR process. Within SAVE THE CHILDREN we have nevertheless been able to engage in the UPR process and have had impact on the UPR outcome document in countries without having engaged publicly in the process. This has been done by providing the necessary concerns and recommendations regarding child rights violations either through quiet channels to missions in Geneva and/or engaging international Human Rights Organizations not present in the country, and without any mentioning of Save the Children. The support of the Save the Children Geneva office in these circumstances can be particularly important.

## What can NGO'S do when

### the final outcome document has been adopted?

**The UPR outcome document and recommendations to the state – is a highly important advocacy tool for the NGOs!**

The final UPR outcome document will, as mentioned above, be made up of two sets of recommendations: The ones that enjoy the support of the State reviewed and those which do not. The final outcome will in turn be adopted by the plenary of the Council, and contain a summary of the process, conclusions and/or recommendations, and the voluntary commitments of the State concerned.

NGOs should be directly involved in the follow-up to the review and the UPR outcome document including recommendations to the state – is a very important advocacy tool for the NGOs!

We can push the State to address the recommendations, and collaborate with national human rights organizations, such as NHRIs, Parliament, civil society, academia, media, etc. In particular, child rights NGOs can make sure children are an integral part of the national agenda following the Review. We can distribute the Review report nationally, draw attention to child rights issues and draw up an action plan or strategy to help with implementation.

*In fact it is our duty to monitor the implementation of the UPR recommendations!*

### **Engage in Voluntarily Mid Term reviews**

A number of States have voluntarily chosen to conduct a mid term review – two years after the UPR review and the adoption. By doing this the State is willing to assess the implementation of the UPR-recommendations half way through the cycles. This provides another important window of opportunity for us as NGOs to actively monitor the implementation of the UPR recommendations in due time before the Mid Term Review and also comment and monitor on the States own perception of improvements after the Mid Term Review.

## Child participation and the UPR

Children can be involved in every stage of the UPR process and we should help to facilitate that!

TAKE CHILDREN SERIOUSLY, BECAUSE THEY WILL BE THE LEADERS IN THE FUTURE. AND CHILDREN WHO LEARN TO SOLVE PROBLEMS NOW WILL BE MORE ABLE TO SOLVE THE BIG PROBLEMS LATER.” *Hassan from WV Lebanon child led UPR submission.*

In a recent survey by CRIN they found that very few NGOs had involved children in the reporting process, or at any stage of the UPR. However, when asked what they would do differently next time, more than half said they would involve children in the process. The responses suggested the lack of child participation was more a result of time and capacity issues as opposed to recognising the benefits of involving children in the UPR.



Foto: Karin Beate Nøsterud/Save the Children

### Case study

#### Child participation in Lebanon's UPR

World Vision successfully incorporated the views of children into their alternative report for Lebanon's review. The NGO staged a series of workshops with children in different parts of the country and in different socio-economic contexts to discuss the issues they faced in their own country. After hearing about the broad range of issues that existed, the children voted on the concerns they felt were particularly problematic and which affected them most. Research was then conducted alongside the children into evidence of these violations and reports were drawn up. Finally, a lessons-learned session with children and staff involved in the child-led reporting process was conducted to help improve the process for the next UPR session. A 16 year old child, who was involved in the process, attended the review in Geneva and will report back to his peers about the experience.

Cite CRIN for Box



Save the Children has not succeeded so far in prioritizing child participation in our submissions. As child rights organizations Save the Children and its partners have an obligation to not just raise children's rights but provide a space in which children themselves can be heard in this important process.

Obviously the more time given to the preparation of the NGO submission the more meaningful any child participation can be. However even when pushed for time we can and should at least consult the children with which we work on our draft report and include their feedback and priorities in any final submission.

We can also lobby for children to be consulted by the government when writing its report which as we know is prepared after the NGO report is submitted and children can be involved in the planning for implementation of the recommendations.