
UPR Follow-up: What Can the Human Rights Unit Do to Assist?

After the Geneva discussions, the challenge remains to ensure that the recommendations are taken forward at a national level. Each state bears the responsibility for implementing the accepted recommendations. Accordingly, the Commonwealth Secretariat is refocusing UPR assistance from preparation to implementation of recommendations.

The Secretariat's assistance will identify, support and disseminate good practice for states, to encourage coherent and strategic approaches to the range of recommendations accepted. This is intended to strengthen the ability of Commonwealth states to engage with the second cycle of the UPR, in which the implementation of recommendations will be considered.

Through ongoing work with a range of actors, the HRU ensures that its support is of a unique nature – the dialogues promoted through preparatory work will be followed through into the follow-up and implementation work. This will involve working with states, NHRIs and NGOs in all our seminars. We work with these three groups of national actors to encourage consultation and partnership, core messages of the UPR.

Regional seminars

At a regional level for Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific, the HRU will bring together key UPR focal points from the three actors listed above to participate in seminars. These seminars will allow countries that share regional similarities to discuss, develop and share good practices and lessons learned with regard to implementation of accepted recommendations.

We are aware that countries are experiencing many constraints with regard to implementing a multitude of accepted recommendations. The seminars allow peer group learning and discussion of different models for UPR follow-up action and implementation of recommendations.

Bilateral assistance

The HRU provides a variety of human rights assistance to Commonwealth member states relating to thematic areas which touch on those raised in UPR recommendations. It can:

- strengthen (or assist in the establishment of) key institutions that promote or protect human rights, through technical assistance and advice;

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- promote human rights education and awareness, including through targeted programmes for uniformed services, government agencies, the judiciary, the media and universities;
 - assist countries to develop national plans of action for human rights;
 - assist member states in becoming party to human rights treaties and in fulfilling their treaty body reporting, taking capacity and data limitation into account.

Preparation for the second cycle of the UPR

The HRU intends to continue supporting Commonwealth states and stakeholders in their preparation for the second cycle, and has begun initial discussions with the UPR section of the OHCHR on co-operation in this regard.

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