

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

## from a feminist perspective

### SDGs & HRC

### Women's Major Group

The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all." It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 and is intended to be achieved by 2030.

The UPR, unlike the SDG process, actually provides for a conducive mechanism and structure for accountability on government's human rights commitments.

Because of the universal nature of the UPR process and broad and expansive range of human rights, environmental and development issues that it encompasses, all of the Goals and Targets under the SDGs can be covered within the UPR process.

If the 2030 Agenda is to be realised in a way that truly does 'leave no one behind,' then human rights obligations and commitments must be applied, implemented and protected by all governments.

WHAT IS HRC?

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States (which rotates periodically) responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. It does so by establishing under itself, a number of [bodies, processes or mechanisms](#) that form the basis of the HRC's work.

WHAT ARE THE SDGs?

WHAT IS THE INTERLINK AND INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE SDGs AND THE HRC?

WHAT ARE THE 2 KEY MECHANISMS/ ROLES OF THE HRC?

### UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

The [Universal Periodic Review](#) (UPR) is an intergovernmental process that is carried out by the HRC which involves the reviewing of all the human rights records of all UN Member States. All member states are reviewed every four and a half years and this review is carried out by a Working Group (which basically consists of the 47 member states that currently sit on the HRC).

Civil societies, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders can participate in the review process by participating in the national consultations held by the state under review, sending in information on the human rights situation in the country, lobbying other member states on the Working Group, taking the floor during the actual review process and monitoring and participating in the implementation by the state under review of the UPR recommendations.

### SPECIAL PROCEDURES

The [Special Procedures](#) are one of the mechanisms on the HRC where independent human rights experts are appointed to the position titled either [Special Rapporteurs](#), [Independent Experts](#) or [Working Groups](#) on various topics and issues. There are currently [44 thematic](#) and [11 country](#) mandates appointed by the HRC. These individuals or groups of experts can conduct reviews and reporting on the human rights violations on the specific issues or countries which they have been mandated to by undertaking country visits, acting on individual cases and complaints they have received, conduct annual thematic reviews, attend consultations by civil societies, carry out advocacies and so on.





## WHO COULD YOU REACH OUT TO?

The [Women's Major Group](#) facilitates participation and inputs CSOs working to promote human rights based sustainable development with a focus on women's human rights at the UN

[UPR-Info](#) is a Geneva based NGO that works on the UPR process to promote human rights and facilitate the access to the UPR for civil society organizations, human rights defenders, national human rights institutions or other groups or associations or any member of the civil society who wishes to use the UPR process as a means to promote and protect human rights.

The [Danish Institute of Human Rights \(DIHR\)](#) is a national human rights institution (NHRI). Though based in Denmark and originally established by a decision of the Danish parliament, today the DIHR works all around the world with other NHRIs as well as with governments, civil societies and businesses to strengthen their capacity to advance human rights in their countries.



## TOOLS TO CHECK OUT

The [Danish Institute of Human Rights' Guide to the Sustainable Development Goals](#) makes concrete links between the SDGs Targets and the relevant international and regional human rights instruments, international labour standards and key environmental instruments.

[UPR-Info](#) provides a [database](#) on all of the UPR recommendations and voluntary pledges that has been made across several categories: State under Review, Recommending State, Regional Group, Organisation, Response UPR cycle, Thematic Issues, and Type of Action.

The [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association \(ILGA\)](#) has a [SOGIESC UPR Advocacy Toolkit](#) which is a guide dedicated to activists working on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) issues, who wish to engage with the UPR process.

An [information leaflet](#) and FAQ on the [HRC Complaint Procedure](#) which allows for any individuals, groups, or non-governmental organizations that claim to be victims of human rights violations or that have direct, reliable knowledge of such violations to submit a complaint to the HRC. States do not need to ratify any human rights treaties to be reviewed under this complaint procedure.

## TIPS FROM THE MOVEMENTS

The UPR review process for each country accepts reports from civil societies, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders, not only from the country being reviewed but also parties from any other countries where the act or omissions of the country being reviewed has led to human rights violations. For example, issues on extraterritorial human rights obligations of governments. Similarly, Special Procedures mandate holders can receive submissions, communications or complaints from civil society organizations at any time on any issues related to their mandate.

Both the UPR process and the Special Procedures mechanism provides very institutionalized mechanisms and methods for civil society to input into the implementation and monitoring of human rights in their own countries and on various thematic issues.

As not all countries have ratified or signed all of the international conventions while some also does not recognize some of the human rights mechanisms, the SDGs as an agenda that is broader and has universal acceptance can be used as a valuable entry point for issues and languages from treaties and conventions that your government has not ratified or recognized yet.

Because of the broad and expansive human rights issues covered under the UPR process, whether your government is up for review at the UPR and the SDGs Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the same time or at different times, women's rights organizations can take advantage of this by either using the same report for both processes, drafting the two reports in a complimentary way or adding whatever changes that might have occurred in the time between the two reviews in the latter reporting.