

## **Universal Periodic Review input for the High-level Political Forum 2022**

### Recommendations for HLPF consideration:

- Given the growing attention by human rights mechanisms to economic, social and cultural rights, including education, as reflected in Human Rights Council panel discussions and resolutions, and an increasing number of related UPR recommendations, the High-level Political Forum could usefully take advantage of the momentum created to expand its focus on human rights and ensure the discussions at the HLPF are guided by the work of international human rights mechanisms;
- Learning from the key UPR features, including political commitments explicitly made by States during the UPR process, the HLPF could benefit from encouraging States to make concrete follow-up commitments as part of the VNR process and during the plenary sessions;
- The HLPF Secretariat could further publicly highlight UPR and VNR commitments to inform and generate opportunities for partnership building and additional support from the UN, other Member States, development partners, CSOs, NHRIs and other stakeholders;
- At the national level, the close correlation between UPR recommendations and SDG goals and targets means that implementation ensures progress on both agendas and can contribute to integrated systems and plans for human rights based development programming. The HLPF can play a catalytic role in promoting linkages and galvanizing support towards such human rights-based acceleration of the 2030 Agenda;
- The HLPF could also showcase human rights mechanism processes as valuable in assessing progress made on the 2030 Agenda and informing the VNRs, with added benefits also for easing reporting burdens for Member States, ensuring progress on leaving no one behind, and achieving development that realizes human rights, with a strong message to 2022 VNR countries in this regard during the preparatory processes;
- With COVID-19 laying bare the devastating consequences for all globally when only part of the world's development needs are met, the role of the HLPF in engendering partnership becomes an urgent call. The UPR has been one forum to identify common concerns and effective practices, and encourage cooperation and coherent action. The HLPF may consider referencing such practices to motivate related actions at country level and substantively inform the Ministerial Declaration;
- Existential environmental pressures also make a strong HLPF position vital. The HLPF can hopefully draw on shared experiences and practices at the July event to ensure action and shift towards sustainability with core consideration for human rights, encouraging further related cooperation with human rights mechanisms in this regard.

### 2022 UPDATE

The 37<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> UPR Working Group sessions in 2021, held in hybrid modalities, included pandemic-referenced recommendations linked to the SDGs under review at the 2022 HLPF. Member State recommendations for the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> sessions covered, inter alia:-

- Safeguarding access to education, providing equal access to online education for girls, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown, and strengthening efforts for inclusive education, including for children with disabilities living in remote areas;

- Addressing additional challenges facing women and girls, including increased domestic violence, and the impact on the care system, especially greater domestic burdens on women, and the negative survival resources for women, such as premature unions;
- Strengthening cooperation with international partners to reverse the economic impact of the pandemic and including in official development assistance emergency aid packages targeted to address the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.

Statements of States under Review made particular reference to the impact of the pandemic on: travel, economies dependent on tourism, livelihoods and employment; public health and social security systems; the challenge of ensuring that students, in particular those in vulnerable situations, had access to the tools needed to continue their education through distance learning; and the difficulties in maintaining social distancing in camps for internally displaced persons, densely populated settlements and crowded urban areas. Member States noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had impeded efforts underway at the national and global levels to achieve the SDGs.

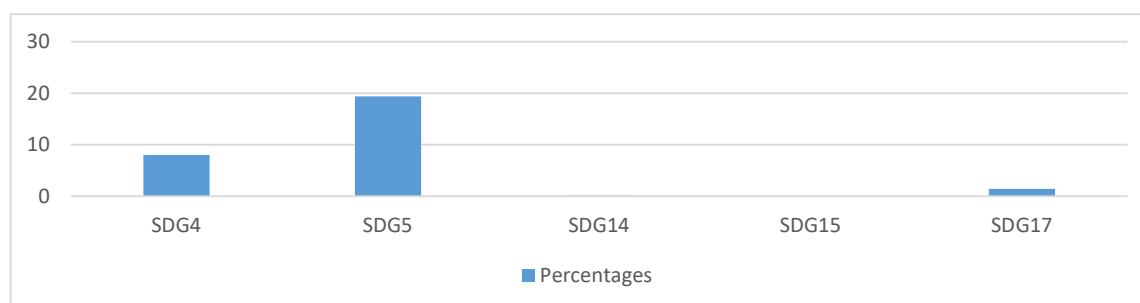
Examples of useful measures applied included:-

- Initiatives to boost the standard of living of teachers, health-care workers and certain vulnerable groups, distance learning through the radio and online classes, slow resumption of face-to-face learning to avoid overcrowding at schools, and the building of new classrooms to enable social distancing when schools reopened;
- Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, countries donating vaccines and offering related support;
- Expanded protections for victims of domestic violence and strengthened measures to prevent femicide, and public information campaigns and efforts to strengthen the skills of professionals to identify risks of domestic violence and provide support to victims.

In 2021, 41 States were reviewed (the review of Sudan was postponed to 2022), resulting in 9,642 recommendations.

For the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> UPR Working Group sessions in 2021 for which data is currently available, 96.8% were linked to the SDGs or SDG targets. A total of 3,656 recommendations, or 74.6% enjoyed the support of the States under review. Out of the supported recommendations, 97.8% were linked to the SDGs or SDG targets.

With specific reference to the 2022 HLPF themes, 392 recommendations (8%) were linked to SDG 4, 950 (19.4%) to SDG 5, 5 (0.1%) to SDG 14, 4 (0.08%) to SDG 15 and 68 (1.4%) to SDG 17.\* These percentages are depicted in the chart below.



## UPR TOOLS

The UPR secretariat has developed [country-specific tools to facilitate States in linking human rights recommendations and the SDGs](#):-

- Letters from the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Foreign Minister of each Member State once its UPR outcome is adopted in the Human Rights Council;
- Matrices of thematically clustered recommendations for each country, linked to relevant SDGs and targets, starting with those accepted by the State;
- Infographics providing trends between second and third cycle and linking human rights mechanisms' recommendations with the top five SDGs.

Tools are also available for other stakeholders:

- The [UPR Practical Guidance](#) specifically meant for Heads of UN Offices worldwide (available in the six UN languages) so as to maximize the use of this mechanism for country engagement on human rights and integration at least of accepted UPR recommendations in UNSDCFs;
- [Tips for engagement at country level for National Human Rights Institutions and NGOs](#);
- [Tips for Members of Parliament](#).

\*Data drawn from the Universal Human Rights Index on 14 December 2021 <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/>