Universal Periodic Review input for the 2025 High-level Political Forum

This document responds to the 24 December 2024 letter of invitation from the President of ECOSOC to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2025. It draws on reports from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council over the preceding year to present information for consideration at the HLPF.

Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the 2025 HLPF Ministerial Declaration:

> The secretariat notes that, in alignment with the Pact for the Future commitment to promote and protect human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as mutually reinforcing, the High Level Political Forum could seek to enhance systematic cooperation between human rights and sustainable development monitoring bodies and processes, especially with respect to implementing Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review recommendations and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and in linking related reporting.

a) Impacts of the multiple crises on the implementation of SDGs 3,5, 8, 14 and 17[i].

> **With respect to the COVID-19 pandemic**, States reported that the pandemic further exacerbated economic and social challenges, including with greater economic instability and increased unemployment. Difficulties in recovering from the pandemic, such as economic recession, strained public healthcare services, as well as financial and technical resources and capacity, slowed the momentum towards achieving the SDGs, exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, and limited financial resources available for development initiatives;

> **In terms of the impact of climate change**, States reported catastrophic environmental consequences, including extreme weather events such as hurricanes and floods, resulting in significant displacement, loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, and economic instability. Small Island Developing State emphasized their exposure to natural disasters, requiring urgent mitigation efforts to prevent further damage to infrastructure and livelihoods;

> **With regard to armed conflicts**, States noted that ongoing conflicts and terrorist activities had led to widespread loss of life, economic decline, destruction of infrastructure and humanitarian crises, and presented the challenge of accommodating refugees, while introducing disruptions to food, energy, and finance. State financial constraints led to higher poverty levels and greater reliance on international aid;

> **Regarding the global economic and financial crises**, States highlighted related economic and financial issues, including the impact of global inflationary pressures on the cost of living, the lingering effects of the financial and sovereign debt crises, and the inflationary crisis, which, inter alia, contributed to rising unemployment.

b) Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages between the Goals and targets. [ii]

- State national reports noted examples of **digital health services to** promote universal health coverage (SDG target 3.8). Efforts encompassed telemedicine systems, online medical services, more AI- and IT-based medical services through the introduction of an AI medical service system, a Telegram mobile application to facilitate communication, an online digital platform including counselling and self-care guidance, an Electronic Patient Information System under an eHealth strategy, allowing for medical consultations via videoconference, and digital transformation programs to bolster birth registration coverage;
- **Sustainability measures** in some States facilitated sustainable economic growth and development in different areas (SDGs 8.4 and 14.2), including promoting the pausing of seabed mining, sustainable use of water, building and operating sustainable solid waste management facilities, efforts to achieve a net-zero carbon society, developing a comprehensive roadmap for sustainable development, supporting sustainable jobs, and a Sustainable Urban Quality Strategy on meeting water security requirements;
- Some State efforts regarding an **inclusive workforce** promoted gender equality and full employment (SDGs 5.5 and 8.5). These encompassed the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, implementing legal reforms on gender discrimination, public policies to eliminate the gender gap in the labour market, upholding the principle of equal pay for equal work, providing vocational skills training for women, strengthening the participation of women in decision-making positions in political life, increased parental leave for men, and gender quotas in leadership and public affairs roles to ensure women's participation.
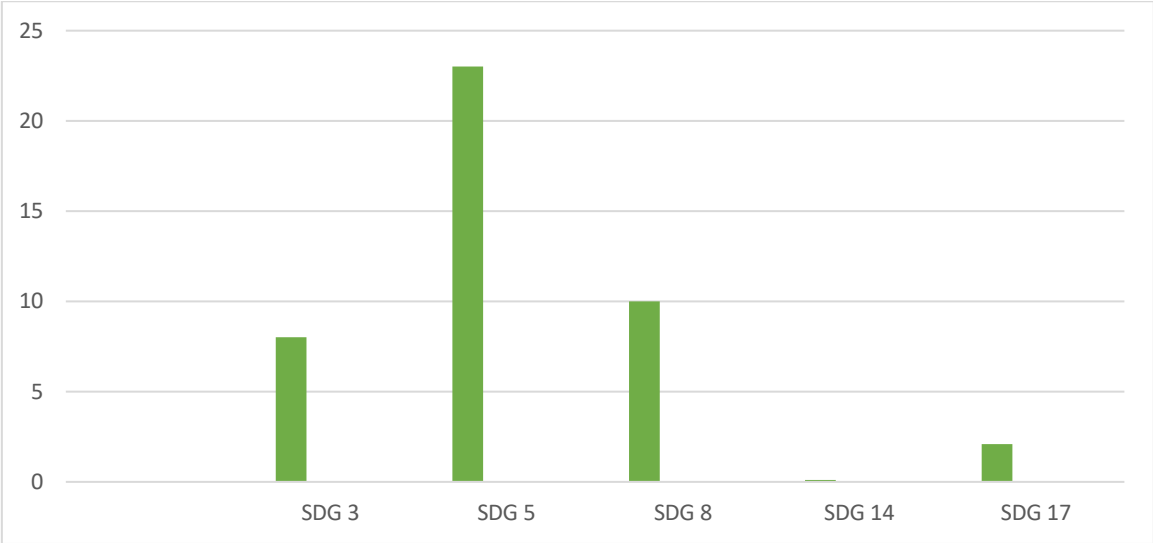
c) *Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.*

National reports noted **energy roadmaps** in two countries, aiming to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and increase the use of renewable energy (SDG 7), address climate change (SDG 13), and ensure access to energy for all households and businesses, thereby improving livelihoods and creating job opportunities (SDG 8). Several reports also highlighted **digital and innovative education measures**, including a national e-learning portal, promoting distance education, providing tablets and internet connectivity to students from low-income families, and launching mobile early childhood education centres in rural areas, thereby enhancing access to quality education (SDG 4) and reducing inequality (SDG 10). **Initiatives to plant trees** in various States also contributed to addressing climate change (SDG 13), protecting biodiversity (SDG 15), and improving the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15).

ANNEX

For the 45th and 46th UPR Working Group sessions in 2024 for which UHRI data is available, 79% of recommendations enjoyed the support of the States under review. Out of the supported recommendations, 99% were linked to the SDGs or SDG targets.

With specific reference to the 2025 HLPF themes and time period, for the 45th and 46th UPR Working Group sessions, 8% of UPR recommendations were linked to SDG 3 or its targets, 23% to SDG 5 or its targets, 10% to SDG 8 or its targets, 0.09% to SDG 14 or its targets, and 2.1% to SDG 17 or its targets. These percentages are depicted in the chart below.

Percentage of UPR recommendations in WGs 45 and 46 linked to SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17

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 supported/accepted by the State;
- Infographics providing country trends of the top five SDGs linked to recommendations.

Tools are also available for other stakeholders:

- "Maximizing the use of the UPR at country level -Practical Guidance" for UN actors;
- "UN Good Practices – how the UPR process supports sustainable development";
- Tips for engagement at country level for National Human Rights Institutions and NGOs;
- Tips for Members of Parliament;
- Updated UPR Civil Society Guide for the 4th cycle.

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[i] See the National Reports of UPR WG45, WG46 and WG47, at https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/documentation
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