

36th session of the Human Rights Council

Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms

Theme: *The universal periodic review and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5)*

Concept note (as of 25 August 2017)

Date and venue: **Friday, 15 September 2017, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**, Palais des Nations, Room XX, Geneva
(will be broadcast live and archived on <http://webtv.un.org>)

Objectives: The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a pivotal moment when the global community agreed to an ambitious plan to address some of the world's most pressing challenges. With a dedicated goal on achieving gender equality, the implementation of this Agenda presents an opportunity for collective action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the realization of their full enjoyment of all human rights.

At the same time, with the third cycle of the universal periodic review (UPR) having commenced in 2017, this mechanism has generated unprecedented action on human rights in numerous national contexts. It provides an opportunity for States to report on their progress in upholding human rights, as well as to share best practices, and no comparable mechanism exists at the international level under which all UN Member States are periodically reviewed. It is important to note that the 2030 Agenda is similarly a universal agenda which applies to all States.

Over the first two cycles of the universal periodic review, it is evident that the vast majority of recommendations to States relate to at least one target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recommendations and voluntary commitments were made pertained to women's rights and gender. However, a number of issues were largely neglected.

As States embark on implementation of the SDGs, keeping in mind that this Agenda is grounded in the respect for international human rights, the recommendations generated through the UPR process are an essential starting point for the development of strategies to achieve the SDGs. Conversely, it is also important to explore how SDG implementation will influence reporting to the UPR mechanism going forward. There are considerable possibilities for these processes and mechanisms to be mutually reinforcing and complementary – thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of both, and bolstering efforts to achieve gender equality. To realise this potential, explicit dialogue and experience sharing is critical.

This panel discussion will present an opportunity to participants to explore the potential role the UPR mechanism can play in advancing the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Goal 5, at the global, regional and country levels.

Chair: **H.E. Mr. Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli**, President of the Human Rights Council

- Opening statement:** **Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Moderator:** **Ms. Claire Somerville**, Executive Director of the Gender Centre, Graduate of Institute of International and Development Studies
- Panellists:**
- **Ms. Salma Nims**, Secretary General of the Commission for Women in Jordan
 - **Ms. Eva Grambye**, Deputy Executive Director, International Division, Danish Institute for Human Rights
 - **Mr. Roland Chauville**, Executive Director of UPR Info
 - **Ms. Dorothy Nyasulu**, UNFPA Assistant Representative, Malawi Country Office, United Nations Population Fund
- Mandate:** At its sixth session, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 6/30, entitled “Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system”, in which it decided to incorporate into its programme of work an annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout its work and that of its mechanisms, including the evaluation of progress made and challenges experienced.
- Resolution 6/30 “reiterates the need for integrating a gender perspective through using gender-inclusive language in the formulation, interpretation and implementation of human rights instruments, as well as in reports, resolutions and/or decisions of the Human Rights Council and its various mechanisms and of other human rights mechanisms”. In addition, resolution 6/30 urges all stakeholders to take into full account both the rights of women and a gender perspective in the universal periodic review, including in the preparation of information submitted for the review, during the review dialogue, in the review outcome and in the review follow-up.*
- Resolution 6/30 further “welcomes the panel discussion on the integration of a gender perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council, held on 20 and 21 September 2007, and decides to incorporate into its programme of work an annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout its work and that of its mechanisms, including the evaluation of progress made and challenges experienced”.*
- Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 also recognizes the importance of gender integration and specifically mandates as a principle that the universal periodic review must ‘fully integrate a gender perspective’ into all aspects of the review [para. 3 (k)].
- Format:** The opening statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and initial presentations by the panellists, the latter guided by the moderator, will be followed by an interactive discussion with States and observers intervening from the floor.
- The list of speakers for the discussion will be established at the beginning of the panel and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups will be moved to the beginning of the list. The list of speakers for the discussion will be established at the beginning of the panel and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups will be moved to the beginning of the list. States and observers, including representatives of civil society, will take the floor for a 2-minute intervention each (total 45 minutes), followed by responses from panellists (15 minutes). A second round

of interventions from the floor (45 minutes) will be followed by responses and concluding remarks from the panellists and the moderator (15 minutes). To make the panel interactive, speakers are encouraged to focus their interventions on the themes of the panellists either by asking the panellists questions or sharing concrete examples and relevant national experience. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

Background: The following topics were covered during the previous Council annual discussions on gender integration:

- Integrating a gender perspective into the work of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (2008);
- Integrating a gender perspective in the universal periodic review (2009);
- Integrating a gender perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council: lessons learned, shortcomings and future challenges – 2007-2010 (2010);
- Promoting gender equality as institutional practice: from policy to action (2011);
- Economic, social and cultural rights of women (2012);
- Civil society's contribution to the integration of a gender perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms (2013);
- Gender integration in the country-focused work of the Council (2014);
- Gender parity and its contribution to gender integration in the work of the Human Rights Council (2015);
- Gender integration in the resolutions and recommendations of the HRC (2016).

Background documents:

- Human Rights Council resolution [6/30](#), "Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system" (*adopted by consensus on 14 December 2007*)
- General Assembly resolution [69/151](#), "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly" (*adopted by consensus on 18 December 2014*)
- General Assembly resolution [70/1](#), "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (*adopted by consensus on 25 September 2015*)
