Human Rights Engagement in Practice

Virtual sessions
Webinar 1 – Human rights engagement as a process
Engagement with human rights mechanisms provide an opportunity for protection clusters to...

• Use additional means and avenues to achieve protection outcomes - NOT ADDITIONAL WORK, REPORTING REQUIREMENT, BUT SOMETHING USEFUL for CLUSTERS
• Address the realities from human rights angle - HCT protection strategies
• Strengthen the rights based approach
• Advocate more strategically
• Engage in confidential dialogue on sensitive issues
• Create and mobilize in-country networks, as well as global level stakeholders
• Raise more awareness on HR of IDPs
• Showcase the links between human rights recommendations and the broader themes such as 2030 Agenda, SG’s call to action on HR, links to development actors
What this webinar is about:

- Basic concepts on HR engagement
- Discuss how human rights engagement represents a process
Ground rules for this webinar

- The webinar will last for 2h
- Participate – raise your hand, chat
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking
- Share your comments, observations and questions
Brief overview of the main HRM

General Assembly

Adopts
- Human Rights Treaties
  - Treaty Bodies (Committees)

Creates
- Human Rights Council
  - Universal Periodic Review
  - Special Procedures

Secretariat
*OHCHR supports the work of the HRC and the mechanisms
UN OHCHR (UNGA 48/141 - 1993)

• Part of the UN Secretariat, the UN's executive arm.
• Coordinating efforts to promote and protect human rights.
• Provides research, technical expertise, and logistical support to facilitate the work of the Human Rights Council and other charter bodies.
• Supports the work of the treaty bodies that monitor compliance with the UN's core human rights treaties.
• Assist Governments through our field presences: monitoring and analysis informs decision-making and development programming. Capacity-building and legal advice; supporting rule of law, law enforcement and justice institutions.
UN Human Rights Council (UNGA 60/251-2006)

- Inter-governmental body – subsidiary organ of the GA
- 47 UN member states elected by UNGA on rotating basis; UN, Civil Society participate to the sessions
- Discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations
- Regular sessions and Emergency sessions
- Adopts resolutions; Makes recommendations; authorizes COI and FFM; possible country visits (SPs)
How we can engage with the HRC

• Provide oral statements
• Attend or participate in relevant side-events
• Host side-events
• Collaborate with other UN agencies, Permanent Missions and/or NGOs
• Contribute to the language of Resolutions adopted by the Council
• Raise cases of grave and systematic abuses to the Complaints Procedure
Universal Periodic Review

• HRC Subsidiary Mechanism to evaluate the human rights practices of each UN member state (once every 4.5/5 years).
• Discuss all thematic human rights issues including IHL
• State Driven Process: Each member state submits a self-assessment ("national report") to the HRC.
• UPR WG solicits input from other SPs, TBs, UN bodies, NGOs and CSOs;
• Issues report and recommendations e.g. ratify or adhere to certain HRs instruments
How we can engage with the UPR

• Provide public country-specific submissions
• Support Governments and/or civil society in their preparation of reports
• Work with member states to promote the recommendations in UNHCR’s submissions and raise awareness
• Also an opportunity to share confidential or sensitive information with certain permanent missions (Summary of Key Issues)
• Collaborate with other UN agencies, Permanent Missions and/or NGOs
• Present statements during the adoption of UPR working group reports – highlighting issues and/or offering UNHCR’s technical support
• Engage with States and other stakeholders in follow-up procedures and mid-cycle reviews
UN Special Procedures

• Special procedures mandate-holders are either an individual (called a Special Rapporteur (SR) or Independent Expert (IE)) or a Working Group (WG) of five members.
• Mandate holders are appointed by the HRC and their work is supported by the OHCHR.
• Mandate holders serve in their personal capacities, independent of the UN.
• Annual reports; Conduct visits; press communications; individual communications; make recommendations
How we can engage with SPMH

- Support operations to contribute to country visits by relevant SPMH
  - Requesting visits
  - Providing confidential written information
  - Holding meetings in country / supporting visits with PoC or key stakeholders

- Thematic meetings with SPMH

- Contribute to the annual reports of SPMH
  - Meeting with relevant SPMH to determine topics of mutual interest
  - Providing written input to forthcoming reports

- Collaborate with SPMH for participation/contributions to events, side events, International Days etc.

- Raise cases of serious concern, and/or support persons of concern to submit complaints to SPMH – including requests for urgent appeals
The UN human rights treaty system
UN Treaty Bodies

- Each of the UN's nine core human rights treaties has a corresponding mechanism;
- Focus on countries part to the treaty;
- Review of states every 3-5 years;
- Monitor the enforcement of the treaties;
- Interpretation of the law through General Comments;
- Receive individual complaints…
- General recommendations\concluding observations
How we can engage with the Treaty Bodies

• Submit Confidential Comments for State reviews
• Provide oral briefings on States under review
• Provide thematic briefings/meetings for the Committees
• Participate in thematic discussions
• Engage Committee Members in cluster events
• Contribute to General Comments/General Recommendations
• Support persons of concern to submit complaints to the Treaty Bodies – including requests for interim measures where relevant
Human rights engagement as a process
Exercise

Discuss a situation where you used human rights norms or mechanisms. Or how you think is best for your cluster to start a process of engagement. Describe to your colleagues:

• what steps you took/would take
• what actions you conducted/or recommend
• what human rights instruments you used, or would want to use
• what human rights mechanisms you engaged with/would engage with
• Whether you use a human rights instrument or mechanism, what were the challenges that you have encountered?

Reflect as well on how you would evaluate the outcomes of your work.
Human Rights Engagement

- Engaging persons of concern
- Human rights analysis
- Mapping stakeholders
- Integrating human rights in UNHCR interventions
- Communication
- Implementing outcomes of engagement
- Managing Yourself
Available support

• Creation of a Task Team on Human Rights Engagement under the GPC
• Exchanges with HRs partners and NHRIs, and invite them to be part of the cluster
• Learning program on HR engagement in practice
• Monthly thematic webinars and peer exchanges
• Practical guidance, tools
• Inputs to the HCT protection strategy/ advocacy strategy
• SG’s Call to Action on HR: the Highest Aspiration – national action plans?
Key messages:

• Human rights engagement is a process - part of a broader advocacy/protection strategy
• Human rights engagement does not have a fixed form
• There is a range of UN human rights mechanisms, and several ways in which clusters can engage with them.
Thank you for your attention!

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