

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS (HR) MECHANISMS?

Understanding how the sessions take place can help in several ways:

- Looking forward: this helps understand the types of outcomes that derive from those mechanisms; we can, for instance, understand why the recommendations from the human rights mechanisms are so different from one mechanism to another. It also helps us understand what concrete avenues are available in terms of follow-up.
- Looking backward: having a clear understanding of what happens during a session of the human rights mechanisms helps us tailor our advocacy, messages, but also our expectations. We can understand with more nuance the advantages and the limitations of each human rights mechanism, what they can do and what they cannot do. This helps us formulate more clearly our messages and define with clarity the types of outcome we can expect to achieve.

When we understand what each human rights mechanism can do and make the link between the procedures that take place during the sessions of those mechanisms and the outcomes, we can have a clearer picture about what we can expect from each mechanism. This also helps us better prepare our inputs, manage advocacy interventions and tailor the way in which we engage with each mechanism.



If you want to watch some of the sessions of the UPR or other mechanisms, please visit the link below

- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/uprsessions.aspx>
- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx>
- <https://media.un.org/en/webtv/>





WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SESSION?

The process of follow-up to human rights recommendation is not a singular process. All the stakeholders involved in the review procedure with a human rights mechanism undertake some form of follow-up.

- The Government will follow-up and analyse ways to implement the recommendations it received.
- The human rights mechanisms themselves may have sometimes follow-up procedures.
- Some treaty bodies established their own follow-up procedures whereby the States are required to submit a country report on specific recommendations at half-way before their next review.
- The Universal Periodic Review also has a procedure whereby States have the option to submit a mid-term report indicating the progress they made in implementing the recommendations received at the previous review. This procedure is not mandatory; but more States have started to submit mid-term reports in relation to the Universal Periodic Review.

Then, each stakeholder that has followed or submitted information to the human rights mechanisms will undertake a follow-up. **The Government alone carries the responsibility for implementing its human rights obligations and therefore to implement the recommendations from the human rights mechanisms.** The Government is the duty-bearer. Even though the recommendations from the human rights mechanisms are not binding, implementing them demonstrates the Government is taking steps to comply with its human rights obligations. The Government may adopt several approaches to monitor the recommendations it received, to assign responsibility for the implementation of those recommendations and to track progress. Some States adopt national action plans on human rights; others establish national mechanisms for implementation and follow-up; others create databases on human rights recommendations which track progress over time.



WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL MECHANISMS AND HOW CAN THE CLUSTER SUPPORT THEM?

The national human rights action plans perform the following functions:

- Assess human rights needs in the country
- Raise awareness of human rights among national authorities
- Adopt a comprehensive approach to human rights
- Mobilize civil society organizations
- Mobilize cooperation at national and international levels
- Generate commitment to action
 - Identifies the current human rights situation in the country
 - Identifies problems that need to be overcome
 - Specifies what actions need to be taken
 - Specifies the actor who is responsible for taking the defined actions
 - Establishes firm time frames for each action
 - Provides effective monitoring and evaluation of the actions taken.
- Propose goals with an accountability framework and indicators.
- National human rights action plans can guide the development of legal frameworks, ratification of international instruments, effective rule of law, frameworks for the protection of individuals, a culture of human rights and National institutions for the protection of human rights.



Click on the link below to learn more about National plans of actions by country
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/plansactions/pages/plansofactionindex.aspx>

Further reference:

[OHCHR Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action](#)



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Follow-up implies accountability.
- Using human rights recommendations can strengthen advocacy and protection interventions.
- National mechanisms for reporting and follow-up can support coordination in the implementation of human rights recommendations.
- National human rights action plans can be useful tools to promote the inclusion of affected populations in national frameworks.

