



Child Rights Governance

Universal Periodic Review Toolkit Add-On

Advocacy Guide



Save the Children

September 2012

Save the Children's Child Rights Governance Global Initiative (CRGI) seeks to strengthen the ability of civil society organisations (CSOs) and child-led groups to hold their Governments to account on their obligations and commitments to children. Child rights monitoring, through reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, is a key tool for improving accountability.

This short advocacy guide aims to provide CSOs and child-led groups with a brief overview of the child rights outcomes and lessons learned from the UPR's first cycle and how this can help improve advocacy for the second cycle through a 10-step guide to successful child rights UPR advocacy.

UPR first cycle: any results for children?

Child rights outcomes:

The UPR completed its first cycle in March 2012 with the adoption of the last outcome reports. Although child rights figured prominently throughout the cycle, this did not always translate into concrete outcomes, as only 20% of all UPR recommendations focused on children (source: CRIN).

However, the UPR process and recommendations have shown to be crucial tools to achieve policy change and legal reform. In Nepal, for example, recommendation 108.4 to "expedite the endorsement of long-awaited child policy legislation, including the Child Rights Act" resulted in quick enactment of the law.

Save the Children was actively involved in this first cycle, supporting child rights submissions and advocacy on 31 countries. For these countries, at least one of our key child rights issues was raised in 97% of the UPR outcome documents (dialogue and recommendations). Approximately 50% of these key concerns were reflected in UPR recommendations accepted by the State under review.

Lessons learned:

Save the Children and other CSOs were the most successful in raising child rights concerns and achieving concrete outcomes when our advocacy was focused, targeted towards key Governments and coordinated at the national and international levels.

There is a need to reinforce linkages between treaty body recommendations, especially Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations, and UPR recommendations to strengthen outcomes and follow-up.

Finally, more needs to be done to give more visibility to children's voices in the UPR process, through clear child-friendly guidance, facilitation and support from CSOs.



Photo: Lisbeth Dina Jensen

UPR second cycle: what's new?

As of May 2012, the UPR has begun its second cycle (2012-2016) and the following key changes have taken place:

- New word limits for CSO submissions: **2815 words** for individual submissions and **5630 words** for coalition submissions (instead of page limits).
- Explicit focus on **follow-up**: the second cycle includes a review of the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations of the first cycle and developments in the human rights situation.
- Increase in length: the period between reviews has increased from 4 to 4.5 years and the duration of the UPR Working Group session from 3 to 3.5 hours.
- Reduction in speaking times: as all States can now intervene in the UPR Working Group, the time allotted to them to raise concerns, ask questions and make recommendations is reduced to 2 minutes each. There is a risk that controversial issues could be neglected.

UPR advocacy: what do we do and when?

10 steps to successful UPR child rights advocacy*:

1. Consult, prioritise and strategize (9-12 months prior to review):

- Consult with child rights coalitions and child-led groups to identify 5 key child rights priorities that require specific measures from the State (policy change, legislative reform, budgetary allocations).
- Identify partners and undertake a risk analysis (as the UPR is a public process).
- Develop a UPR advocacy strategy, identifying clear advocacy objectives, targets, activities, outcomes and indicators.

2. Prepare a targeted individual or coalition submission (7-8 months prior to review):

- Draft an individual or coalition CSO stakeholder submission or support child-led groups in drafting a submission that is targeted, builds on key CRC Concluding Observations and follows-up on UPR recommendations from first cycle, if relevant.
- Structure of submission: try to follow the UN format, skipping sections if they are not relevant:
 - I. Background and framework: Scope of international obligations (i.e. recommendations on removal of reservations to UNCRC and ratification of Protocols, including the third Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure); Institutional and human rights infrastructure and policy mechanisms (i.e. recommendations on the establishment of a Child Rights Institution/ Ombudsman office for children).
 - II. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms (i.e. recommendation on implementation of CRC Concluding Observations).
 - III. Implementation of international human rights obligations: (i.e. identify 3 to 5 key thematic child rights concerns).
- Present key concerns in the following manner: a paragraph explaining the concern and why policy change is needed (backed by evidence and statistics), one or two SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented and time-bound) recommendations formulated in the following manner: *“The Government should undertake measure X (policy change), and allocate Y% of the budget to achieving it, by date Z.”*
- Submit stakeholder submission on time, complying with the word limit (**2815** individual submission/ **5630** joint submission), OHCHR technical guidance and deadlines: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>).

3. Take part in national consultations for State UPR report and ensure key child rights concerns are raised (deadline for State report is 3 months prior to UPR session):

- Find out if and when State under review will have national consultations, send your UPR stakeholder submission to the Government and raise your key child rights concerns in these consultations.



Photo: Louise Dyring

4. Undertake targeted and coordinated pre-session advocacy, in close collaboration with the Save the Children Geneva Office (1-3 months prior to session):

- Identify key Governments that are donors/ support child rights work in the State under review/ raise child rights in the UPR and coordinate advocacy with partners in child rights coalition (**3 months prior to review**).
- Prepare a short advocacy document (summary of 5 key concerns, questions and recommendations) and send to key embassies in State under review (**3 months prior to review**).
- Attend UPR-Info pre-session in Geneva to present key concerns in a 5 minute oral statement and meet with Geneva mission bilaterally. This requires collaboration with the Geneva Office and resources. See dates on: <http://www.upr-info.org/> (**3 months prior to review**).
- Send advocacy document to missions in Geneva and Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) in capitals (**2-3 months prior to review**).
- If possible, organize a side-event at the UN Human Rights Council prior to the UPR Working Group to highlight key child rights issues and advocate for inclusion of key recommendations. This requires collaboration with the Geneva Office and resources (**around 2-3 months prior to review**).
- Organize follow-up meetings with embassies in State under review, missions in Geneva and Ministries of Foreign Affairs in capitals of key countries. Ensure this action is coordinated with Geneva Office (**1 month prior to review**).

5. Undertake advocacy during the UPR Working Group session in Geneva, in collaboration with the Save the Children Geneva Office (one week before and during the session).

- Meet missions in Geneva one week before the UPR session to find out what they are planning to say and advocate for them to prioritise key child rights concerns. This requires collaboration with the Geneva Office and resources.
- If you decide to organize a side-event one day before the UPR session to highlight the key child rights issues, please note that States will have already identified their issues of concern. Such an event requires collaboration with the Geneva Office and resources.
- If in Geneva, meet with the Governmental delegation after the session to advocate for acceptance of child rights recommendations and find out plans for implementation.
- Communicate the outcomes of the UPR session through a press release, blog or social networks (the UPR session is available on public webcast (<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/c/un-human-rights-council.html>)).

6. Undertake advocacy on the pending UPR child rights recommendations (between the UPR Working Group session and the adoption of the outcome report at the Human Rights Council, 3 months after the review)

- Encourage the State to conduct national consultations with stakeholders to discuss the pending child rights recommendations.
- Meet with relevant Ministries and advocate for acceptance of the pending child rights recommendations.
- Involve Parliamentarians, National Human Rights Institutions, Child Rights Institutions/Ombudsperson Offices for Children in advocacy for acceptance of the pending child rights recommendations.
- Contact the embassies of the countries that made the recommendations that are still pending and request that they intervene to encourage the State under review to accept them.

7. Prepare a 2 minute oral statement to be delivered in Geneva at the Human Rights Council when the outcome of the UPR report is adopted (3 months after the review)

- The oral statement should comment on the key child rights recommendations that were accepted or rejected and call for involvement of civil society in implementation of the UPR recommendations.
- There are only 10 slots for CSO oral statements, so it is not worthwhile coming to Geneva to deliver the statement as there is no guarantee that an NGO will obtain a slot. Collaborate with the Geneva Office to try to obtain a slot and have your statement delivered by them.

8. Analyse and disseminate UPR child rights outcomes:

- Analyse the UPR child rights outcomes, including tracking which of your child rights concerns were raised in the UPR process and resulted in accepted UPR recommendations.
- Translate UPR child rights outcomes into national languages and develop child-friendly versions and disseminate results.

9. Take part in national follow-up and monitor implementation: develop a follow-up strategy and engage in follow-up.

- Coordinate with CSOs and child-led groups to develop and/or adapt your follow-up strategy based on the child rights outcomes.
- Involve other stakeholders in follow-up, including Ombudsman for children and Parliamentarians.
- Integrate the UPR child rights recommendations into your national advocacy plans and activities.
- Meet with relevant Ministries to discuss their plans for implementation and advocate for involvement of CSOs and key stakeholders in these plans.
- Meet with embassies of the countries that made key UPR child rights recommendations and encourage them to support follow-up activities

10. Link UPR follow-up to CRC reporting and reporting to regional accountability mechanisms:

- Link to relevant UPR child rights recommendations and inform on follow-up actions in supplementary reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and to regional accountability mechanisms

*Please note that it is not necessary to undertake all these activities, particularly if you have resource constraints. At a minimum it is important to develop a strategy, to prepare an advocacy document with five key recommendations, to target advocacy towards embassies in the State under review and to prioritise follow-up on UPR child rights recommendations.



**If you want to read more about Child Rights Governance,
please visit the Resource Centre:
<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se>
where you can find and upload materials.**