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THE EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING, AND FOLLOW-UP

A first global survey of national human rights implementation and reporting systems

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UNIVERSAL RIGHTS GROUP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ever since UN member States began to construct the international human rights system over seven and a half decades ago, commentators have questioned the degree to which it is capable of, and is succeeding in, securing real-world change – in other words, whether the system is delivering demonstrable improvements in the on-the-ground enjoyment of human rights. Critics of the system (which today comprises, *inter alia*, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nine core human rights treaties, the main international human rights mechanisms –Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and UPR, as well as OHCHR) have argued that a significant 'implementation gap' has developed between universal values and local realities, that is, between the international human rights obligations that States are bound by, and their effective implementation at the domestic level.

Concern over this gap, and a determination to bridge it, have played a predominant role in shaping recent international human rights system reforms, including the establishment of the Human Rights Council in 2006, with the new body, in the words of the-then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, expected to 'lead the international community from the era of declaration to the era of implementation.' Yet, while the Council, the mechanisms, and OHCHR can – and sometimes do – play a role in promoting and supporting implementation, ultimately it is the responsibility of States themselves to translate their human rights obligations and commitments into better national laws, policies, and practices.

Unfortunately, for most of its lifetime, the Council, like the Commission on Human Rights before it, has failed to pay sufficient attention to the processes and mechanisms States have put in place to receive recommendations from the human rights mechanisms, coordinate implementation measures across government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches), track progress, measure impact, and report back to the UN.

Over the past decade, however, there are signs that UN member States, supported by think tanks and OHCHR, have begun to reverse this historic neglect, and pay more attention to the 'mechanics of implementation.'

Key to that shift has been the emergence, especially in the developing world, and in particular in LDCs and SIDS, of what we now call 'national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up' (NMIRFs). These single governmental entities collate, manage, coordinate, and track domestic progress on the implementation of recommendations from all international human rights mechanisms. While the exact form of NMIRFs varies from country to country, they are all founded upon an understanding that it is more efficient for States to establish a single, standing human rights implementation and reporting mechanism, covering *all recommendations from all UN mechanisms*, rather than maintain a web of ad hoc government committees, each responsible for different UN treaties or mechanisms.

In 2018–2019, this revolution at the national level began to be recognised and encouraged at UN level, with the creation of a 'group of friends on domestic implementation/NMIRFs' in Geneva (launched by Paraguay and the Universal Rights Group – URG), the organisation of informal regional and subregional meetings to share good practices and establish common principles for the establishment/operationalisation of NMIRFs (e.g., in Fiji and Morocco), the creation of a dedicated unit in OHCHR mandated to support NMIRFs, and the adoption of a series of Council resolutions on NMIRFs, led by Paraguay and Brazil with support from URG (e.g., resolution 42/30), creating spaces at regional and UN-level for States to share good practices in the establishment and operation of effective NMIRFs, as the keystone of the new global human rights 'implementation agenda.'

Today, thanks to these and other steps, there is growing consensus around general principles that should guide the establishment and development of NMIRFs. These have been most succinctly set out in the Pacific Principles of Practice, agreed upon by Pacific Island States in 2019:[1]

– There is no 'one size fits all' approach to NMIRFs;

– NMIRFs should be permanent and established in law/statute by the executive; and

– NMIRFs shall be given a structure, mandate, and resources to effectively coordinate and track national implementation of human rights and other overlapping frameworks.

A FIRST EVER GLOBAL SURVEY OF EMERGENT NMIRFS

Notwithstanding this progress, in 2024, there is still no clearly-defined universal understanding of what is – and is not – an NMIRF. Moreover, there has been no global effort to map which UN member States have established NMIRFs, and how each of them operates.

Against this background, between 2021-2022, URG undertook a global survey to identify the different human rights implementation-reporting systems in place across UN member States, analyse the main types of implementation/reporting systems in use, and understand the key characteristics of those systems. As part of this wider goal, the survey aimed to ascertain how many UN member States have already established, or have taken steps towards establishing, a recognisable NMIRF. During the second half of 2023, given the significant developments in the area at both UN- and national-levels, URG conducted follow-up surveys, interviews, and desk-based research to validate already-collected information and request further data on new developments. Altogether, the final survey covers 83 UN member States.

Based on the survey results, and in particular the identification of certain shared characteristics between different NMIRFs, URG has been able to isolate four broad types of national implementation-reporting systems. This typology is as follows:

– Single ministerial mechanism.

– Ad hoc inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.

– Single inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.

– National mechanism for implementation, reporting, and follow-up (NMIRF).

After identifying the above four main types of implementation-reporting system, URG then used the detailed results of the global survey to classify each respondent State's national system.

As suggested by the above, a 'sliding scale' exists between different systems – from the least to the most 'sophisticated', and from the least to the most institutionalised (i.e., from ad hoc to standing). However, there are no clear lines or boundaries between them – meaning a given national implementation-reporting system may exist at the boundary of two 'types' – or even retain certain characteristics of two or more of the four categories.

In all cases, the authors attempted to identify the 'best fit' for each country's national implementation-reporting system within the above typology. In several instances, it was not possible to clearly allocate the national system to one category. In those cases, the national implementation-reporting system was labelled as 'hybrid.'

Based on the 83 survey responses, URG was thus able to categorise States' national implementation-reporting systems as follows:

– **Single ministerial mechanism:** <u>5 States</u> – Brazil,[2] Germany, South Africa,[3] United Kingdom,[4] Vanuatu.

– *Ad hoc* **inter-ministerial coordination systems:** <u>16 States</u> – Canada, China, Czech Republic, Finland, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Ukraine, Viet Nam.

– **Single inter-ministerial coordination mechanism:** <u>18 States</u> – Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia, Chad, Chile, The Gambia, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Philippines, Qatar, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tonga.

– **NMIRF:** <u>38 States</u> – Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Georgia, Guatemala, Italy, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lebanon, Madagascar, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Rwanda, Samoa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland, Tunisia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela.

– **Hybrid:** <u>6 States</u> - Afghanistan,[5] Australia, Ethiopia, Latvia, Malaysia, Mongolia.

Taking the analysis one step further, URG then attempted to 'map' the different implementation-reporting systems against two axis: an X-axis showing levels of sophistication of the mechanism, and a Y-axis showing levels of institutionalisation. This mapping exercise was also important in order to 'test' URG's classification of State systems according to the above-mentioned four main types.

Finally, in order to illustrate the four (or five if we include 'hybrid') identified categories/types of implementation-reporting system, the report goes on to present seven national case studies (one case study showcasing a single ministerial mechanism, one an ad hoc inter-ministerial coordination system, one a single inter-ministerial coordination mechanism, one a hybrid system, and three showcasing NMIRFs); followed by a sectoral or horizontal analysis of key characteristics of all the implementation-reporting systems surveyed for this report, in order to identify good practices, and understand the key ingredients or building blocks of an effective national implementation-reporting system or mechanism.
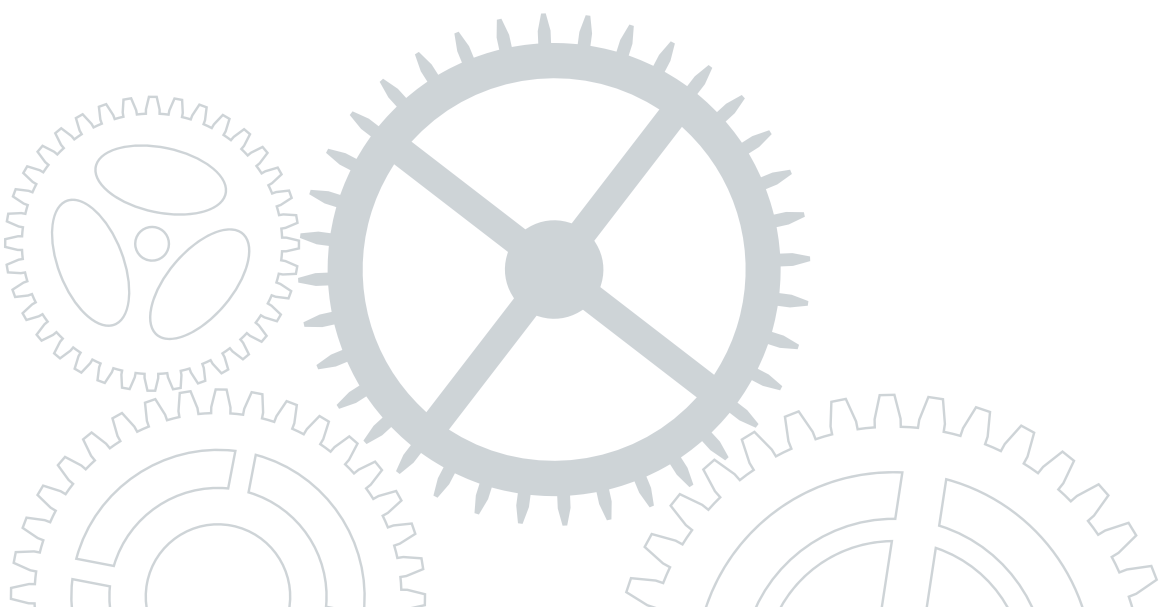
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THE HUMAN RIGHTS 'IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA' AND THE GENESIS OF NMIRFS

The international community has invested enormous time and energy in building the international human rights system over the past 70 years. Today it comprises, *inter alia*, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nine core human rights instruments (international treaties) and various international human rights mechanisms – namely, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). These mechanisms are designed to oversee States' compliance with their international legal obligations, hold duty-bearers to account, and recommend domestic legislative and policy reforms to improve future compliance.

Unfortunately, for as long as the United Nations (UN) human rights system has existed, commentators have questioned the degree to which it is capable of, and is succeeding in, securing real-world change – i.e., demonstrable improvements in the on-the-ground enjoyment of human rights. According to this narrative, a significant 'implementation gap' has developed between universal values and local realities.

Concern over this gap, and a determination to bridge it, has played a predominant role in shaping recent international human rights system reforms. For example, when proposing to replace the former Commission on Human Rights with a smaller, more powerful Human Rights Council (the Council), former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made clear that a primary objective of the new body would be to 'lead the international community from the era of declaration to the era of implementation.' When the UN General Assembly formally established the Council with resolution 60/251, it emphasised that it should 'promote the full implementation of' States' human rights obligations. To fulfil this mandate, the General Assembly (GA) instructed the Council to develop working methods that 'enable genuine dialogue, [are] results-oriented, allow for subsequent follow-up discussions to recommendations and their implementation, and also allow for substantive interaction with special procedures and mechanisms.'

To assess the degree to which the Council and the wider human rights system, including the human rights mechanisms, have responded to this call, it is useful to recount how that system is meant to work in principle. In short, four conditions must be met if the universal system is to work effectively and have a real impact on the lives, rights, and dignity of individual rights-holders around the world:

1. States must first agree on, and explicitly elaborate, the elements that constitute 'universal human rights norms.' This means agreeing to and adopting international human rights treaties setting down the rights of individual people, and the related obligations of States to respect, protect and fulfil those rights. This body of human rights law can then be clarified and elaborated through soft law instruments such as UN principles, guidelines, resolutions, and opinions.

2. States must then choose (voluntarily) to sign and ratify or accede to the various treaties, thereby binding themselves to, and accepting obligations under, international human rights law.

3. States then have a duty to fulfil those obligations by bringing laws, policies, and practices into line with universal norms. To help this process of national implementation, as noted above, the UN has created various human rights mechanisms (Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the UPR) with which States are expected to engage and cooperate by submitting regular progress reports and by implementing their recommendations (as appropriate). UN entities (agencies and programmes including OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, etc.,) can also help States fulfil their international human rights obligations and commitments by supporting the domestic implementation of the mechanisms' recommendations.

4. States should track progress with the domestic implementation of their international human rights obligations and commitments, including the extent to which they have implemented the recommendations for improved compliance provided by the mechanisms (as appropriate), and measure the impact of this on the enjoyment of human rights (via indicators). This in turn allows States to report back to the UN mechanisms with objective data on achievements and challenges. In parallel with State reporting, civil society and UN country offices have the opportunity to contribute to 'alternative reports' (often called 'shadow reports') to the mechanisms – providing independent assessments of progress and shortfalls.

Since the UN's establishment, remarkable progress has been made in meeting the first two conditions, as States have negotiated and adopted a comprehensive and deeply textured canopy of international human rights norms. A Universal Declaration and nine core treaties have been agreed to, and complemented by thousands of resolutions, principles, guidelines, opinions, and general comments (e.g., by Treaty Bodies).

Regarding the second condition, progress has been equally marked. The number of States choosing to ratify or accede to the international human rights treaties, and thus commit to their standards, has grown exponentially since their adoption. Today, all UN member States have ratified at least one core international human rights treaty, and 80 per cent have ratified four or more. As a result, many of the international conventions are moving towards universal ratification. For example, every UN member State but one (the United States) is now party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, progress on the third and fourth conditions is both more difficult to assess (it is, of course, relatively straightforward to count the number of human rights conventions or treaty ratifications, but not so with measuring levels of implementation and impact) and, most likely, far less pronounced.

This has not been helped by the broad failure of the Council and its mechanisms to prioritise and realise the mandate to 'promote the full implementation' of States' human rights obligations. As a general rule, very little space has been provided for States and other national stakeholders to provide and exchange information on implementation or to seek international technical and capacity-building support to improve future compliance, and this is compounded by a general lack of systematic follow-up by the human rights mechanisms. Perhaps most importantly, there has been a broad and persistent lack of interest, among States, civil society, the UN, and academia, about the actual mechanics, at national level, of *how* States translate UN human rights recommendations (especially from the three human rights mechanisms) into improved laws, policies and practices. To put it bluntly, until relatively recently it was extremely unclear *how* States implement their human rights obligations and commitments, *how* they track

General view of the 51st session of the Human Rights Council. Palais des Nations, Room XX, Geneva, Switzerland. September 12, 2022.
UN Photo by Pierre Albouy

progress in that regard, *how* they fulfil their reporting obligations, and – crucially – *how* they might improve those domestic systems and mechanisms in the future.

Notwithstanding this broad picture, over the past ten years there have been some encouraging signs that States are at last beginning to recognise and reverse this neglect. During that time, far more thought and attention has been paid, at national and international levels, to the mechanics of implementation – the systems and processes through which States translate universal norms into local reality. Central to that push has been the emergence, especially in small developing countries, of so-called 'national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up' (NMIRFs) – single, streamlined legal bodies that collate, manage, coordinate and track progress on the implementation of recommendations from all international human rights mechanisms (together, in some cases, with those from regional mechanisms). Some of these States, supported by OHCHR and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including the Universal Rights Group (URG), have also begun to develop sophisticated implementation and reporting software, to support the work of NMIRFs.

In 2018–2019, this revolution at national level began to be recognised and encouraged at UN level. A 'group of friends on domestic implementation/NMIRFs' was created in Geneva which, inter alia, uses the UPR to recommend the establishment or strengthening of NMIRFs in all UN member States; subregional groups (e.g., the Pacific Community) began to hold meetings to share good practices and define principles for the operation of NMIRFs; and Paraguay and Brazil secured the adoption of Council resolution 42/30, establishing a process of regional consultations to drive the quantitative and qualitative evolution of NMIRFs, as the keystone of a global human rights 'implementation agenda.'

This chapter seeks to set out the early history of NMIRFs – how and why they emerged, how they have evolved, how they function, and what role the UN has played in promoting their development. For clarity, the chapter will use the term 'national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up' (NMIRF), even though, as recounted below, several different terms have been applied over the past decade. Notwithstanding, where the chapter analyses, for example, a UN report that uses a different name formulation, it will repeat that same formulation (for reasons of historical accuracy).

THE EMERGENCE OF NMIRFS AS THE KEYSTONE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA

'National mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up,' or NMIRFs, is the name given to a range of increasingly sophisticated domestic procedures and systems designed to streamline the implementation and tracking of, and reporting on, recommendations received by States from the three main UN human rights mechanisms (some NMIRFs also process recommendations received by regional human rights mechanisms, and – increasingly – seek to integrate State commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

While the exact form of NMIRFs varies from country to country, they are all founded upon an understanding that it is more efficient for States to establish a single, standing human rights implementation mechanism, covering *all recommendations from all UN mechanisms*, rather than maintain a web of *ad hoc government committees*, each responsible for either different UN treaties (e.g., 'gender committees' for CEDAW recommendations) or mechanisms (e.g., specialised committees for UPR reporting and implementation).

NMIRFs further enjoy a number of common characteristics, and while their identification and understanding are still a work in progress (indeed, it is a central objective of efforts to establish universal norms for NMIRFs – see below), several common traits are self-evident. Effective NMIRFs enjoy, for example, high-level political backing; are 'standing' in nature, meaning they are permanent structures established through law or statute; work according to thematic or operational 'clusters' of recommendations received from all of the UN human rights mechanisms, rather than treaty-by-treaty or mechanism-by-mechanism; follow the entire 'reporting-implementation-reporting cycle' (i.e., as standing bodies, they are responsible for preparing periodic UN reports, coordinating the implementation of recommendations, tracking progress, and then reporting – again - to the mechanisms); and have one (e.g., an official in the foreign ministry) or more (i.e., an NMIRF secretariat) government official(s) responsible for the ongoing running and work of the mechanism.

EARLY HISTORY

As recounted above, the creation of the Human Rights Council was partly designed to bridge the long-standing human rights 'implementation gap.' While the Council was supposed to lead the international community from the 'era of declaration' to a new 'era of implementation,' for the first ten years of its life, the Council and its mechanisms continued to produce thousands of recommendations, together with hundreds of resolutions, reports, and principles, yet gave little thought and paid little attention to the actual mechanics of national implementation or to the measurement of progress.

The first important steps to move beyond this situation actually took place outside the intergovernmental structures of the Council, specifically in the context of the 2011-2014 Treaty Body strengthening process and, in particular, a 2012 report by the then High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay.

In a major step forward in the international community's thinking regarding the challenges of State implementation and reporting, and how to overcome them, the High Commissioner encouraged States 'to establish or reinforce a standing national reporting and coordination mechanism' (SNRCM), which 'should be able to deal with all UN human rights mechanisms requirements with the objectives of reaching efficiency, coordination, coherence and synergies at the national level.'

The report went on to offer other important new concepts and ideas to promote national follow-up, including: linking 'SNRCMs' with the new (at the time) Universal Human Rights Index database clustering recommendations from all human rights mechanisms, thematically and/or operationally (according to the institution(s) responsible for implementing them); identifying relevant actors (i.e., across line ministries) for follow-up (i.e., focal points) and 'guiding them throughout the process;' and 'leading periodic consultations with national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and civil society actors, to cooperate on reporting and implementation processes.' The report also, astutely, focused on the key role of parliaments, saying

all legislatures should establish 'appropriate standing committees or similar bodies [...] involved in monitoring and assessing the level of domestic implementation of the recommendations, particularly those related to legislative reform.' Finally, Pillay argued that 'SNRCMs should also liaise with members of the judiciary to inform them of Treaty Body recommendations and to collect and disseminate judicial decisions relevant to international human rights law.'

Looking back at that report, it becomes clear just how far-sighted Pillay's proposals were. Unfortunately, when States came to adopt General Assembly resolution 68/268 (2014), concluding the Treaty Body strengthening process, the ambitious proposals of the High Commissioner were significantly watered down. Operative paragraph 20 of the resolution merely recognised that:

Some States Parties consider that they would benefit from improved coordination of reporting at the national level, and [thus, the General Assembly] requests the Office of the High Commissioner to include among its technical assistance activities relevant assistance in this regard, at the request of a State party, based on best practices.

In 2015, consideration of the questions and ideas contained in the High Commissioner's report began to reach, and be considered by, a receptive audience in the Council. An important starting point for this shift was the second Glion Human Rights Dialogue (Glion II), a retreat in the Swiss Alps for senior international human rights policymakers, organised by Norway, Switzerland and URG.

The title of Glion II was 'The Human Rights Council at 10: improving relevance, strengthening impact.' Under this broad umbrella, one of the Dialogue's three main subthemes was 'Strengthening implementation and impact on the ground.' During discussions on this topic, State representatives noted that while 'the elaboration of a comprehensive global code of human rights norms has been one of the major success stories of the Council and its predecessor, the Commission, promoting State compliance with those norms has consistently

proved more difficult.' 'There is no question,' they continued, 'that the human rights mechanisms and their recommendations can have a profound positive impact on the promotion and protection of human rights in specific cases.' However, what is less clear is 'the degree to which the expansion of the mechanisms and their output over the past two decades has led to a corresponding strengthening in terms of their impact on the ground.'

Participants at Glion II acknowledged that 'while it may seem counter-intuitive,' there has been relatively little focus, over the years, 'on the actual mechanics of what happens to UN level human rights recommendations [...] when they are transmitted from Geneva-based missions to national capitals.' Building from this analysis, and while acknowledging the considerable challenges to effective implementation (e.g., 'the sheer number and often overlapping nature of recommendations'), diplomats and other participants drew particular

attention to the importance of 'developing effective national implementation, coordination and reporting structures.'

This was a significant moment in the emergence of NMIRFs. It was one of the first times State delegations to the Council acknowledged (even if informally) the existence and potential value of this new type of mechanism. 'Initial research suggests,' it was noted, 'that a small but growing number of States are building such domestic structures, to help coordinate the different national actors involved in implementing UN human rights recommendations.' Importantly, diplomats also recognised that such mechanisms should be inclusive in nature – i.e., not only involve the government/executive but also 'NHRIs, parliaments, judiciaries, NGOs,' and that they would be extremely useful as an interface between developing countries and 'UN country teams [...] and donor States.'

Participants at Glion II on 'The Human Rights Council at 10: improving relevance, strengthening impact' in May 2015.

With this in mind, the outcome report of Glion II made two important recommendations relating to 'SNRCMs:'

- All States should establish and/or strengthen SNRCMs, which would be responsible, inter alia, for developing national implementation plans, and for reporting back to the UN on progress. SNRCMs might also be encouraged to develop national databases to track progress on the implementation of recommendations. Helping States establish and/or strengthen SNRCMs (where requested) should be a priority for OHCHR and UN country teams.

- UN country teams might find ways to better support follow-up action to recommendations received from the international human rights mechanisms, including by supporting the establishment and strengthening of inclusive SNRCMs, by integrating UN human rights recommendations into their country programming, including UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) agreed with host States, and by supporting the strengthening of NHRIs to act (with parliaments and local civil society) as independent monitors of State implementation.

One year later, a policy report by URG critiquing the first two cycles of the UPR drew particular attention to the capacity challenges faced by States, especially developing countries, as they sought to coordinate the implementation of hundreds of UN recommendations, and positioned NMIRFs as part of the solution. 'State delegations,' the report noted, 'regularly complain of being overwhelmed or 'lost in a jungle' of recommendations.' In addition to making it difficult for national administrations, especially in Small States, to coordinate implementing actions, these capacity constraints also hamper their ability to comply with their international reporting obligations. For example, a 2016 report by the UN Secretary-General found that only 13 per cent of States Parties to the human rights treaties had fully met their reporting obligations (as of 19 January 2016).

Such challenges – i.e., the difficulties inherent in implementing and reporting on such a large number of recommendations (an average State can expect to receive well over a thousand recommendations from the three main UN human rights mechanisms over a five-year period) – have traditionally been exacerbated by the overwhelmingly *ad hoc*, piecemeal, or 'siloed' way in which States organised systems of implementation and reporting. Depending on the mechanism or treaty in question, different government departments/ministries would have primary responsibility for implementation and reporting. In other instances, different line ministries might be responsible for implementation, but the foreign ministry would be responsible for reporting – leading to obvious problems of coordination. Even in countries with relatively well-established inter-ministerial committees on human rights, the potential consequences for pursuing a fragmented, duplicative, and confused approach to implementation-reporting were clear.

Finally, and linked to the above point, national processes and systems of implementation-reporting have always tended to be *bureaucratic* rather than *democratic* in nature – tightly controlled by civil servants in a closed process largely taking place within government, rather than involving members of parliament and other elected officials, NHRIs and civil society in a more open process of constructive dialogue.

> " **A 2016 report by the UN Secretary-General found that only 13 per cent of States Parties to the human rights treaties had fully met their reporting obligations.** "

Participants at Glion II on 'The Human Rights Council at 10: improving relevance, strengthening impact' in May 2015.

THE RISE OF NMIRFS

This new type of national mechanism, first referred to in the High Commissioner's 2012 report and in the outcome report of Glion II, appears (from anecdotal evidence) to have originally appeared in a handful of States (especially small States) in Latin America and the Caribbean (e.g., Paraguay, Ecuador, and the Bahamas), the Pacific (e.g., Samoa), and the Indian Ocean (e.g., Mauritius, Seychelles). Interestingly, these early NMIRFs seem to have all emerged around the same time (from 2012), and did so 'organically' – i.e., not through any consistent process of cross-regional coordination. This seems to have been the result of individual foreign ministry officials in those countries (usually women – and often supported by UN human rights advisors), when faced with significant capacity challenges, devising new and innovative ways to improve, simplify and streamline national implementation-reporting processes. In this sense, necessity was truly the mother of invention – a point that helps explain why there were so many Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which suffer from particularly acute capacity constraints, among the early NMIRF pioneers. Broadly speaking, the individual government officials in these countries came to realise that if all recommendations could be brought together in one place and clustered according to key themes/operational objectives, then it would drastically reduce the overall number of recommendations to be acted upon, would facilitate appropriate prioritisation of more significant 'clusters' of recommendations, and would help overcome capacity constraints by concentrating resources in one mechanism, eliminating siloes, and making coordination (for both implementation and reporting) far easier. In some places, these 'founding mothers/fathers' or pioneers of NMIRFs also realised that single national mechanisms also made structured and systematic engagement with parliamentarians, judges and lawyers, the police and prison services, NHRIs and NGOs, more straightforward.

THE PIONEERS

On 9 November 2016, the Council, as per resolution 30/25, organised an intersessional panel discussion during the 26th session of the Working Group of the UPR, to share experiences and good practices in relation to the establishment and strengthening of national human rights follow-up systems, including the role of international cooperation in that regard.

The report of the debate provides an interesting snapshot of the early emergence of NMIRFs in different parts of the world.

Opening the meeting, the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights welcomed the establishment of NMIRFs (although they were not called this at the time), which, she said, 'strengthened engagement with the human rights mechanisms; enabled coordination among the branches of the State and its specialised bodies; provided for sound consultative processes with relevant stakeholders, such as national human rights institutions and civil society representatives [...]; and supported effective information management capacity.' She also mentioned the related emergence of a number of useful tools to support nascent NMIRFs, such as 'the development of indicators to help assess the implementation and impact of the recommendations on the ground […] and the creation and maintenance of a database to track and report on the implementation of recommendations.' In relation to the last point, the Deputy High Commissioner stated that OHCHR was in the process of finalising the development of a 'Universal Human Rights Index web service, which would enable the transfer of recommendations from the index to customised national databases.'

Next, ministers from several NMIRF pioneer countries shared their experiences.

Ms. Kate Gilmore, Former United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, delivering the opening statement at the panel discussion on promoting international cooperation to support national human rights follow-up systems and processes. 9 November 2016. UN TV.

H.E. Mr. Juan Miguel Gonzalez Bibolini, Minister and Director-General for Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paraguay, delivering its presentation as a panelist at the panel discussion on promoting international cooperation to support national human rights follow-up systems and processes. 9 November 2016. UN TV.

First, Ledy Zúñiga, the Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Worship of **Ecuador**, explained that, based on a voluntary commitment made during its second UPR review in May 2012, and with the technical assistance of OHCHR, Ecuador had begun developing, in August 2012, an information system called SIDERECHOS to follow up, monitor and assess the implementation of the recommendations received from all three UN mechanisms and relevant regional mechanisms, as well as the implementation of relevant national policies. In addition, a web platform was created and a communication strategy to promote the tool was developed. SIDERECHOS was launched on 10 December 2014.

According to the Minister, SIDERECHOS facilitated the democratisation of implementation by involving 'the greatest number of people in the widest possible way.' As a result, it was noted, 'transparency in processes and accountability for human rights have been enhanced. SIDERECHOS also facilitates, inter alia, the mainstreaming of human rights in the development of national and sectoral public policies, the adjustment of such policies, and the prioritisation of State actions with regard to unrealised rights.'

Second, Juan Miguel González Bibolini, Minister and Director-General for Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Paraguay**, explained that his country's journey towards establishing an NMIRF had begun in 2009. In preparation for its first UPR review, Paraguay established an inter-institutional mechanism - the 'human rights network at the executive level' - 'composed of 23 national entities, with the participation of the legislative and judicial branches, as well as civil society.'

To support this important institutional reform and facilitate easy coordination between relevant national implementation actors (e.g., line ministries), 'the government, in cooperation with the OHCHR human rights adviser in Paraguay, created SIMORE, a system to monitor human rights recommendations addressed to Paraguay.' SIMORE is an online public platform to follow up on the implementation of recommendations made by the three main UN human rights mechanisms, 'as well as judgments handed down by the Inter-American Court

of Human Rights.' He explained that this digital tool is now an integral part of Paraguay's national mechanism 'and plays a significant role in the implementation of those recommendations, the preparation of reports, and the development of governmental human rights policies and programmes, among other benefits.'

In 2016, the 'human rights network,' supported by SIMORE, consisted of 45 focal points in 36 State entities, 'tasked with following up the international human rights recommendations assigned to their respective institutions.' The network is managed jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. Focal points (e.g., assigned officials in relevant line ministries) 'upload to SIMORE the activities carried out by their respective institutions to implement the recommendations under their responsibility.' By regularly inputting data on implementation progress in this way, the government is able to keep track, in real time, of State-wide progress, apply indicators to measure impact, and more easily generate periodic progress reports for transmission to, for example, the UPR mechanism or the Treaty Bodies.

Moreover, Mr. Bibolini explained that his country's NMIRF also makes it easier for civil society and the country's NHRI to monitor State progress with the implementation of its international human rights obligations and commitments, which is important for transparency and democratic accountability, and because it helps civil society and the NHRI to prepare their own shadow reports to the UN mechanisms.

Finally, Paraguay's 'human rights network,' backed by SIMORE, has proved so successful in strengthening implementation and streamlining reporting that Paraguay has begun a 'bilateral technical cooperation programme for countries seeking to set up their own national systems […] using the SIMORE experience as good practice.' This programme has so-far helped Uruguay, Chile and Honduras establish NMIRFs with SIMORE-style digital tools, while 'requests for technical assistance have been received from countries in Central America, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.'

Re-launch of the Ecuadorian platform SIDERECHOS. 9 December 2019. Ministry of Women and Human Rights.

Ahead of the debate, OHCHR published and shared a new report, 'National mechanisms for reporting and follow-up' which, *inter alia*, included case studies of other 'NMIRF pioneers.' Some of these, together with additional States that presented information on national experiences during the November 2016 Council debate, are summarised below:

– **Belgium's** 'federal structure,' it was explained during the debate, 'requires [considerable] coordination and consultation when preparing human rights reports and ensuring follow-up.' Belgium thus established a 'permanent coordination and consultation structure for multilateral issues within the Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.'

– In late 2016, following an OHCHR-organised training workshop on human rights indicators, the government of **Mauritius** prepared terms of reference for a new 'national mechanism for reporting and follow-up.' The terms of reference included a mandate to develop 'human rights indicators' to measure impact in Mauritius, as well as a stipulation that the new NMIRF must include 'at least two statisticians.'

– Previously, the **Bahamas** prepared for each review (whether UPR or Treaty Body) by convening 'ad hoc drafting committees that were tasked with producing individual human rights reports' that were 'disbanded immediately thereafter,' with each being led by a (usually different) lead ministry. This led to significant challenges in terms of coordination and 'institutional memory.' Moreover, because the ad hoc committees were created for the sole purpose of preparing periodic reports, and were disbanded immediately after the relevant UN review, there was insufficient focus on the implementation of recommendations. To address these drawbacks, in 2014 the Bahamas established a standing inter-ministerial mechanism for reporting and follow-up: a working group led by the Attorney General's Office and composed of designated focal points

in line ministries. Later, this was expanded into what we now understand as an NMIRF, with the participation of other parts of the State, including the department of statistics, the police force and the defence force, as well as civil society.

– **Portugal's** National Human Rights Committee was established in 2010, by resolution 27/2010 of the Council of Ministers. The Committee is responsible for intergovernmental coordination 'with the aim of promoting an integrated approach to human rights,' which includes implementation of recommendations, coordination of governmental human rights action, and carrying out reporting obligations. The Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Human Rights Division in the Ministry acts as the permanent secretariat. All ministers are represented on the Committee, in some cases at state secretary level, and each ministry has an assigned focal point. The national statistics office is also a member. The Committee meets at least three times a year at plenary level and whenever needed at working group level. At least one of these three plenary meetings must be open to civil society. Outside of formal meetings, coordination is mainly by email (i.e., rather than via online platforms such as SIMORE).

> " **In 2014 the Bahamas established a standing inter-ministerial mechanism for reporting and follow-up: a working group led by the Attorney General's Office and composed of designated focal points in line ministries.** "

The 38th plenary meeting of the Portuguese National Human Rights Committee to discuss how to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 19 May 2023. Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

TOWARDS UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES FOR NMIRFS?

As well as providing a snapshot of the early history of NMIRFs, including the reasons for their emergence, the above-mentioned case studies also revealed a critical challenge to their effective long-term development (in both a qualitative and quantitative sense); namely that, in 2016 (and so it remains today), there was no universally accepted understanding of what is, and what isn't, an NMIRF.

Moreover, since 2016, this conceptual opacity has, if anything, gotten worse, as more and more countries have established – or have claimed to have established – NMIRFs. While many countries now claim to have an NMIRF, they are usually just applying this label to whatever national implementation and reporting system they have already put in place. In some ways, this mirrors the challenges faced by NHRIs in the early years of their development – before the 1993 Paris Principles codified their principal characteristics.

States regularly argue that there can be no 'one size fits all' approach to NMIRF development. That may be true, yet it remains of vital importance that States, supported by the UN and civil society, agree on the basic parameters of what constitutes a 'true' NMIRF and how it operates. Without such a 'norm setting' exercise, not only will NMIRFs remain the subject of conceptual confusion, but they will also, more importantly, never fulfil their potential as the main engine of the international human rights implementation agenda.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Because the above-mentioned 'pioneer NMIRFs' emerged organically, in different parts of the world and in an unconnected manner (i.e., bottom up), rather than via any international process of development (i.e., top down), there has been a great deal of confusion about what to call this new type of mechanism, and, linked with that point, about what is - and is not - an NMIRF.

As we have seen, one of the earliest efforts to understand and provide a name for this new type of mechanism was Navi Pillay's 2012 report on Treaty Body strengthening. In that report, the High Commissioner introduced the conceptual basis of what she termed 'standing national reporting and coordination mechanisms' (SNRCMs). While her proposals had much to commend them, one important (symbolically and practically) omission was the word 'implementation' in the general name she put forward. This reluctance to explicitly include the word 'implementation' stemmed, in large part, from a concern that some powerful UN members would likely object to OHCHR straying into an area seen as a uniquely State prerogative (i.e., how to implement international obligations at national level). This explains the preference for a focus on 'reporting' (which is an international obligation), 'coordination' (sufficiently vague to mean a number of different things), and – later, in a further name proposed by OHCHR – 'follow-up' (which also meant different things to different people).

Also, as recounted above, in 2015, Norway, Switzerland and URG included the emergence of national follow-up mechanisms as a discussion point at Glion II, also using the term 'SNRCMs' in the outcome report.

One year later, the third Glion Human Rights Dialogue (Glion III) focused on 'Human rights implementation, compliance and prevention: turning universal norms into local reality.' The first of three main subthemes explored at Glion III was, 'The experience of States with implementation, coordination and reporting: identifying and replicating good practice.'

After posing the questions, 'what happens to [UN human rights] recommendations once they have been produced by the relevant mechanism and transmitted to the concerned State's delegation in Geneva?' and 'how do States seek to analyse and process them, and feed recommendations into relevant domestic policymaking processes?' the outcome report of Glion III recalled the 'growing interest, among States, NGOs, UN experts

and OHCHR, about the evolution of so-called 'national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up' (NMRFs) or 'standing national implementation, coordination and reporting structures' (SNICRS). The first of these new names (NMRF) had started to be used by OHCHR over the preceding twelve months, for example in its 2016 report on 'National mechanisms for reporting and follow-up: A practical guide to effective State engagement with international human rights mechanisms.' To avoid creating confusion, Norway, Switzerland and URG agreed to also use the name in the Glion III report, alongside a new label, included in the background papers for the retreat: SNICRS. The significance of this new name (which was debated during the Glion III retreat, without any agreement being reached) was the inclusion of the word 'implementation.'

Beyond questions of nomenclature, there were several other interesting debates at Glion III, with important implications for the quantitative and qualitative development of NMIRFs. Some of the debates were ideological in nature, others practical.

Regarding the former, some States (from the Like-Minded Group of countries) at Glion III argued that 'the implementation of international recommendations is a national prerogative and need not, therefore, be the subject of international debate or consideration,' (this helps explain OHCHR's reticence to including the initial 'I' (for implementation)). Others disagreed, however, recognising that while 'responsibility to implement Council decisions and recommendations must be State-owned,' the international community (specifically the Council), can and should provide support by reminding States of their obligations, providing recommendations and guidance, and monitoring implementation status.

The most important practical debate at Glion III centred on a first attempt to identify common standards or principles for NMIRFs – both to help define the nature and operation of such mechanisms, and eventually to help more States establish them. While many States (and OHCHR) repeatedly made the point that 'there is no one size fits all formula,' others pointed out that

'effective NMRFs or SNICRS appear to share certain common characteristics.'

For example, in addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, they tend to: have the capacity to track progress with implementation; work in a transparent manner (*vis-à-vis* the general public); and be inclusive in nature – open to 'all relevant national stakeholders […], including parliaments, NHRIs, NGOs, the judiciary and national statistical offices.'

This last point was part of a wider discussion during the retreat about the nature of implementation. In particular, State representatives at both Glion II and III began to develop a more comprehensive or inclusive understanding of implementation, not as a *bureaucratic* exercise requiring the involvement of one or two government ministries, but as a *democratic* one necessitating the engagement of all relevant parts of society. The critical role of State legislatures in the process offers but one example. It has been estimated that more than 50 per cent of UPR recommendations require or involve parliamentary legislative action to be implemented – i.e., they cannot be realised through executive/government action alone. Additionally, parliaments play a crucial role in overseeing executive actions, including whether or not the government has implemented its international human rights obligations. In some (best practice) cases, parliaments carry out this oversight function in consultation with NHRIs and national civil society – allowing for greater transparency and deeper public accountability.

Building on these core common characteristics of NMIRFs, States at Glion III also: recognised the value of developing 'IT-based coordination and reporting systems centred on a single database' that automatically incorporate and cluster recommendations from all three UN mechanisms, collect information on implementation progress, and 'allow for streamlined national reports to international bodies;' called on all States to explore the integration of nationally-defined human rights indicators into domestic implementation and reporting strategies (including NMIRFs), 'in order to

allow for the measurement of impact'; and called on all States to ensure that such indicators 'are compatible with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,' (to allow for joint tracking and reporting), as well as with State obligations under the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

Finally – and crucially - there was a clear recognition, at Glion III, that States should 'assess their current implementation systems and […] seek to establish, where appropriate, single national implementation and reporting mechanisms,' and, moreover, should 'consider developing a set of international standards or principles for NMRFs or SNICRS.'

Participants at Glion III on 'Human rights implementation, compliance and prevention' in May 2006.

OHCHR'S 2016 REPORT

In addition to presenting the results of a first global 'survey' of nascent NMIRFs in different parts of the world, in the form of a collection of country case studies (e.g., Bahamas, Mexico, Morocco, Portugal), and the introduction of a modified name for these new national mechanisms (NMRFs), OHCHR's 2016 report was also significant in that it represented a first attempt by a UN agency to identify key common characteristics of effective NMIRFs. It aimed to do so (while being careful not to upset States opposed to 'UN interference' in sovereign affairs) by providing a first working definition of NMIRFs, supplemented by the identification of four 'capacities' (key characteristics of effective national mechanisms - 'engagement,' 'coordination,' 'consultation,' and 'information management'). Taken together, the definition and the four capacities can be seen as providing rudimentary 'universal principles' for NMIRFs (in the same way as the Glion III outcome report) – though the Office was careful not to position them as such. Unfortunately, as explained below, OHCHR undermined this important norm-setting work by arguing, in part I of the report, that 'there are four main types of [NMIRFs]: […] *ad hoc*; ministerial; inter-ministerial; and institutionally separate.' This was, in effect, akin to saying that the existing implementation-reporting systems of every State could already be described as a full-fledged NMIRF.

While perhaps understandable (OHCHR was trying to square a circle between, on the one hand, publishing a product with normative value, and on the other, not antagonising important UN member States), this all-encompassing approach nonetheless represented a missed opportunity, especially when one considers that the definition put forward in the report was very good, and in itself contained a number of important elements for future, potential UN principles on NMIRFs. The 2016 report proposed the following definition:

A national mechanism for reporting and follow-up is a national public mechanism or structure that is mandated to coordinate and prepare reports to and engage with international and regional human rights mechanisms […] and to coordinate and track national follow-up and implementation of the treaty obligations and the recommendations emanating from these mechanisms […]

The national mechanism performs these functions in coordination with ministries, specialised State bodies (such as the national statistics office), parliament and the judiciary, as well as in consultation with the national human rights institution(s) and civil society […]

A national mechanism's approach is comprehensive, and it engages broadly on all human rights, with all international and regional human rights mechanisms, and in following-up on recommendations […]

What is more, the report offered a particularly strong argument for why NMIRFs work, and why it would be in the interest of all States to establish one:

The international [human rights] mechanisms are mutually reinforcing and constitute a complementary human rights protection system to State efforts at the national level. Their recommendations or decisions provide the most authoritative and comprehensive overview of human rights issues requiring attention at the national level, based on the legal obligations under international human rights law as well as the political commitments made by States.

Within the above definition lie many of the core principles also identified during discussions at Glion III, namely: NMIRFs should be comprehensive in approach – covering all UN and regional mechanisms; they should receive and coordinate the implementation of all recommendations from each of these mechanisms (clustered by theme and operational objective); they should be inclusive in nature – open to the engagement of national statistics offices, parliamentarians, judges, NGOs, NHRIs, etc.; and should have the capacity to track progress with implementation.

Moreover, OHCHR's report also touched upon other key principles considered at Glion III. For example, it recognised that NMIRFs: should be standing in nature; 'may benefit from a comprehensive formal legislative or policy mandate, as well as a common intragovernmental understanding of its role and political ownership at the highest level;' and should have 'dedicated, capacitated and continuous staff, building expertise, knowledge and professionalism at the country level.'

Roundtable organised by OHCHR in partnership with the Geneva Human Rights Platform, the Universal Rights Group and the Danish Institute for Human Rights on 'national mechanisms for implementation, reporting, and follow-up: what next.' 16 September 2022. Dominico Zipoli.

THE GROUP OF FRIENDS

Building on OHCHR's report and the Glion III outcome document, in 2016, Portugal and URG established a new Group of Friends at the Council to help promote the quantitative and qualitative development of NMIRFs.

The 'Group of Friends on national implementation/ NMIRFs' (in a final twist to the saga over names, Portugal and URG added an 'I' for 'implementation' to the name/acronym proposed in OHCHR's 2016 report), now includes around 40 States, OHCHR and other interested UN agencies (e.g., UNFPA), and international NGOs (including URG and UPR Info). The Group provides a space for States to share experiences and good practices on the establishment and development of NMIRFs by delivering regular joint statements on NMIRFs at sessions of the Council, and – crucially – by asking advanced questions and providing recommendations on NMIRFs during the UPR reviews of each and every UN member State.

Equally important, the Group became a key engine for intergovernmental progress on the elaboration of universal norms for NMIRFs.

At first, it pursued this norm-setting objective by encouraging members to organise regional consultations wherein States could share experiences on implementation and reporting, including the establishment and development of national mechanisms, and together identify common 'success factors' and/or key characteristics of effective NMIRFs. It was the hope of the Group of Friends that each of these consultations would result in the elaboration and adoption of regional 'NMIRF principles,' which, taken together, would eventually combine to form the basis of universal principles, (in the same way that a series of regional meetings on NHRIs led to the adoption of the 1993 Paris Principles).

In this context, in April 2019, Fiji (supported by the UK, the Regional Rights Resource Team of the Pacific Community, and URG) hosted a first-ever regional consultation on NMIRFs, for Pacific Island States. After the meeting, Pacific States negotiated and adopted the 'Pacific Principles of Practice' on NMIRFs, which were

then launched at a 3 July Council side event hosted by the Permanent Mission of Australia.

The Principles, endorsed by Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa (one of the first countries in the world to establish an NMIRF) and Vanuatu, were intended to 'contribute to the global conversation on effective implementation of human rights obligations and development commitments.' They are based on the following principles:

– There is no 'one size fits all' approach to NMIRFs;

– NMIRFs should be permanent and be established by the executive or legislature; and

– NMIRFs shall be given a structure, mandate, and resources to effectively coordinate and track national implementation of human rights and other overlapping frameworks.

Seven sub-clauses help elaborate the third principle (above). These include guidance to States on:

• The composition of effective NMIRFs (e.g., including the participation of government ministries and agencies, statutory bodies, parliamentarians, the judiciary, civil society, NHRIs, traditional and religious leaders/groups, national statistics offices, and the private sector);

• The ideal mandate for an NMIRF, including a list of responsibilities such as: 'receiving, clustering, planning, tracking and centrally managing all human rights recommendations,' 'centralised collection of data and information management to continuously track progress and identify implementation gaps,' 'regular convening of all national implementing actors,' 'making all recommendations, past reports and implementation status publicly available in primary national languages,' 'regular reporting to parliament,' and public 'consultations on all draft reports and implementation plans;'

H.E. Mr. Rui MACIEIRA, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva speaking at the Intersessional Seminar on National Mechanisms on June 2023

H.E. Mr. Tovar DA SILVA NUNES, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva speaking at the Intersessional Seminar on National Mechanisms on June 2023

- How to connect human rights implementation with implementation and reporting on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

- The utilisation of technology to facilitate the aims and functions of an NMIRF and to simplify reporting;

- Working methods – including terms of reference;

- Secretariat support – 'a secretariat should be established and written into the terms of reference;' and

- Resources – 'an NMIRF should be provided with adequate resources to fulfil its mandate.'

Speaking at the launch of the Principles, the Executive Director of URG, Marc Limon, remarked that this was 'an extraordinary, even historic, moment for the universal human rights system: the launch of the world's first inter-governmental principles designed to guide States in the effective implementation of their international human rights obligations.'

Unfortunately, capacity constraints prevented members of the Group of Friends from organising and hosting similar meetings for other UN regions and subregions.

Therefore, in the summer of 2019, two members of the Group, Paraguay and Brazil, with the support of URG, drafted a Council resolution calling on the UN to support the organisation of five regional consultations on NMIRFs. This was eventually adopted by consensus on 27 September 2019 as resolution 42/30 on 'Promoting international cooperation to support national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up.' With the resolution, the Council:

– Recognised the importance of providing a platform for States to share experiences, good practices and lessons learnt with human rights implementation and reporting, and to boost cooperation, including South-South cooperation, triangular cooperation, and North-South cooperation, as a means of 'strengthening national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up;'

– Recognised the 'mutually reinforcing role and contribution of all human rights mechanisms of international and regional human rights systems for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;'

– Recognised the importance of securing the participation of 'all branches of State, as well as of national human rights institutions, civil society, academia, and other relevant stakeholders' in effective NMIRFs;

– Recalled 'that the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda' are 'interrelated and mutually reinforcing,' and that the implementation of States' international human rights obligations and commitments contributes 'to the prevention of human rights violations;'

– Welcomed previous OHCHR support for 'the establishment or the strengthening of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up;'

– Encouraged all States 'to establish or strengthen national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up for further compliance with human rights obligations or commitments, and to share good practices and experiences in their use for the elaboration of public policies with a human rights approach;'

– Requested OHCHR 'to organise five regional consultations to exchange experiences and good practices relating to the establishment and development of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and their impact on effective implementation of human rights obligations and commitments, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders;' and

– Requested OHCHR to thereafter 'prepare a report with the conclusions and recommendations made at the regional consultations in order to identify forms of cooperation between the Human Rights Council and the national mechanisms for implementation.'

It was the hope of Paraguay, Brazil and URG that the Pacific Principles of Practice would be presented at each of the five consultations to be convened, as a means of inspiring each UN regional group to elaborate their own sets of principles. They would then be collated, synthesised, and presented in OHCHR's subsequent report to the Council, potentially forming the basis for universal principles for the establishment, development, and operation of NMIRFs.

Though delayed due to COVID-19, the five regional meetings were eventually held in November and December 2021 (under a virtual format).

Mr. Marc Limon, Executive Director, Universal Rights Group presenting good practices at the Intersessional Seminar to facilitate sharing experiences among States on National mechanisms, for implementation, reporting and follow-up. 23 June 2023. UN TV.

The Minister of Justice, Kingdom of Morocco, Mr Abdellatif Ouahbi, formally opens the International Seminar. 7 and 8 December 2022. The Danish Institute for Human Rights.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Partly because the five regional seminars were held virtually, and thus were not able to fulfil one of their primary intended purposes – namely, to encourage each UN regional group to consider possible sets of regional principles for the establishment and/or strengthening of NMIRFs, following the lead of the Pacific Principles of Practice – over the summer of 2022, Paraguay, Brazil and URG worked on a follow-up resolution. This was intended to 'bring the discussions to Geneva' where, it was hoped, State experts in the Council could consider gathered good practices from the regional seminars and translate them into universal principles for NMIRFs.

Resolution 51/33 on 'Promoting international cooperation to support national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up' was eventually adopted on 7 October 2022. After recalling key preambular paragraphs from resolution 42/30, and welcoming the holding 'of five online regional consultations to exchange experiences and good practices relating to the establishment and development of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and their impact on the effective implementation of human rights obligations and commitments, as well as the additional information provided by member States throughout the consultation process,' with the text, the Council:

– (Again) encouraged States to establish or strengthen NMIRFs for further compliance with human rights obligations and commitments and to share good practices and experiences in their use;

– Requested OHCHR to organise 'a one-day intersessional seminar in 2023 and a one-day intersessional seminar in 2024, both to be held in Geneva, to consider further the experiences and good practices shared during the five online regional consultations relating to the establishment and development of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up […] and to present to the Council at its fifty-seventh session a summary report on the seminars;' and

– Requested OHCHR 'to establish and maintain a virtual knowledge hub for national mechanisms, in collaboration with States and relevant stakeholders, in order to share good practices and to facilitate the exchange of experiences.'

The first of the intersessional seminars was held on 23 June 2023. During the initial panel discussion, Marc Limon of URG called for the elaboration of universal principles to guide the establishment and/or development of NMIRFs. This call was echoed by Kazakhstan.

In his statement, Limon argued that the adoption of the Pacific Principles of Practice 'marked a crucial turning point in our common understanding of how to effectively develop national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up.' They reflected, he said, a recognition 'that while there is no 'one size fits all' approach to the development of national mechanisms, there are nevertheless 'success factors' and/or key characteristics of effective mechanisms that enable us to identify a best practice model of a true NMIRF.' In conclusion, he left participants with one key message: that previous exchanges of good practices had been useful in identifying core common characteristics of effective NMIRFs, and that it was now time to distil those characteristics into 'a common understanding of the necessary criteria to be a recognisable NMIRF' - and that this should form the basis of universal guiding principles on NMIRFs based on the model of the Paris Principles for NHRIs.

Louis Mason of URG delivered a similar message during an expert 'International Seminar on National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRFs) in the field of human rights,' hosted by the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights of the Kingdom of Morocco (i.e., Morocco's NMIRF) on 7 and 8 December 2022 in Marrakech.[6]

FINAL POINTS

Three other developments at the Council over recent years, closely related to the emergence of national mechanisms, merit reference in any early history of NMIRFs, namely: the design of digital technology tools for implementation and reporting; the empirical measurement of human rights progress; and the linking of the human rights, sustainable development, and prevention agendas.

Firstly, the establishment of NMIRFs in a number of countries (e.g., Paraguay, Ecuador, and Samoa) has been accompanied by the development of information technology tools designed to ease coordination across government ministries, track progress and facilitate periodic reporting (i.e., back to the UN). The first of these tools - essentially national databases of clustered recommendations that automatically share data between national implementation focal points, and also link to a public website to show progress – was the SIMORE system in Paraguay (originally developed in cooperation with OHCHR). SIMORE was closely followed by the SIDERECHOS system in Ecuador, and SADATA in Samoa. The designers of SADATA subsequently also designed software for New Zealand's NHRI, allowing it to monitor government progress with the implementation of UPR recommendations.

OHCHR subsequently took the original SIMORE design and improved upon it – creating a new off-the-shelf digital coordination and tracking system: the National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD). Among other features, the NRTD: allows States to automatically download new UN human rights recommendations addressed to them, via OHCHR's global Universal Human Rights Index database; automatically 'tags' downloaded recommendations with relevant human rights themes and SDG targets; automatically shares recommendation clusters with relevant focal points in line ministries; allows focal points to directly input information on implementation progress; integrates

indicators to allow the State to measure the impact of implementing measures on the enjoyment of human rights; links with a public-facing website; and facilitates the preparation of reports to the international human rights mechanisms.

In its 2019 Human Rights Report, OHCHR reported that it had assisted States including Botswana, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ghana, Haiti, Kenya, North Macedonia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Zambia, to establish and/or strengthen NMIRFs, including through NRTD installation and customisation.

Around the same time as OHCHR was developing NRTD, an NGO, the IMPACT Trust (responsible for the development of SADATA in Samoa), teamed up with the Permanent Mission of Singapore in Geneva and URG to develop a civil society-led alternative to OHCHR's database, called IMPACT OSS. IMPACT OSS is currently being used by a number of States in Asia and the Pacific.

Secondly, in several countries, NMIRFs, backed by technology, have begun measuring changes (using indicators) in the domestic enjoyment of human rights, and (linked to this point) in the human rights impact of legal, policy and other reforms designed to implement UN recommendations. Although a broad methodology for such empirical measurement of human rights change/impact, using a system of output and outcome indicators, was originally proposed by OHCHR over ten years ago, uptake among States remained very low. Today, there is anecdotal evidence that this situation is beginning to change – mainly thanks to NMIRFs (along with digital support tools), which, through the regularised participation of national statistics offices, systematically gather human rights indicator data and link it to relevant recommendations and implementing actions.

Thirdly, over recent years, States at the UN have also begun to pay increased attention to the potential advantages of NMIRFs (and digital support tools) in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the prevention agenda of Secretary-General António Guterres. Human Rights Council resolutions now regularly recognise that State progress with the implementation of international human rights

obligations and commitments also, by definition, drives progress towards the achievement of the SDGs aim of 'leaving no one behind' (because 92% of the SDG targets are grounded in human rights law), and towards building societal resilience, thus preventing human rights violations, crises and – ultimately – violent conflicts.

UNDP Kenya. 6 December 2019.

CHAPTER

02

GLOBAL SURVEY ON IMPLEMENTATION - MAPPING EXISTING PROCESSES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF UN HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Between 2021-2022, the Universal Rights Group undertook a global survey to identify the different human rights implementation-reporting systems in place across UN member States, analyse the main types of implementation/reporting systems in use, and understand the key characteristics of those systems. As part of this wider goal, the survey aimed to ascertain how many UN member States have already established, or have taken steps towards establishing, a recognisable NMIRF. For a small number of countries, this primary research was backed up with desk research on national implementation-reporting systems based on existing public or academic sources of information (e.g., South Africa, United Kingdom). In October 2023, given the significant developments in the area of NMIRFs at both UN- and national-levels, URG conducted a follow-up survey of those countries that had responded to the first survey, to validate already-collected information and request further information on any new developments. Moreover, in an effort to improve regional balance, in late 2023, URG conducted a few additional interviews with State representatives. In total, over the three years of research, 83 States responded to the survey and/or were interviewed by URG analysts.

DEVELOPING A TYPOLOGY OF DIFFERENT IMPLEMENTATION-REPORTING SYSTEMS

As noted in chapter 1, until relatively recently, diplomats at the Human Rights Council, UN experts, civil society organisations, and even academic researchers had paid very little attention to the 'mechanics' of *how* States implement the recommendations they receive from the human rights mechanisms, *how* they track progress, *how* they measure impact, and *how* they prepare periodic progress reports.

As part of this broad neglect, little or no work has been done to identify, even less codify, the different national implementation-reporting systems in use around the world. The survey conducted by URG between 2021 and 2023 therefore provides a first opportunity to identify and understand the different systems established by States, and to attempt to codify those systems.

Based on the survey results, and in particular the identification of certain shared characteristics between different NMIRFs, URG has been able to isolate four broad types of national implementation-reporting systems. This typology is as follows:

– **Single ministerial mechanism.** These systems are characterised by a large degree of control residing within just one government ministry. For a given UN mechanism or treaty, that ministry will assign different recommendations to relevant line ministries. That may occur during a coordination meeting or simply through the sending of emails. There is usually limited discussion between the lead ministry and relevant line ministries about appropriate implementation measures – recommendations are simply assigned, and it is left up to the line ministry to then decide on and take forward implementing measures. Under this system, the lead ministry will typically only get back in touch with the line ministries when a future periodic report to the relevant UN mechanism is due. For example, in many countries the foreign ministry has overall responsibility for engagement with the UPR mechanism and will simply assign received UPR recommendations to the relevant

line ministries for implementation. Based on the data gathered through the global survey, single ministerial systems can be said to be the least institutionalised and sophisticated of the four NMIRF 'types.'

– **Ad hoc inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.** These systems are similar to 'single ministerial systems' in that they are located squarely within the executive branch and see a 'lead ministry' play a dominant role in coordinating implementation and reporting for a given UN mechanism or treaty (e.g., the ministry of family or child affairs leading on the Convention on the Rights of the Child). However, they are also more 'advanced' or sophisticated in their working methods and levels of stakeholder engagement when compared to single ministerial mechanisms, in that the lead ministry will typically establish an inter-ministerial committee that will meet to discuss implementing measures and agree who will take them forward – *and how* (i.e., rather than simply being assigned recommendations). The lead ministry also tends to be more proactive in following up with line ministries on progress and in organising subsequent committee meetings. Those committees are, however, usually *ad hoc* – i.e., organised at the behest of the lead ministry with no central government coordination and without any governing statute establishing the committee or setting its rules of procedure.

– **Single inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.** These systems are similar to 'ad hoc inter-ministerial coordination systems,' except that a myriad of different committees or action plans (e.g., a national committee on women responsible for CEDAW recommendations) or action plans (e.g., a national action plan on children's rights that incorporates Committee on the Rights of the Child recommendations) are replaced by a

Side-event at the margins of the 27th session of the UPR 'Leveraging the crucial role of NHRIs and national NGOs in advocating for, and independently monitoring and reporting on, the domestic implementation of UPR recommendations.' 9 May 2017.

single inter-ministerial committee - sometimes created by statute, other times not – with established rules of procedure (governing, for example, composition, or meeting frequency). By their character, single inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms involve some degree of central government coordination, and also benefit from economies of scale (because they can, at a given meeting, address a certain thematic 'cluster' of recommendations irrespective of the human rights mechanism from which they originate). Such systems remain, however, predominantly 'inter-ministerial' in character – i.e., with minimal involvement on the part of parliaments or judiciaries. Civil society and NHRIs are sometimes consulted but this tends to remain *ad hoc* as opposed to systematic. In other words, implementation and reporting remains a bureaucratic rather than a democratic exercise.

– **National mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up (NMIRFs).** NMIRFs represent a further 'step up' from 'single inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms.'

They are a single standing mechanism (e.g., a committee), usually established and governed by statute or legislation, meaning that rules of procedure, composition, and responsibilities are systematised and institutionalised. Moreover, and crucially, NMIRFs enjoy a higher degree of sophistication, notably by systematically engaging with stakeholders beyond the executive. Specifically, NMIRFs routinely engage/involve judiciaries (on implementation) and parliaments/parliamentarians (on implementation and/or oversight). Their governing statutes also typically require the participation of civil society and NHRIs – usually on a consultative basis, though occasionally as implementing partners. NMIRFs often use more advanced tools, such as implementation, monitoring and reporting software, which may, in some cases, allow them to apply impact indicators to measure progress and 'link' that progress with other policy areas, such as on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets.

CLASSIFYING STATE IMPLEMENTATION-REPORTING SYSTEMS

After identifying the above four main types of implementation-reporting system, URG then used the detailed results of the global survey to classify each respondent State's national system.

As suggested by the above, a 'sliding scale' exists between different systems – from the least to the most 'sophisticated', and from least to the most institutionalised (i.e., from *ad hoc* to standing). However, there are no clear lines or boundaries between them – meaning a given national implementation-reporting system may exist at the boundary of two 'types' – or even retain certain characteristics of two or more of the four categories.

In all cases, the authors attempted to identify the 'best fit' for each country's national implementation-reporting system within the above typology. In several instances, it was not possible to clearly allocate the national system to one category, as the national system displayed strong characteristics of more than one of the above system types, either because the system varied according to the human rights mechanism (e.g., Australia) or there were different systems in place for implementation, monitoring, and reporting (e.g., Afghanistan). In those cases, the national implementation-reporting system was labelled as 'hybrid.'

Based on the survey responses and information obtained through desk research, URG was able to categorise the 83 reviewed States' national implementation-reporting systems as follows:

– **Ministerial mechanism:** 5 States - Brazil,[7] Germany, South Africa,[8] United Kingdom,[9] Vanuatu.

– ***Ad hoc* inter-ministerial coordination systems:** 16 States – Canada, China, Czech Republic, Finland, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Ukraine, Viet Nam.

– **Single inter-ministerial coordination mechanism:** 18 States – Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia, Chad, Chile, The Gambia, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Philippines, Qatar, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tonga.

– **NMIRF:** 38 States – Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Georgia, Guatemala, Italy, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lebanon, Madagascar, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Rwanda, Samoa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland, Tunisia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela.

– **Hybrid:** 6 States - Afghanistan,[10] Australia, Ethiopia, Latvia, Malaysia, Mongolia.

MAPPING NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION-REPORTING SYSTEMS

Taking the analysis one step further, URG then attempted to 'map' the different implementation-reporting systems against two axis: a X-axis showing levels of sophistication of the mechanism, and a Y-axis showing levels of institutionalisation. This mapping exercise was also important in order to 'test' URG's classification of State systems according to the above-mentioned four main types. To score States' implementation-reporting systems on these two axes, each was assessed according to the following criteria.

X-axis (mechanism sophistication)

- **Stakeholder participation** – whether, and to what extent, stakeholders that are not part of the executive branch of government (e.g., parliamentarians, judiciary, civil society, national statistics bureaus, other relevant State agencies, and the private sector) engage with a State's mechanism.

- **SDG integration** – whether there is an integrated approach to human rights and SDG reporting and implementation.

- **Clustering** – whether recommendations are clustered by thematic human rights issue/objective, rather than addressed in silos (e.g., each treaty separately).

- **Centralised repository/database or recommendation tracking software** – whether implementation information is stored in a central repository and if a tracking software/database (e.g., IMPACT OSS, NRTD, SIMORE/SIMORE PLUS) is used to monitor implementation.

- **Implementation monitoring** – whether a particular mechanism has processes in place to monitor/track State implementation of received human rights recommendations.

- **Human rights impact indicators** – whether impact indicators are used to measure the impact of implementation actions.

- **'Holistic' approach to implementation** – whether planning for recommendation implementation takes into consideration *all recommendations* received by the State (i.e., recommendations from both past and most recent reviews) and covers recommendations from *all human rights mechanisms*, rather than having a different process for different Treaties or human rights mechanisms.

- **Coordination responsibility** – whether the mechanism itself is responsible for coordinating implementation, or whether such responsibility lies with an ad hoc committee or responsible line ministries.

Y-axis (mechanism's degree of institutionalisation)

- **Established by law** – whether or not the mechanism is established by law (i.e., statute, decree, etc.).

- **Permanent/standing** – whether the mechanism is permanent (i.e., standing) or ad hoc (i.e., only convened for reporting purposes or following receipt of UN recommendations).

- **Regularity of meetings** – whether the mechanism has regularly scheduled meetings.

- **Secretariat** – whether the mechanism has a dedicated secretariat or an informal secretariat within a ministry.

- **Budget** - whether the mechanism has its own budget or not.

- **Dedicated focal points** – whether the mechanism has dedicated long-term focal points in line ministries, parliaments, judiciaries, State agencies, etc, or temporary/ad hoc focal points.

The detailed scores for each national implementation-reporting system (against these two sets of criteria) are presented in Annex II. Graphically, the results are presented below in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1.

Mapping of types of national implementation and reporting systems[1]

Mechanism's degree of institutionalisation · Y axis

Assessed according to:
- Established by law
- Permanent/standing
- Regularity of meetings
- Secretariat
- Budget
- Dedicated focal points

X axis · **Mechanism sophistication**

Assessed according to:
- Stakeholder participation
- SDG integration
- Clustering
- Centralised repository/database or recommendation tracking software
- Implementation monitoring
- Human rights impact indicators
- 'Holistic' approach to implementation
- Coordination responsibility

Colour Key

- 🟢 NMIRF
- 🟣 Single inter-ministerial mechanism
- 🔵 Ad-hoc inter-ministerial mechanism
- 🟠 Ministerial mechanism
- 🔴 Hybrid mechanism
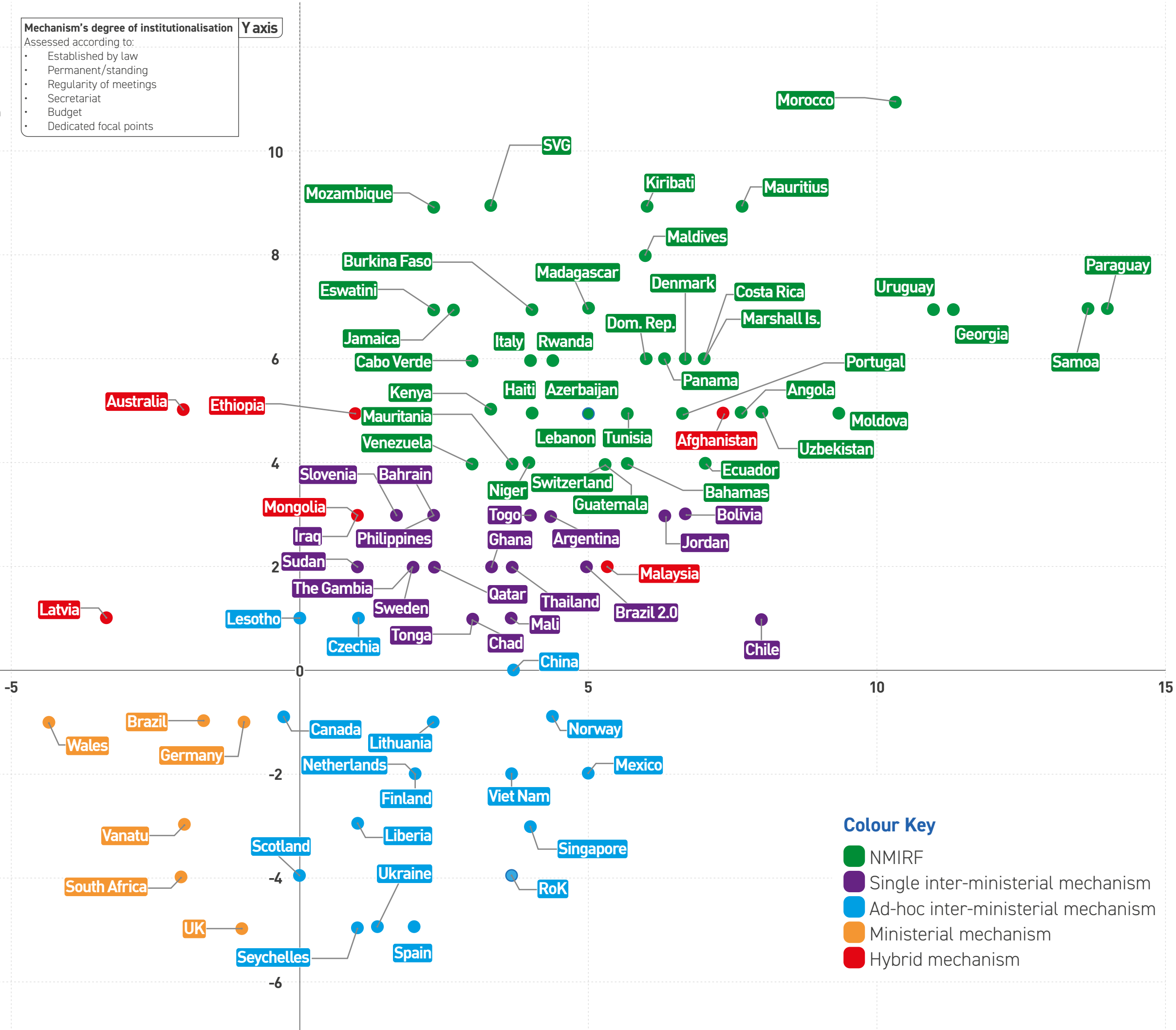
Broadly speaking, true NMIRFs are clustered in the top right quadrant of the graph, reflecting their relatively high levels of sophistication and institutionalisation, while single ministerial mechanisms (which have relatively low levels of sophistication and institutionalisation) are clustered in the bottom left quadrant, and so on. The results of the mapping therefore broadly validate URG's classification of national implementation systems according to the four identified categories/types. Notwithstanding, there are 'outliers' in the mapping, especially the 'hybrid' systems, which, as noted above, retain characteristics of two or more of the identified system types.

In order to illustrate the four (or five if we include 'hybrid') identified categories/types of implementation-reporting system, the following chapter will present seven national case studies (one case study showcasing a single ministerial mechanism, one an ad hoc inter-ministerial coordination system, one a single inter-ministerial coordination mechanism, one a hybrid system, and three showcasing NMIRFs).

Chapter four then presents a sectoral or horizontal analysis of key characteristics of all the implementation-reporting systems surveyed for this report, in order to identify good practices, and understand the key ingredients or building blocks of an effective national implementation-reporting system or mechanism.

TABLE I.

Type of mechanism by region

	AG	APG	EEG	GRULAC	WEOG
SINGLE MINISTERIAL	1 (4%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (6%)	2 (15%)
AD HOC INTER-MINISTERIAL	3 (13%)	4 (19%)	3 (38%)	1 (6%)	5 (38%)
SINGLE INTER-MINISTERIAL	6 (25%)	7 (33%)	1 (13%)	4 (18%)	1 (8%)
NMIRF	13 (54%)	6 (29%)	3 (38%)	12 (71%)	4 (31%)
HYBRID	1 (4%)	3 (14%)	1 (13%)	0	1 (8%)
TOTAL NUMBER OF MECHANISMS	24	21	8	17	13

CHAPTER

03

ILLUSTRATING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF IMPLEMENTATION-REPORTING SYSTEM: NATIONAL CASE STUDIES

SINGLE MINISTERIAL MECHANISM: VANUATU

According to URG's analysis, Vanuatu's implementation-reporting system corresponds most closely to a 'single ministerial mechanism.' In Vanuatu, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade plays the lead role in engaging with all UN human rights mechanisms. That engagement is mainly focused on reporting to the mechanisms rather than on coordinating the implementation of recommendations.

Within the Ministry, a **National Human Rights Committee (NHRC)**, made up of several Ministry officials, was established in 2014 to coordinate Vanuatu's engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms. It includes two sub-committees: a data collection sub-committee, and a drafting sub-committee.

Once Vanuatu receives recommendations from a given UN mechanism (e.g., from a Treaty Body), the NHRC will allocate recommendations to what it considers to be the most relevant line ministries. The recommendations are sent to expert-level focal points in those ministries, who are responsible for implementation (though, as noted above, Vanuatu's system appears to be mainly focused on reporting) and for monitoring progress. The NHRC will sometimes, on an 'as needed' basis, convene meetings with focal points. However, those meetings are mainly used to clarify points ahead of future reporting, rather than to coordinate implementation actions. Notwithstanding such ad hoc meetings, most information used to compile periodic reports (including on implementation progress) is simply requested in writing ahead of an upcoming review. In a notable good practice, when making those information requests, the NHRC systematically asks focal points to also include information on the impact of implementation measures (using human rights indicator data from the national statistics office).

While there is some degree of engagement between the NHRC and parliamentarians, this typically occurs only in the context of normal official contacts between Vanuatu's legislative and executive branches (e.g., over the national budget or scrutiny of ministries) and not as a part of a regular structured process of engagement. In addition, there is some engagement between the NHRC and Vanuatu's civil society and NHRI, but this is neither regular nor structured.

Vanuatu's mechanism does not use any software to support implementation, tracking, or reporting, though in their survey response this was something Vanuatuan officials expressed an interest in developing.

AD HOC INTER-MINISTERIAL MECHANISM: LESOTHO

The **Human Rights Unit (HRU)** of the Ministry of Justice and Law plays the lead role in coordinating the implementation of, and reporting on, recommendations received from the UN human rights mechanisms, in coordination with other relevant ministries.

Upon receipt of recommendations following a periodic review, the HRU will convene an ad hoc 'workshop' with relevant line ministry experts. For example, for recommendations received from the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, relevant experts from the ministries of Justice and Law, Gender, Foreign Affairs, Education, and Health are invited to the workshop(s). At those meetings, the HRU will 'share and disseminate' clusters of recommendations to the relevant line ministries. Based on the discussions, the HRU then prepares a workplan to ensure that responsibilities are clear, enable the tracking of progress, and facilitate the preparation of future periodic reports. Once tasks are assigned, each ministry is responsible for implementing recommendations and tracking progress.

Meetings of these ad hoc workshops are neither regular nor structured – the HRU simply convenes a meeting of relevant ministry officials when the need arises and, in practice, meetings are concentrated towards the end of the implementation and reporting cycle (i.e., when a report is due). The HRU will normally hear from line ministries on implementation progress when the next periodic report is due – i.e., when the HRU requests information so that it can compile that report.

Parliamentarians are only indirectly engaged with Lesotho's national implementation and reporting system - when relevant parliamentary committees are asked to validate draft periodic reports to the UN mechanisms. Civil society is, however, very much involved in the country's implementation and reporting system. NGOs and academic experts are routinely invited to ad hoc workshop meetings, as are – less frequently – representatives of the private sector.

Launch event of the survey titled 'Bridging the Human Rights Implementation Gap: A Commonwealth Survey' at the United Nations Office in Geneva on Friday 17 February 2023.

SINGLE INTER-MINISTERIAL MECHANISM: THE GAMBIA

Lesotho is currently in the process of transitioning to a fully-fledged NMIRF. A decision to establish an NMIRF was taken by the Cabinet in August 2021, mainly to help the country reduce its backlog of periodic reports to the UN human rights mechanisms. It has since received relevant technical support from the OHCHR. Although, to-date, the NMIRF is not yet operational, Lesotho expects its NMIRF to be a standing mechanism, with regular coordination meetings (committees and sub-committees) of assigned (permanent) focal points, gathering throughout the implementation-reporting cycle, and working in close cooperation with parliament and civil society. The subcommittees are expected to be organised according to thematic clusters of recommendations, or according to treaties/ mechanisms. The HRU also hopes to introduce implementation and reporting software to support its work.

Notwithstanding these objectives, Lesotho recognises that it faces important challenges in establishing a well-functioning NMIRF. For example, nominations of focal points from each ministry have traditionally been slow, and those focal points that have been assigned have not reliably responded to meeting or information requests.

> " **Lesotho expects its NMIRF to be a standing mechanism, with regular coordination meetings of assigned focal points, gathering throughout the implementation-reporting cycle, and working in close cooperation with parliament and civil society. "**

The Gambia's current system most closely aligns with a single inter-ministerial mechanism. In 2017, following the restoration of democracy in the country, the Government decided to strengthen its national implementation and reporting system, switching from a more ad hoc model (focused primarily on reporting), to a single, standing inter-ministerial **task force on human rights.** It is more inclusive than the prior system, with the full and equal participation of all relevant government ministries and State agencies, as well as parliamentarians, in addition to regularised consultations with civil society. That said, the task force does retain some of the weaknesses present in the earlier model. For example, it is heavily focused on reporting rather than implementation, and although the task force is, in principle, 'standing,' in reality its meetings follow UN reporting cycles.

During a given reporting cycle (e.g., under a particular international human rights convention), the task force will typically meet four or five times. The first of those meetings, which occurs shortly after the receipt of the given Treaty Body's concluding observations, is used to consider the recommendations, and decide which ministries (or parliamentarians) are responsible for implementation. According to Gambian officials, 'all ministries and other institutions of the State are typically invited to this initial meeting.' Once implementing tasks have been assigned, relevant line ministries and institutions begin implementing recommendations. Ahead of the next periodic report, there will be one or two 'review style' meetings to assess progress with implementation. Based on that information, a first draft report will be prepared. A further meeting of the task force, involving 'senior officials from relevant line ministries,' will then be convened to 'complete and validate the report.' Once there is a final draft, 'it will be reviewed by the heads of each ministry or agency of State.' The completed report is then submitted to the relevant UN mechanism by the Ministry of Justice.

The exact composition of task force meetings depends on the UN mechanism that provided the recommendations under consideration. That said, broadly speaking, expert-level officials from relevant ministries (in addition to the President's Office) are invited, as well as members of parliament. According to Gambian officials, parliamentarians are especially involved in implementation, as 'most recommendations will require some sort of legislative reform, financial reform, or institutional reform.' The Gambian Bureau of Statistics also regularly participates in meetings of the task force, providing official national data for inclusion in periodic reports. The Gambia's NHRI and civil society are also actively consulted on issues involving both reporting and implementation. Parliament also consults with civil society to obtain its views regarding government implementation progress.

The Ministry of Justice, which has overall responsibility for the task force, is currently looking into how to further strengthen the mechanism, including with a view to turning it into a fully-fledged NMIRF. As part of that process, the Ministry is considering options to give the task force formal legal status, how to transform it into a truly 'standing' body, and how to further 'institutionalise' it. On the last point, the Ministry's objective is to establish a permanent secretariat, which will help - it is hoped - strengthen the mechanism's 'institutional memory,' and find 'economies of scale' by allowing it to deal with all recommendations from all UN mechanisms in an integrated manner. It is not clear whether, as part of this reform, the task force will focus more attention (and resources) on coordinating the implementation of recommendations, or whether it will remain a mechanism focused, principally, on report preparation.

Commonwealth Secretariat Working Session with the Gambia Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Human Rights, 9–11 March 2022, Banjul.

HYBRID MECHANISM: LATVIA

Latvia's system can be best classified as a hybrid mechanism – retaining characteristics of two or more of the four main 'types' of national implementation-reporting system. It offers an interesting national case study as it maintains a national mechanism with 'certain features of an NMIRF,' centred on the office of a single person: a **'Representative of Latvia before international human rights organisations.'** Latvia's mechanism does, however, diverge from the kind of 'model' NMIRF envisioned in the Pacific Principles in a number of important ways, differentiating it from such a system. For example, the Office of the Representative only covers the Treaty Bodies, with the UPR being the formal responsibility of the Foreign Ministry (the Representative did, however, chair the group responsible for drafting Latvia's national reports for the second and third UPR cycles). Furthermore, the Office of the Representative only covers six Treaty Bodies – engagement with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare. Officials admitted that this somewhat confused division of labour has led to cases 'where they have to adjust responsible ministries because the competencies shifted.'

This Office consists of the Representative and four lawyers, and sits within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a permanent (standing) structure, established by government statute, and has its own dedicated secretariat (the Representative plus four lawyers). The Office oversees the entire 'review-implementation-reporting' cycle. It does not have its own dedicated budget, and is instead funded through the Foreign Ministry.

> " **The Office of the Representative only covers the Treaty Bodies, with the UPR being the formal responsibility of the Foreign Ministry** "

There is no formalised system of cooperation with responsible line ministries. Rather, 'it depends on the instrument and the ministry.' To coordinate implementation, the Office of the Representative maintains a 'table, with accepted recommendations in the first column, and the responsible line ministry (or ministries) in the second.' The Office then contacts the line ministries, sharing the relevant Treaty Body recommendations. There is no formalised system of focal points. Instead 'each ministry decides which individual or department is responsible,' and then the Office of the Representative coordinates with the relevant person or department.

It seems that the Office does not keep a regular check on progress with implementation. Instead, when the time arrives to prepare the next periodic treaty report, the Office will contact the relevant line ministry/ministries with written questions designed to assess progress with implementation. According to the Representative, these questions are usually answered in good time, 'because the requests are addressed to the State Secretaries in each ministry.' Once the Office has received all necessary information, it will prepare the periodic report. If there are gaps, the Office will recontact the relevant ministry.

Parliamentarians are not directly engaged by the Office of the Representative. Rather, if international recommendations require new or amended legislation, the responsible line ministry will typically contact relevant parliamentarians to discuss. Parliament does not formally oversee progress with the implementation of Latvia's international human rights obligations, or contribute to periodic reports back to the UN. Notwithstanding, the Representative has appeared before parliamentary standing committees to share information on periodic reports that are about to be submitted. There have also, on occasion, been parliamentary hearings where the Representative has given an overview of the progress reflected in a to-be-submitted periodic report, and during which parliamentarians and civil society organisations have been able to pass comment.

While civil society and Latvia's NHRI are not formally involved in the drafting of periodic reports, they are consulted during the drafting process. In practice, this means that after the report is drafted, and more or less accepted by the Government, it is sent to the NHRI for comments. Those comments are then added to the report. For their part, civil society organisations are invited to comment on a draft of the periodic report posted on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The national statistics authority is contacted to provide general national data for periodic reports, but is not formally involved, and does not provide human rights indicator data to help assess levels of impact. While the Office of the Permanent Representative does not use dedicated implementation-reporting software, the public is able to access information on received recommendations via the Foreign Ministry's website (implementation progress, however, is not included).

Ms Kristine Lice, Representative of Latvia before International Human Rights Institution at the review of Latvia at the 68th session of Committee Against Torture.

NATIONAL MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING, AND FOLLOW-UP: PARAGUAY

Paraguay's system, a fully-fledged NMIRF, was first envisioned in 2009. In 2013, the country began a project that 'proposed the creation of an inter-institutional mechanism for monitoring and following-up on the implementation of the international recommendations made to Paraguay in the matter of human rights,' relying on the OHCHR Human Rights Office for Paraguay for technical assistance, and the UPR Voluntary Fund for Technical and Financial Assistance to provide 'the necessary financial resources.'

Interestingly, Paraguay began its journey towards creating one of the world's first NMIRFs by first developing implementation-reporting software. Its SIMORE (*Sistema de Monitoreo de Recomendaciones*) software was launched in 2014, before the Government began to construct the institutional dimension of its national mechanism. SIMORE, the country's own proprietary software, is designed to facilitate the systematisation, organisation, and prioritisation of UN human rights recommendations. The software also makes information on government progress with the implementation of those recommendations available to the public – enhancing transparency and accountability.

Paraguay's NMIRF (i.e., the institutional mechanism), also called **SIMORE** (sometimes leading to confusions with the software), was officially formed in 2015 through Presidential Decree no. 4368/15. With Decree no. 4368/15,[11] the Government recognised the need for a single mechanism to better coordinate the national implementation of UN human rights recommendations, and to streamline periodic reporting back to the UN mechanisms.

Once recommendations are received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, which together coordinate the work of SIMORE (acting as a kind of informal secretariat), officials from these ministries carry out a preliminary analysis of recommendations and cluster them according to

seven topics/affected population groups. Next, the key clusters of recommendations are assigned to the NMIRF's 167 focal points[12] - technical-level officials from approximately 72 State entities, covering the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, as well as State agencies (e.g., police, penitentiary services). Each focal point is then responsible for inputting their assigned clusters of recommendations into the SIMORE database, together with other information such as the UN mechanism that issued the recommendations and the year they did so, the main substantive focus of recommendations, affected population group(s), envisioned implementation actions, and timelines. Thereafter, each focal point is also responsible for regularly updating the database with information on implementation progress.

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, Paraguay (with the support of various UN agencies) launched an improved version of its SIMORE software, called SIMORE Plus, which links information on the implementation and impact of UN human rights recommendations with the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets.

Paraguay's NMIRF works through regular ordinary and extraordinary inter-entity meetings called 'working groups' (made up of relevant focal points), which are in turn subdivided into 'worktables' covering each of the seven key clusters of recommendations (as noted above, this is done by theme and/or affected population group(s)). Ordinary meetings of the working groups are held every three months and feature a maximum of two worktables per week. These meetings continue until all seven main clusters of recommendations have been covered. Decisions taken are then inputted into the online database by relevant focal points. Additionally, ordinary meetings may be called by the 'human rights network' of the government to monitor/oversee progress with implementation, and extraordinary

meetings are called whenever Paraguay receives new recommendations or when 'a new periodic report is pending.'

Even though Paraguay's SIMORE digital platform was one of the world's first examples of dedicated NMIRF software, and SIMORE Plus was one of the first attempts to use such software to integrate human rights recommendations with relevant SDGs and targets, almost one decade after its creation, it remains one

of the most advanced digital tools in the world for coordinating the implementation of, and reporting on, UN human rights recommendations.

The SIMORE system does not have its own budget, but instead works through the regular budget of each government institution that forms part of SIMORE. UNDP technical assistance has supported bringing improvements to the SIMORE digital platform.

SIMORE Paraguay Technical Cooperation Programme. 21 December 2017.

NATIONAL MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING, AND FOLLOW-UP: SAMOA

Samoa offers a best practice example of an NMIRF. Upon receipt of recommendations from any UN mechanism, Samoa's NMIRF, which is established by statute, convenes a meeting. Recommendations are clustered and members are invited to discuss and propose implementation actions. Recommendations, implementation measures, responsible institutions and focal points, and timeframes, are then inputted into **SADATA** (Samoa's pioneering implementation-reporting software).

Samoa's NMIRF was established in 2016 with support from OHCHR, following wide acceptance within government that the previous ad hoc system was not functioning well. The NMIRF meets at least on a quarterly basis, though in practice it meets as often as needed. It is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and co-chaired by the Ministry of Women, Community, and Social Development, and attended by senior government representatives (vice-ministers and chief executive officers, and heads of State agencies – though more junior officials are also assigned as implementation-reporting focal points). Parliamentarians, judicial representatives, NGO representatives, and the country's NHRI are also engaged, and sometimes invited to participate in NMIRF meetings - though not routinely,

'because implementation is the ultimate responsibility of the Government.'

The International Relations Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as the secretariat of Samoa's NMIRF. As a good practice example of how to organise the work of an NMIRF, discussions are first divided by UN treaty/mechanism, and then further subdivided by key clusters of recommendations received, and relevant population group, i.e., women, children etc.

A unique characteristic of Samoa's NMIRF is that it was one of the first in the world to develop dedicated implementation and reporting software: SADATA (Samoa Database). This is a web-based archive under the Chair of the NMIRF (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), which allows the mechanism to easily distribute implementation tasks, eases follow-up, and allows for the tracking of progress. SADATA also integrates human rights indicator data from the National Statistics Office to allow for the measurement of human rights impact, and links this to progress with the realisation of the SDGs. SADATA also makes top-line information on recommendations, progress, and impact available to the general public via a website.

> **A unique characteristic of Samoa's NMIRF is that it was one of the first in the world to develop dedicated implementation and reporting software: SADATA (Samoa Database).**

NATIONAL MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING, AND FOLLOW-UP: MOROCCO

Morocco's national implementation-reporting system - a single, standing body for all recommendations from all UN human rights mechanisms - can also be considered a best practice NMIRF.

Morocco's NMIRF, the **Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights** (*Délégation Interministérielle aux Droits de l'Homme, or DIDH*), was created by Government Decree no. 2-11-150 in April 2011. The DIDH has three Directorates and a Secretary-General, and is responsible for designating implementation-reporting focal points, producing an implementation-reporting action plan, and maintaining a calendar of activities. The Secretary-General heads the NMIRF's secretariat which includes over a hundred staff.

The NMIRF is led by the Interministerial Delegate for Human Rights,[13] who is appointed[14] by the King and is responsible[15] for organising the Directorates that constitute the DIDH. The Interministerial Delegate is assisted by a Cabinet, which includes, *inter alia*, the Secretary-General.

As noted above, the DIDH is divided into three main Directorates: one for 'Dialogue and Partnership with National Organisations and Associations,' which oversees cooperation with Morocco's NHRIs and civil society organisations, as well as with regional human rights mechanisms; one for 'Direct Coordination and Promotion of Human Rights,' which coordinates implementation and reporting actions with and across government departments; and one covering 'Legal Studies and International Cooperation,' which is directly responsible for engagement with the UN human rights system, including following-up on the implementation of recommendations and the preparation of national reports.

Morocco's Parliament is consulted in the process of drafting the country's national report to the UPR mechanism, as are the NHRIs. 'As the importance of civil society in the protection and promotion of human rights is constitutionally recognised,' the DIDH also 'collaborates[16] closely with Moroccan civil society.'

While the National Commission for Sustainable Development retains overall responsibility for achieving the SDGs 'leaving no on behind,' the DIDH also contributes to the implementation of Morocco's commitments[17] under the 2030 Agenda by integrating human rights recommendations into sustainable development programming.

The DIDH is in the process of introducing implementation-reporting software, in collaboration with the EU. When completed, this will cover recommendations received from all three UN human rights mechanisms, and will allow for easier coordination and tracking. Information will also be made accessible to civil society.

Finally, the DIDH has its own budget, which is separate from other individual ministries and covers[18] all its core functions.

04

KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND GOOD PRACTICES OF SURVEYED NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION-REPORTING SYSTEMS

LEGAL BASIS, TERMS OF REFERENCE, MANDATE

One key factor that differentiates the various types of implementation-reporting systems is whether they have a formal mandate and are established by legislation (i.e., through parliament), through an executive regulation (e.g., a cabinet decree), or through any other administrative statute having the force of law.

Ad hoc mechanisms or ministerial systems tend not to have a formal mandate, functioning – at best – on the basis of terms of reference and – more often – on the basis of informal modes of practice among government officials. These working methods are not always clearly defined and depend largely on the initiative of individual officials. Such mechanisms tend to find it difficult to build and retain institutional expertise and memory.

A formal mandate also helps to strengthen public accountability and enhances participation in (e.g., senior officials from across government) and the authority of the mechanism. Finally, a formal mandate or legal basis can help ensure, and set the parameters for, participation on the part of parliamentarians, judges, NHRIs, civil society, etc., thus helping to 'democratise' and strengthen implementation.

TABLE II.[19]

Mechanisms established by law among States surveyed

	NUMBER OF STATES
NOT ESTABLISHED BY LAW	27
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	9
ESTABLISHED BY LAW	47

TABLE III.

Modes of legal establishment of mechanisms[21]

	NUMBER OF STATES
CABINET DECREE	8
MINISTERIAL DECREE	17
PRESIDENTIAL ORDER	11
GOVERNMENT DECREE	6
BYLAW	1
NOT SPECIFIED	4

Of the countries surveyed, those with NMIRFs tend to have the clearest formal mandate. These are typically established by cabinet decree (e.g., **Jamaica, Kiribati, Samoa, Morocco, Uruguay, Paraguay**) or ministerial decree (e.g., **Saint Vincent and the Grenadine, Kenya, Eswatini, Mauritius, Rwanda, Portugal**). These decrees set out the relevant NMIRF's legal basis, mandate, composition, and working methods.

Where an NMIRF is not established by law, it is nonetheless important that it has a clear mandate and rules of procedure, or at least the high-level political backing necessary to ensure its perennity. In the **Maldives** and **Azerbaijan**, for example, while no specific legislation, statutes or decrees were adopted to establish their implementation-reporting mechanisms, the decisions to do so were endorsed by the countries' Presidents, thus giving the mechanisms the high-level political backing necessary to ensure their proper functioning and to merit their identification as NMIRFs. In **Denmark**, the NMIRF is not established by law, but as a governmental decision that 'ministries [...] improve the process of reporting, implementation and follow-up of UN recommendations.' **Moldova**'s NMIRF was similarly established by a 2019 governmental decision, which mandated the mechanism to coordinate and supervise the national implementation of human rights recommendations, with clear terms of reference that specify inter alia composition and working methods.[20]

Uruguay, Senate. Author: Fernando Da Rosa.

Slightly more than half (ten of 19) of the single inter-ministerial mechanisms surveyed for this report enjoy a formal legal basis (e.g., are established by statute). While some have clear rules of procedure governing composition and/or meeting frequency, others do not, with negative implications for their operation and effectiveness. For instance, **The Gambia's** national mechanism has no formal legal basis and thus tends to operate in an *ad hoc* manner, with meetings only convened when a periodic report is due. Indeed, the State has recognised the value of providing its task force with a formal legal status and permanent institutional structure, as a means of 'strengthening the mechanism's institutional memory and [to help] find economies of scale' (e.g., by allowing it to deal with all recommendations from all UN mechanisms in an integrated manner). It is therefore exploring options, with OHCHR support, to establish a legal basis and formal mandate. As part of this, the authorities also hope to establish a permanent secretariat for their national mechanism.

On the other hand, ad hoc inter-ministerial mechanisms (such as in the **Republic of Korea**) or single ministerial mechanisms (e.g., **Vanuatu**), generally function on the basis of informal modes of practice amongst government officials. In the **UK's** single ministerial system, for example, where the Ministry of Justice, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are responsible for allocating recommendations to relevant line ministries depending on the subject matter, the system was described by one government representative as an 'ad hoc senior officials' coordination effort.'[22]

Some ad hoc inter-ministerial systems have, however, found other ways to establish mandates/working methods, without recourse to a single legal basis. In **Singapore**, for example, each of the different inter-ministerial committees set up to implement and report on the UN human rights recommendations for which they are responsible, have themselves developed terms of reference (covering inter alia the committees' composition and the periodicity of meetings).

A further benefit of a formal mandate or legal basis is that it can also help ensure, and set the parameters for, participation on the part of non-executive stakeholders such as parliamentarians, judges, NHRIs, civil society, etc. Indeed, survey responses demonstrate a strong level of correlation between the degree of institutionalisation of an implementation-reporting system and the degree and systematicity of stakeholder participation.

Notwithstanding, such lack of 'institutional maturity' can in part be compensated by a strong human rights culture within government. For example, **Norwegian** officials explained that they did not envisage establishing a more institutionalised model than their current ad hoc inter-ministerial system because 'follow-up to UN recommendations is an integrated part of the ministries' daily work,' and officials in all line ministries 'understand that human rights should not be treated as a separate issue' but should rather be horizontally integrated into policymaking.

OHCHR Pacific workshop on National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRFs). Fiji, 2017

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND WORKING METHODS

The organisational structure and working methods of different national implementation-reporting systems are quite diverse (even among NMIRFs). However, States with standing mechanisms, like NMIRFs (especially those with a clear legal basis and mandate) unsurprisingly tend to have far clearer and more elaborate/sophisticated organisational structures and working methods than those that work through more ad hoc or ministerial systems. Moreover, the former have structures and working methods geared to the entire review-implementation-reporting cycle, whereas the latter tend to be geared, primarily, to preparing periodic reports.

The Gambia offers a good example of the former. Its single inter-ministerial mechanism possesses an organisational structure and working methods designed to coordinate the implementation of recommendations, to follow-up and monitor implementing actions, and to prepare future reports. The Gambia's mechanism typically meets four or five times during the review-implementation-reporting cycle of engagement with a given UN human rights mechanism. The first of those meetings, which takes place shortly after the receipt of, for example, Treaty Body concluding observations, is used to consider the recommendations and to decide on which ministries (or indeed parliamentarians) should be responsible for implementation. According to Gambian officials, 'all ministries and other institutions of the State are typically invited to this initial meeting.' Once implementing tasks have been assigned, relevant line ministries (and other institutions) are left to get on with the process of implementing recommendations, though the mechanism is kept updated on progress, and further meetings may be organised where necessary. Then, before the next periodic report is due, there will typically be one or two dedicated 'review style' meetings to assess progress with implementation. Based on the information gathered, a first draft report will be prepared. A further meeting of the task force, involving 'senior officials from relevant line ministries,' will then be convened to 'complete and validate the

report.' Finally, once there is a final draft, 'it will be reviewed by the heads of each ministry or state agency.' The completed report is then submitted to the UN by the Ministry of Justice.

Similarly, **Rwanda's** NMIRF (the 'Treaty Body Reporting Task Force' - TBRT) has an organisational structure and methods of work that are clearly premised on the full review-implementation-reporting cycle. Upon receipt of recommendations from the UN mechanisms, the TBRT convenes a 'stakeholder workshop' with a wide range of stakeholders to debate implementation measures, assign responsibilities, and agree timelines and impact indicators. Based on those discussions, an 'implementation plan' is formulated. The TRBT is then responsible for following up with responsible line ministries to collect information on progress. Where necessary, the TRBT will convene further meetings (on a given set or cluster of recommendations) to review progress with the line ministries and make adjustments to the implementation plan where necessary. According to Rwandan officials, for each set of recommendations, the TBRT will meet at least four times – once upon receipt of the recommendations, once at the mid-term point to evaluate progress with implementation, once (when a report is due) to collect and share information on implementation, and once to validate the final periodic report.

Indeed, nearly all the States surveyed for this report that were found to have established NMIRFs have working methods that emphasise regular meetings, and regular follow-up with line ministries, throughout the review-implementation-reporting cycle. The NMIRFs of **Jamaica, Mauritius, Eswatini, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Paraguay, Denmark** and **Kiribati**, for example, meet on a quarterly basis, regardless of whether a report is due. In reality, many of them meet more frequently, especially at expert level (in working groups). In **Georgia**, for example, while the entire mechanism meets annually to 'discuss priority human rights concerns,' thematic working groups meet on

a monthly basis to ensure the mechanism's 'smooth functioning,' while **Paraguay's** NMIRF (in addition to quarterly meetings) holds extraordinary meetings when the State receives new recommendations or to begin preparing a new report. That is not to say that these systems work perfectly. **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** and others report that they sometimes find it difficult to meet quorum, especially for working group or drafting group meetings.

One example of a good practice regarding the regularity of meetings and working structure can be found in the

Bahamas' NMIRF, which holds bi-monthly meetings attended by ministers and experts, and chaired by the Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs, with the deputy chair position rotated among different ministries on an annual basis (for 2024, the Ministry of Education will serve as the deputy chair). The NMIRF also employs a system of working groups and focal points, who are 'determined by the recommendations.' **Morocco** provides another strong example, as its NMIRF meets three to four times per week, and has a structure composed of three directorates, all of which manage different parts of the NMIRF's functioning.

The organisational structure of several other countries with NMIRFs is based on the use of focal points designated by the mechanism's line ministries (**Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Denmark, Eswatini, Georgia, Jamaica, Kenya, Morocco, Paraguay, Portugal, Samoa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**). In **Morocco**, focal points are appointed on an informal basis (except for 'exceptional circumstances') based on factors such as personal

experience and which government ministry they are part of. In **Azerbaijan, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**, and **Kenya**, focal points are technical-level experts from relevant ministries, while in **Eswatini** the focal points are department directors or legal advisors. Focal points for **Samoa's** NMIRF are senior officials as well, but two focal points are always nominated in order to ensure continuity.

TABLE IV.

Regularity of mechanism meetings among States interviewed[23]

	NUMBER OF STATES
MEETING FOR REPORTING ONLY	19
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	20
NON-REPORTING MEETINGS	4
REGULAR, NEEDS-BASED MEETINGS	17
SYSTEMATIC MEETINGS	23

TABLE V.

Use of focal points/dedicated staff among States interviewed[24]

	NUMBER OF STATES
NONE	7
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	41
FOCAL POINTS	32
DEDICATED STAFF	3

UN Photo/Albert González Farran. 1 August 2012. Kuma Garadayat, Sudan. Photo # 522403.

In comparison, single ministerial mechanisms such as **Vanuatu's**, tend to have less elaborate structures and working methods. These are, moreover, usually dedicated to responding to reporting requirements (rather than also focusing on implementing received recommendations). In Vanuatu, a ministerial human rights committee based within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs convenes on an ad hoc basis in response to reporting needs. The committee's organisational structure also reflects this preoccupation with reporting. The committee is divided into two subcommittees, one for 'data collection' and one for 'drafting.' Likewise, in **Malaysia**, responsibility is assigned to relevant line ministries upon receipt of recommendations, but this is primarily for the purpose of drafting subsequent reports (each ministry or agency designates two focal points, one at undersecretary level and another at expert level, who meet in an *ad hoc* committee to draft reports).

That is not to say that more *ad hoc* ministerial or inter-ministerial systems do not offer important examples of best practice. **In Lesotho**, for example, upon receipt of UN recommendations, a meeting is convened by the Ministry of Justice 'to share and disseminate the recommendations, cluster them, and form a workplan to track progress.' Separately, an ad-hoc inter-ministerial expert level committee is formed to maintain contact with responsible line ministries (under the workplan), track progress, and eventually produce the next periodic report.

A final important point on working methods relates to the clustering of recommendations. This best practice (whereby recommendations are clustered by theme and objective, irrespective of which UN mechanism extended them) appears to be done by about a third of States surveyed (e.g., **Samoa, Uruguay, Portugal**). These States focus their implementation discussions and actions on clusters of thematic human rights issues (e.g., political and civil rights, access to justice), and/or relevant populations (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, women) rather than, for example, all recommendations received from a particular Treaty Body.

TABLE VI.

Clustering of human rights recommendation by thematic human rights issue among States interviewed[25]

	NUMBER OF STATES
NO CLUSTERING	14
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	42
CLUSTERING	27

SECRETARIAT/BUDGET

Whether or not a national implementation-reporting system is established with a clear legal basis and mandate/terms of reference has several important institutional 'side effects,' including the likelihood of it having a dedicated secretariat and/or enjoying its own resources under the national budget.

Only one of the national mechanisms surveyed for this report has its own dedicated (i.e., not part of a ministry or prime minister's/president's office) and permanent secretariat (**Morocco**). In the case of Morocco, the NMIRF secretariat is very large – over one hundred staff – and supports the mechanism's three directorates (see Morocco case study above). It is headed by a Secretary-General.

In **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** there is also a 'dedicated secretariat' in a sense, however, it resides in a single person: a 'national coordinator' assigned to the task of coordinating implementation and reporting. Another variation can be found in the **Czech Republic** (an *ad hoc* inter-ministerial mechanism). Here, the national mechanism is composed of a series of standing committees, each tasked with advising the government on a particular human rights theme. Each of these committees has its own dedicated secretariat composed of experts 'who prepare background documents and provide administrative support.'

Many other national implementation-reporting mechanisms (nearly always NMIRFs) do benefit from a permanent secretariat, but it is not 'dedicated' – i.e., it is part of/housed within a ministry or prime minister's/president's office. **Italy, Niger, Uzbekistan, Moldova**, and **Georgia** provide good practice examples of such (fully operational, but not dedicated) secretariats. **Niger's** NMIRF, for example, is administered by a permanent secretariat which is empowered to 'call upon any resource persons to carry out its mission.'[26] **Uzbekistan's** NMIRF also has a permanent, full-time secretariat staffed by 41 people.[27] **Georgia's** NMIRF has a permanent secretariat that not only coordinates implementation, monitoring, and reporting between all responsible government entities, but also organises consultations with civil society and facilitates the preparation of reports. **Italy's** NMIRF secretariat is composed of foreign affairs officials as well as of human rights experts and interns (depending on the available budget), who assist in the performance of the NMIRF's functions. **Moldova** also has a permanent secretariat, which, according to its officials, is its 'most important structure' as its permanence enables it to effectively coordinate government action throughout the review-implementation-reporting cycle.

TABLE VII.

Mechanisms with dedicated secretariat among States interviewed[28]

	NUMBER OF STATES
NO SECRETARIAT	11
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	6
INFORMAL SECRETARIAT	13
SECRETARIAT WITHIN MINISTRY	52
DEDICATED SECRETARIAT	1

TABLE VIII.

Mechanisms with budget among States interviewed[29]

	NUMBER OF STATES
NO BUDGET	51
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	22
DEDICATED BUDGET	10

Other national mechanisms have an 'informal secretariat.' This refers to small teams of officials within the main coordinating ministry or ministries (e.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Justice Ministry) who support the essential functioning of the mechanism. However, this is normally done *in addition* to other work undertaken by the officials in question, meaning (according to survey responses) they can only dedicate limited time to this implementation-reporting work, and are only able to support the most essential parts of the mechanism's mandate (for example, convening meetings, forwarding recommendations to relevant line ministries by email – but with no follow-up, and/or – in advance of reporting deadlines – sending further emails to request information on progress). This is the case, for example, for **Jamaica, Lebanon**, and **Mauritius**.

In other cases, however, for example in **Kiribati** and **Samoa**, ministry officials are able to play a fuller role – i.e., help fulfil more elements of the mechanism's mandate. Indeed, in these two countries the 'informal secretariats' – made up of officials from ministries of foreign affairs and of justice, for example – are so active that they almost behave as *de facto* dedicated secretariats – yet residing within existing ministries.

Eswatini offers a slightly different model for this kind of 'informal secretariat.' Here, instead of the 'secretariat'

being staffed by officials from a single ministry, it is composed of seconded officials from several key ministries, including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office. Similarly, in **Kenya**, officials carrying out the NMIRF's secretariat function are assigned from more than one ministry – in this case, the Office of the Attorney-General, and Department of Justice. In both Eswatini and Kenya (as in Kiribati and Samoa), these 'informal secretariats' undertake a wide range of tasks related to implementation and reporting.

Regarding budgets, very few of the mechanisms surveyed for this report enjoy their own budget lines. **Jamaica, Kiribati, Morocco**, and **Italy** are some exceptions to this general rule. While **Jamaica**'s and **Kiribati**'s national mechanisms have their own small budget allocation to cover operating costs (in the case of Kiribati this budget is also sometimes used to compensate members of the NMIRF for meetings convened outside of working hours), **Italy** and **Morocco** have dedicated annual budgets (Italy's is granted under Law No. 80 of 1999, Article 2, while Morocco's is defended before parliament each year). According to survey responses, this helps them to coordinate implementation/reporting more effectively, including by maintaining a more developed organisational structure with permanent and dedicated staff.

In nearly all other cases, the functions of the national mechanism are subsumed under the normal operational budget of the (overall) lead line ministry, while other major costs associated with engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms (e.g., the travel and accommodation costs associated with appearing before Treaty Bodies) are usually borne by the relevant (i.e., issue lead) line ministry. Likewise, the costs associated with implementing recommendations are usually borne by the relevant line ministry. For example, in the **Maldives**, the mechanism's budget is derived from several 'different sources,' with the Attorney General's Office budget used 'for committee meetings or for the NMIRF's day-to-day affairs,' while '[f]or reporting processes, or to attend sessions in Geneva, expenses are borne by the line ministry that is leading the reporting.'

Generally speaking, establishing a permanent secretariat, and providing an NMIRF with its own budget are two important areas for possible improvement for States, a point recognised by **Eswatini** which has acknowledged a 'need for sharing of best practices from States that have a fully functional secretariat in exercising all the capacities of the NMIRF.' **Kenya** likewise acknowledged that its NMIRF 'requires a dedicated annual budget to assist it meet its mandate,' as well as 'a well-supported secretariat to coordinate the activities of the Committee.' At present, it can only meet on an ad hoc basis due to 'limited funding.' Officials from **Lebanon** also identified the lack of an independent budget as an 'obstacle' to improved implementation and reporting.

2024 Forum between the Human Rights Commission of Maldives and civil society organisations. 21 March 2024.

COMPOSITION

Composition is one of the most important factors distinguishing more and less sophisticated (and more and less effective) national implementation and reporting systems. To function properly, human rights implementation and reporting mechanisms require both depth (i.e., having both technical- and policy-level staff) and breadth (e.g., involvement of different line ministries, State agencies, legislators). In reality, however, many mechanisms do not possess the requisite level of participation, either because they do not systematically involve all relevant line ministries, or because they do not adequately engage other relevant stakeholders.

TABLE IX.

Holistic approaches among States interviewed[30]

	NUMBER OF STATES
MULTIPLE IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING MECHANISMS USED FOR DIFFERENT UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS	14
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	14
ONE NATIONAL MECHANISM FOR ALL UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS	55

26 June 2014. Bamako, Mali. Photo # 593322. UN Photo/Marco Dormino

Single ministerial mechanisms and ad hoc inter-ministerial systems tend to have the narrowest participation in decision-making related to the implementation of, and reporting on, UN human rights recommendations. In other words, only a few ministries (usually represented at technical level) are involved – with little or no participation from outside the executive. Such systems tend to be heavily skewed towards reporting rather than implementation, and see the lead ministry simply allocating recommendations to relevant line ministries (often by email) and/or requesting information (for periodic reports).

For instance, in **Brazil** (a single ministerial mechanism), the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights coordinates implementation and reporting. Line ministries are allocated recommendations and later asked for information on implementation (when the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights is drafting its subsequent periodic report).[31] Another example is the **United Kingdom** (also a single ministerial mechanism), where the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office simply disseminates Treaty Body recommendations to relevant line ministries, and only recontacts them when the next periodic report is due. In both cases, there appears to be little or no regularised engagement with members of parliament or judges.[32]

Similarly, participation in ad hoc inter-ministerial mechanisms tends to be largely limited to the executive branch and, where participation is broadened to other parts of the State, this tends to be on an hoc rather than a systematic basis. While more ministries are typically involved in decision-making, which can help improve coordination, meetings tend to be held for information sharing/gathering and consultative purposes only, usually when recommendations are first received, and when periodic reports are due. In more sophisticated and effective ad hoc inter-ministerial systems, meetings are held regularly throughout the review-implementation-reporting cycle, and are focused on discussing and agreeing implementation measures, and on coordinating implementation across government.

In **Norway**, for example, though different ministries are responsible for leading on different treaties/mechanisms (e.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the UPR and the CESCR, and the Ministry of Justice for the ICCPR), each lead ministry calls a coordination meeting with relevant ministries to agree on the division of responsibilities for the implementation of recommendations. The lead ministry is then responsible for following up and tracking/measuring progress, and for requesting information ahead of reporting.

In **Singapore**, each human rights treaty comes under the responsibility of a different inter-ministerial committee, which are composed of representatives from multiple relevant government ministries and agencies. For example, the committee responsible for CEDAW is composed of representatives from various line ministries, including the Ministry of Social and Family Development, and the Ministry of Health, amongst others, as well as from relevant State agencies, such as the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore and the Registry of Muslim Marriages. Each committee is responsible for coordinating the implementation of recommendations relevant to their thematic area of focus, while another umbrella inter-ministerial committee on human rights, made up of 15 key ministries and agencies, is responsible for tracking and following up on overall progress with implementation.

Similarly, in the **Czech Republic**, implementation coordination falls to various standing committees that are composed of both expert and policy (deputy minister) level representatives of relevant line ministries. All committees, which are divided by human rights theme (e.g., gender equality, rights of foreigners, rights of the child) rather than by Treaty - though the result is essentially the same, are chaired by high-level government officials responsible for human rights.

In neither case (Singapore and the Czech Republic) are members of the judiciary or parliament involved.

INVOLVEMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

In contrast, NMIRFs, generally have broad governmental representation. While ministries that are represented in the mechanism can vary depending on the State, they typically include most prominent line ministries. For example, **Paraguay**'s mechanism is represented by, 'technical-level representatives from around 72 State institutions […] belonging to the executive, legislative and judicial branches, as well as State agencies,' while **Portugal**'s NMIRF 'includes representatives from all government ministerial areas.' Likewise, in **Mauritius, Samoa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**, and **Eswatini**, all line ministries are represented. **Moldova's** NMIRF includes the country's prime minister (chairman of the mechanism), the heads of 'the most important State authorities' (including two chairmen of parliamentary committees), the country's NHRI, and civil society.

Considering the vital role that parliaments must necessarily play if UN human rights recommendations are to be effectively implemented (for example, through new or amended legislation), it is a regrettable finding of the survey that parliamentarians are rarely systematically involved/engaged in the work of implementation-reporting mechanisms (i.e., are integrated into/are part of the mechanism). This has obvious negative implications for human rights implementation and for democratic oversight (e.g., for periodic reporting purposes). As was pointed out by a Gambian official surveyed for this report: 'most [UN human rights] recommendations require some sort of legislative reform, financial reform, or institutional reform.'

TABLE X.

Level of parliamentary involvement among States interviewed[33]

	NUMBER OF STATES
NO PARTICIPATION	8
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	13
PASSIVE CONSULTATION	20
ACTIVE CONTRIBUTION	24
INTEGRATED INTO MECHANISM	18

This low level of engagement with parliaments and parliamentarians is especially surprising in the case of NMIRFs.

Of all the countries surveyed for this report that were found to have NMIRFs, only around 22% have included and integrated members of the legislature as a regular part of the mechanism (e.g., **Eswatini, Rwanda, Gambia, Afghanistan, Moldova, Uruguay**, and **Paraguay**). In **Uruguay**, officials noted that 'parliamentarians are a crucial part of the mechanism.' They are invited to participate throughout the entire review-implementation-reporting cycle, and this is managed by a dedicated 'legislative focal point' in the national mechanism. The focal point ensures that parliamentarians are actively involved both in 'following up on the implementation of recommendations' and in 'contributing to the preparation of reports.' Similarly, in **Paraguay**, legislators are invited to the mechanism's interinstitutional working group meetings that occur every three months. In **Rwanda**, parliament forms an 'integral part' of the country's mechanism and is 'always represented' at meetings. Meanwhile, in **Kiribati**, parliamentarians have 'a standing invitation to NMIRF meetings,' which officials noted 'helps increase awareness and ultimately enhances in one way or another the enjoyment of human rights among the people.'

On the other hand, in **Mauritius**, as elsewhere, officials report that 'parliamentarians are not involved in the NMIRF.' Instead, legislative engagement is limited to being 'made aware' of UN reports and recommendations, and having an opportunity to comment on State periodic reports and national human rights action plans. Similarly, in **Denmark**, parliamentarians 'do not participate in the human rights committee's meetings.' Instead, the committee simply forwards all national reports, UN recommendations after examination, and follow-up reports to parliamentarians.

In **Kenya**, Parliament is more involved, but still not as a regular partner in the work of the country's NMIRF.

Here, Parliament is sent, for example, the concluding observations of UN Treaty Bodies as soon as they are published (to seek their support in implementing recommendations), and is invited to 'stakeholder review and validation forums' - used to consult with stakeholders on draft periodic reports. Yet it is not consulted, as a matter of course, in discussions on implementation, or in regularised monitoring/oversight of progress.

Notwithstanding, there are some signs that some of the NMIRFs that do not involve or systematically engage with parliaments are aware of the problem, and are moving to improve the situation. For example, in their response to the survey, officials from the **Bahamas** recognised the need to improve parliamentary involvement, and explained that the Government had recently passed a resolution calling on Parliament to establish a human rights committee, which, once established, is expected to sign a memorandum of cooperation with the country's NMIRF.

In countries lacking a sophisticated NMIRF, the involvement of parliamentarians is similarly (and perhaps even more) ad hoc, though various States also report – if not regularised then at least fairly frequent – parliamentary involvement. In the **Gambia** (single inter-ministerial mechanism), for example, officials report that Parliament is 'very involved with implementation,' and a 'representative from the National Assembly is always asked to be part of the task force and to participate in the meetings;' while in **South Africa** (single ministerial mechanism), though the legislature is not systematically involved in implementation, it does exercise systematic oversight over reporting, as each periodic human rights report is debated in Parliament.[34]

Similarly, In **Australia** (hybrid system), a parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights is routinely involved as part of Australia's engagement with the UPR process. That includes consultations (led by the Attorney-General's Office) with the joint committee on drafts of Australia's national UPR report, and invitations

to committee members to travel to Geneva as part of Australia's delegation to the UPR Working Group. There have also been occasional requests by the committee for the government to brief them on Treaty Body concluding observations, but these were only ad hoc requests rather than a general requirement to report to the committee or to Parliament more widely. Similarly, in **Germany** (single ministerial mechanism), the Parliament's Committee on Human rights and Humanitarian Aid 'exercises […] parliamentary control over the Government specifically with regards to the Government's human rights policy.' It can therefore hold hearings or invite Government representatives to report 'on the progress of certain UPR recommendations or give statements on why certain recommendations have or have not been approved/accepted.'

In **Mongolia** (hybrid system), Parliament also scrutinises the Government's engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms, including its performance in implementing recommendations and reporting on progress. Indeed, at the time of the survey, Mongolia's Parliament was in the process of reviewing the State's implementation of recommendations provided by human rights Treaty Bodies, with a view to developing policy guidelines 'to enhance the national reporting

and follow-up system and procedures as well as for purposes of further legal reforms.'

However, a majority of States (especially those that have not established an NMIRF) explained, like **Slovenia**, that Parliament was only involved in a limited manner and on an as needed basis.

INVOLVEMENT OF JUDICIARY AND SPECIALISED AGENCIES

The picture is not much better in terms of mechanism engagement with national judiciaries, including amongst States with NMIRFs. Only around 22% of States surveyed reported that the judicial branch is fully integrated into their country's NMIRF or actively contributes to the mechanism's work. Notwithstanding, there are some notable good practices amongst those States that do. For example, in **Georgia**, representatives of the national courts routinely participate in NMIRF meetings, while in **Jamaica** it is representatives of the Prosecutor's Office. Some States even draft periodic reports in consultation with individual judges (e.g., Mauritania).[35]

TABLE XI.

Level of judiciary and State agency involvement among States interviewed[36]

	JUDICIARY	STATISTICS BUREAU	OTHER STATE AGENCIES
	NUMBER OF STATES	NUMBER OF STATES	NUMBER OF STATES
NO PARTICIPATION	6	7	1
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	40	29	21
PASSIVE CONSULTATION	8	7	15
ACTIVE CONTRIBUTION	10	17	16
INTEGRATED INTO MECHANISM	19	23	30

Regularised involvement of/engagement with State agencies is, on the other hand, more widespread, again, especially amongst those that have established an NMIRF.

Many national implementation-reporting mechanisms also include representatives from law enforcement agencies such as: the police service (e.g., **Kiribati**), independent police oversight bodies (e.g., **Kenya**), the penitentiary services (e.g., **Samoa**), anti-trafficking agencies (e.g., **St Vincent and the Grenadines**), health and social services agencies (e.g., **Bahamas**), and national statistics bureaus (most States with NMIRFs – see below).

In most States with NMIRFs, the national statistics bureau participates actively in meetings of the mechanism – with important positive implications for the collection of human rights indicator data to measure the impact of implementing actions. For example, in **the Gambia**, the Bureau of Statistics is 'considered very important in the preparation of reports,' and is relied on heavily for its expertise, while in **South Africa**, the national statistics bureau publishes reports on the 'impact of implementation on the enjoyment of human rights.'[37] Less positively, this involvement is not always premised on proposing and elaborating impact measurement indicators. In **Rwanda, Kenya**, and **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**, for example, the national statistics

offices only participate to help inform national human rights surveys.

Only one NMIRF (**Jamaica**) reported that its statistics bureau is not involved in implementation and reporting.

OTHER STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Another key to successful implementation, reporting and follow-up is the level of engagement with non-government stakeholders such as civil society, national human rights institutions, and the private sector. These actors play a fundamental role as information providers, accountability actors, and – in some cases – implementation partners. While there is a relatively high level of stakeholder engagement in States surveyed, relatively few countries integrate them systematically into their mechanisms' work on implementation and reporting. The two exceptions are **Mauritius** and **Samoa**, where representatives of the countries' NHRIs, private sector and civil society are fully integrated into their NMIRF's work. Notwithstanding, many other national mechanisms/systems (in fact, nearly all of those surveyed) regularly consult with civil society, especially when preparing national reports.

TABLE XII.

Level of other stakeholder involvement among States interviewed[38]

	NHRI	CIVIL SOCIETY	PRIVATE SECTOR
	NUMBER OF STATES	NUMBER OF STATES	NUMBER OF STATES
NO PARTICIPATION	8	0	9
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	20	10	59
PASSIVE CONSULTATION	14	18	4
ACTIVE CONTRIBUTION	24	38	6
INTEGRATED INTO MECHANISM	17	17	5

UN Women/Tasfiq Mahmood

Commonwealth Secretariat Working Session with the Kiribati National Human Rights Task Force, 11–12 February 2020, Tarawa. Commonwealth Survey.

CIVIL SOCIETY

While States surveyed were unanimous in their claims of having modalities for civil society participation integrated into their national systems for human rights implementation and reporting, there are vast differences in the nature of these modalities. For example, some States have an open invitation to all interested stakeholders, while others always invite the same civil society organisations to every consultation, some select NGOs according to the theme under consideration, while others have an accreditation system in place. Moreover, there is a clear tendency toward greater involvement of civil society in reporting to human rights mechanisms rather than in implementation and follow-up, demonstrating a broad tendency to see them as information-providers and accountability actors rather than as implementation partners.

Overall, countries with NMIRFs tend to have more sophisticated modes of engagement with civil society, though relatively few (e.g., Georgia, Mauritius, Portugal) have civil society organisations that are actual members of the mechanism. In **Georgia**, the Human Rights Council gives consultative status to the five most important local human rights NGOs and invites them to participate in all of its activities. In **Mauritius** more than fifty CSOs are members of the NMIRF. While in **Portugal**, one of the NMIRF's three annual plenary meetings must involve civil society, while certain civil society organisations with particular expertise are routinely invited to join meetings of working groups tasked with drafting national periodic reports.

As noted, however, in most cases civil society organisations are simply consulted by the NMIRF (especially in the process of preparing national periodic reports), sometimes systematically, sometimes on an ad hoc basis.

Examples of the former (systematic consultation) include **Uruguay, Mauritania**, and **Paraguay**. Indeed, these States have a legal obligation to consult with civil society prior to submitting a human rights periodic report. In all three of these cases, civil society engagement is facilitated through online consultation platforms.

In **Paraguay**, this platform is an extension to its SIMORE tracking software that provides easy and secure access, and wherein NGO can register, comment on the follow-up to recommendations, and interact with the administrators and focal points responsible for the information published in the system.

Similarly, in 2014, **Uruguay** established a 'System for Dialogue and Consultation' (SDC) by ministerial decree in response to the need 'to establish a permanent dialogue with social organisations and movements for the design and implementation of the State's foreign policy' and in recognition that 'strengthening civil society participation promotes a culture of shared responsibility, understood as the mutual commitment between the State and civil society to the improvement of public policies and services in order to improve the quality of life of the people.' Through the SDC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can organise in person consultations, request written submissions on particular issues, or organise online interactive consultations. The SDC can even invite Uruguayan civil society organisations to be part of official delegations attending international meetings of a multilateral and/or regional nature, such as reviews before UN human rights mechanisms.

Other NMIRFs consult civil society in a more ad hoc or indirect manner. In **Denmark**, for example, civil society organisations are only invited when the human rights committee is drafting 'big reports,' for which additional civil society inputs are required (though a process for more systematic involvement is being developed). Notably, the country's NMIRF seeks 'civil society's insights on which recommendations Denmark could meaningfully take forward, as many recommendations received are not realistically/politically feasible to implement.' The State therefore recognises that 'civil society can, thus, push for change in the government's policy and in parliament, which is something that the Committee (i.e. the country's NMIRF) is not capable of doing.'

In **Kiribati**, the NMIRF only engages with civil society when it is 'necessary,' and the mechanism 'sees **fit**' to extend invitations to meetings. While in **Burkina Faso**, where civil society engagement is limited to seeking their comments on periodic reports, NGOs only allowed to take part in those national workshops where periodic reports are validated.[39]

Consultations with civil society in national systems that are less sophisticated/institutionalised than NMIRFs likewise tend to focus on reporting. **Scotland** (part of the UK), for example, has a policy of systematically consulting civil society by holding events that enable dialogue in advance of each UK review before a UN mechanism, while the **Netherlands** holds consultations in both The Hague and Geneva, with both local and international NGOs ahead of reviews (a fairly common practice in Geneva, particularly ahead of UPR reviews). In other cases, such as in **Spain** and **Latvia**, consultations are held online by inviting civil society organisations to independently make submissions ahead of State reporting, in the case of the former, or to comment on drafts of national reports, in the case of the latter. In **Germany**, consultations are organised through the Forum Menschenrechte (Human Rights Forum), an umbrella organisation of local human rights NGOs.

Side-level event on the margins of the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council on NMIRFs. 28th February 2023.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

In 20% of the States surveyed that have established an NMIRF, the country's NHRI is a full member of the mechanism. In most other cases (only eight States reported no NHRI participation) members of the NHRI are more or less systematically consulted and/or invited to meetings. The **Maldives'** NHRI, for example, while not a part of any of the NMIRF's subcommittees, is considered a 'key stakeholder' and is consulted throughout the review-implementation-reporting cycle.

In those cases where the NHRI is a member of the mechanism, there can be significant variations in its role. In **Rwanda**, for example, the NHRI 'participates in all the NMIRF's activities,' by helping translate recommendations into policy, discussing allocation of responsibility, monitoring implementation, and providing input and impact assessments useful for national reporting; while in **Uruguay**, the NHRI only has observer status.

Though the more sophisticated nature of standing mechanisms like NMIRFs helps improve engagement with NHRIs, there are many examples of NHRIs playing important roles in other types of implementation systems. For example, in **Norway**, the NHRI is 'very actively involved in all the phases of the process of implementation, reporting and follow-up,' drafting and submitting its own alternative reports to Treaty Bodies, providing input on national reports and replies to lists of issues, and 'facilitating communication with/participation of civil society organisations.'

In the **Netherlands**, the NHRI sometimes guides Parliament in following-up on recommendations, by providing 'advice on legislation and also sending letters to the Parliament about certain recommendations' that it feels are important and should be acted upon. In **Ethiopia**, while the NHRI does not attend meetings of the country's hybrid mechanism, it does provide 'comments and input on draft reports.' Similarly, **Latvia's** NHRI is not formally involved in drafting but has 'an obligation to consult with civil society' and provide comments on government reports. In **Ukraine**, the NHRI 'is always invited to meetings' of its ad hoc inter-ministerial human rights committees.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN NATIONAL REPORTING AND IMPLEMENTATION

UN human rights recommendations increasingly refer to, and are sometimes even addressed to, the private sector, which in turn means that successful implementation depends on engaging businesses. Unfortunately, however, there are few cases of effective private sector participation in/engagement with national implementation-reporting systems (only 17% of countries surveyed reported any sort of involvement on the part of private sector actors).

In **Mauritius**, the private sector is represented on the country's NMIRF through Business Mauritius, an independent business association representing over 1,200 companies,[40] while in Samoa it is through the Samoa Chamber of Commerce. There is also some degree of private sector participation/engagement with national implementation-reporting mechanisms in **Lesotho, Moldova, Portugal, Rwanda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines**, and **Uzbekistan**.

INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is fundamentally a human rights agenda, with 92% of SDG targets having been shown to correspond to international human rights law obligations. Integrated approaches to SDG and human rights implementation and reporting therefore provide an opportunity to make efficiency gains and overcome capacity constraints by avoiding duplication of work processes. They further improve effectiveness and coherence of policies through a human rights-based approach to development that shines a light on those most at-risk of being left behind, while ensuring greater accountability for the commitments made under the 2030 Agenda and facilitating the identification of implementation challenges.

Despite the clear advantages to integrated approaches to human rights and SDG implementation and reporting, very few national mechanisms for human rights implementation and reporting (only around 15%) employ working methods that seek to 'link' human rights recommendations with relevant SDGs and targets. States that do so include **Georgia, Paraguay, Portugal**, and **Samoa**.

TABLE XIII.

Level of SDG integration among States interviewed[41]

	NUMBER OF STATES
NO INTEGRATION	19
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	51
INTEGRATION	13

IT SYSTEMS AND DATA MANAGEMENT

In recent years, with the increasing attention being paid to national implementation systems and to overcoming capacity constraints, especially in developing countries, there has been a proliferation of IT systems and information management databases aimed at improving national coordination in human rights implementation and reporting (see chapter 1).

While some States use simple systems for tracking implementation of recommendations (e.g., Excel database), others have implemented complete data management and recommendation tracking tools.

The most well-known national human rights data management tools are Paraguay's SIMORE system (which they have also shared with other countries in Latin America such as Uruguay), and Samoa's SADATA. However, over recent years OHCHR has been steadily improving its generic or 'off-the-shelf' system, the National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD), and making it available to an increasing number of States.

The NRTD is a digital recommendations tracking platform developed, hosted, and maintained by OHCHR and customisable according to national needs. The NRTD functions as a database that 'facilitates the recording, tracking, and reporting on the implementation of human rights recommendations' and works to, *inter alia*, increase States' information management capacity, enhance coordination across State structures, assist States in implementing human rights recommendations, promote accountability and participation, and cluster and prioritise recommendations and their implementation.

TABLE XIV.

State use of centralised repository or tracking database[42]

	NUMBER OF STATES
NONE	14
NO INFORMATION PROVIDED	45
CENTRALISED REPOSITORY	11
TRACKING SOFTWARE	13

05

CONCLUSIONS
AND NEXT STEPS

This report, and the results of the global implementation-reporting system survey presented herein, reveals a story of rapid progress over the past decade in the sophistication with which States, especially small developing States, are managing, implementing, measuring the impact of, and reporting on UN human rights recommendations. The survey results in particular suggest that the international community has, at last, 'turned the corner' in confronting and overcoming the decades old 'implementation gap' between universal norms and local realities – a gap that has, for so long, undermined the credibility and reputation of the UN and its human rights pillar. The keystone of that progress has been the emergence and evolution of NMIRFs, a new type of governmental mechanism that allows States to efficiently and effectively implement the recommendations they receive from all three main UN human rights mechanisms, track progress and impact (sometimes in combination with the SDG targets), and report back to the UN on achievements and shortfalls.

That said, as we begin 2024, we remain in only the first chapter of the story of NMIRFs. We know that a relatively small group of States, mainly LDCs and SIDS facing severe national capacity constraints, have begun to shift from an earlier approach to implementation and reporting premised on multiple, overlapping ad hoc national systems, to a new, more holistic and streamlined approach premised on a single, standing, and inclusive national mechanism. We know that this new approach works – helping States with NMIRFs to implement UN human rights recommendations more effectively (and do so in a more democratic way – by involving parliamentarians, civil society, etc.), and reduce their backlog of overdue periodic reports. And we know the core common characteristics of efficient and effective NMIRFs – the good practices or 'success factors' that allow them to continuously translate UN recommendations into better national laws, policies, and practices. However, we are yet to distil those good practices or 'success factors' into a single, universal, normative framework (building on the regional Pacific Principles of Practice) to help guide any State that wishes to establish or strengthen an NMIRF to do so. Such a step – the next chapter in the story of NMIRFs – is crucial if we, representatives of the international community, are to support the further quantitative and qualitative development of NMIRFs, and thereby ensure that the UN human rights system serves its ultimate purpose: to realise rights, and change lives.

ANNEX

01

METHODOLOGY FOR CLASSIFYING STATES' IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING SYSTEM

The **X axis** (degree of sophistication) is ranked from **-9.33 – 15** total points. The points are awarded as follows:

▶ **Weighted stakeholder** (i.e., government entities, CSOs, etc.) **participation:** -2.33 – 7 points

° Each stakeholder received between -1 and 3 points, which was awarded based on the following levels of participation:

◊ -1 no participation

• (i.e., the relevant stakeholder is not involved in the functioning or proceedings of the mechanism)

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 passive consultation

• (there is some relationship between the mechanism and stakeholder, e.g., the stakeholder is consulted to some extent on certain issues, but the stakeholder is not actively involved in the processes of the mechanism)

◊ 2 active contribution

• (the stakeholder is actively involved in the processes of the mechanism in a more systematic manner)

◊ 3 integration

• (i.e., the entity forms part of the implementation, reporting and follow-up mechanism)

° The stakeholders analysed were:

◊ Parliament

◊ Judiciary

◊ CSOs

◊ Statistics bureau

◊ NHRI

◊ Private sector

◊ Relevant State agencies (e.g., police services, bureau of prisons, health services, etc.)

▶ **SDG Integration**

° Based on whether SDG implementation is measured alongside with human rights implementation (i.e., that approaches to implement, monitor implementation, and follow-up on SDG and UN human rights mechanism recommendations are integrated)

° Point scale: -1 – 1 point

◊ -1 no integration

• (i.e., SDG implementation is measured separately from human rights implementation)

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 integration

• (i.e., SDG and human rights implementation are measured together)

▶ **Clustering**

° Based on whether recommendations were clustered by thematic human rights issues.

° Point scale: -1 – 1 point

◊ -1 no clustering

• (i.e., recommendations are separated by UN human rights mechanism (Special Procedures, UPR, Treaty Bodies) or any manner that is not based on thematic human rights issues)

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 clustering

• (i.e., recommendations are clustered based on thematic human rights issues (e.g., women's rights, political rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights, etc.) irrespective of which UN human rights mechanism the recommendations come from)

▶ **Centralised repository/tracking database**

° Whether implementation information was stored in a central repository and if any tracking software/database was utilised.

° Point scale: -1 – 2 points

◊ -1 no repository/database

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 centralised repository

• (e.g., an excel database)

◊ 2 tracking database

• (e.g., IMPACT OSS, NRTD, SIMORE/SIMORE PLUS)

▶ **Implementation monitoring**

° Whether the mechanism monitors the State-level implementation of human rights recommendations.

° Point scale: -1 – 1

◊ -1 no

• (i.e., the national mechanism only focuses on reporting to the UN human rights mechanisms and does not measure the State-level implementation of recommendations)

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 yes

• (i.e., in addition to reporting, the national mechanism monitors State progress in implementing recommendations received from the UN human rights mechanisms)

▶ **Human rights impact indicators**

° Whether impact indicators are used to measure implementation of human rights recommendations (i.e., whether the mechanism engages in the qualitative or quantitative assessment of impact of State policies (carried out by the State pursuant to UN human rights mechanism recommendations) on human rights based on human rights indicators).

° Point scale: -1 – 1

◊ -1 no

◊ (i.e., the mechanism does not do so)

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 yes

• (i.e., the mechanism uses human rights impact indicators to measure the human rights impact of its implemented polices)

▶ **Holistic approach**

° Whether one or multiple mechanisms are used for all recommendations (i.e., whether one or different mechanisms handle recommendations from the UPR, Special Procedures, and Treaty Bodies).

◊ - 1 Multiple mechanisms to handle recommendations

◊ (e.g., one mechanism for UPR recommendations, and another for Treaty Body recommendations, and another for Special Procedure recommendations)

◊ 0 No information

◊ 1 One mechanism

◊ (i.e., one national implementation, reporting and follow-up mechanism for all UN human rights mechanism recommendations)

▶ **Coordination responsibility**

° Whether the mechanism itself is responsible for implementation coordination, or whether such responsibility lies with an ad-hoc committee or ministry.

° Point scale: -1 – 1

◊ -1 ministry

• (i.e., a line ministry is responsible for coordinating implementation and reporting measures)

◊ 0 ad-hoc committee

• (i.e., an ad-hoc committee is formed to coordinate implementation and reporting measures)

◊ 1 standing implementation mechanism

• (i.e., the mechanism employs a standing body/committee/etc. to coordinate implementation and reporting measures)

The **Y axis** (ad-hoc – standing mechanism) is scored from **-6 – 11 total points**. Points were awarded as follows:

▶ **Established by law**

° Whether the mechanism was established by law (i.e., statute, proclamation, etc.) or not.

° Point scale: -1 – 1

◊ -1 no

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 yes

▶ **Permanent**

° Whether the mechanism is permanent (i.e., standing) and operates continuously (regardless of whether a report is being prepared), or whether it is only convened for reporting purposes (i.e., to draft the relevant reports).

° Point scale: -1 – 1

◊ -1 not permanent

• (only convened for reporting)

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 permanent

• (operating even outside of reporting periods)

▶ **Regularity of meetings**

° How often the mechanism meets (i.e., whether it only meets for reporting purposes, or whether it has regularly-scheduled, systematic meetings, etc.)

° Point scale: -1 – 3

◊ -1 reporting

• (i.e., only meets for reporting purposes)

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 ad-hoc follow-up meetings

• (whether it has any meetings for purposes beyond reporting)

◊ 2 regular, needs-based meetings

• (the mechanism meets on a regular basis, based on need)

◊ 3 systematic meetings

- (the mechanism meets often, on a scheduled, regular basis, not just based on need)

▶ **Secretariat**

° Whether the mechanism has a secretariat or not, and whether the secretariat is informal, within a ministry, or whether the mechanism has its own dedicated secretariat.

° Point scale: -1 – 3

◊ -1 no secretariat

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 informal

- (One State entity/government department/ etc. is responsible for acting as the secretariat, but without any formal procedure or decision)

◊ 2 within a ministry

- (One ministry/State entity (e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs) is responsible for acting as the mechanism's secretariat)

◊ 3 dedicated secretariat

- (the mechanism has its own dedicated secretariat, where secretariat members only work in that position and are not made up of another government ministry/entity)

▶ **Budget**

° Whether the mechanism has its own budget, or whether it is supported through the budgets of other ministries, State mechanisms/entities, etc.

° Point scale: -1 – 1

◊ -1 no

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 yes

▶ **Dedicated focal points/staff**

° Whether the mechanism has dedicated focal points and/or staff.

° Point scale: -1 – 2

◊ -1 none

◊ 0 no information

◊ 1 focal points

- (assigned individuals, typically within relevant line ministries, that are assigned different tasks to ensure the mechanism's efficient functioning)

◊ 2 dedicated staff

- (the mechanism has its own staff that work only for the mechanism)

ANNEX

02

STATES' IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING SYSTEMS

TABLE X.

Points awarded by State

State	UN Regional Group	State classification in report	Parliament	Judiciary	CSOs	Statistics	NHRI	Business	Relevant State agencies	Weighted participation score	Integration SDGs	Clustering	Centralised repository / tracking database	Implementation monitoring	Human rights impact indicators	Holistic approach	Coordination responsibility	Total X Points
Afghanistan	APG	Hybrid	3	0	3	3	1	0	0	3,33	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	**7,33**
Angola	AG	NMIRF	0	3	2	3	0	0	3	3,67	0	0	2	1	1	1	-1	**7,67**
Argentina	GRULAC	Single inter-ministerial	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1,33	1	0	2	1	0	0	-1	**4,33**
Australia	WEOG	Hybrid	-1	0	1	-1	1	0	0	0	-1	0	1	-1	-1	-1	1	**-2**
Azerbaijan	EEG	NMIRF	-1	-1	2	3	3	0	0	2	0	1	-1	1	0	1	1	**5**
Bahamas	GRULAC	NMIRF	2	-1	3	0	-1	-1	3	1,67	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	**5,67**
Bahrain	APG	Single inter-ministerial	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	3,33	0	0	0	1	-1	0	-1	**2,33**
Bolivia	GRULAC	Single inter-ministerial	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1,67	0	1	2	1	1	1	-1	**6,67**
Brazil	GRULAC	Single ministerial	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,33	0	1	-1	-1	-1	1	-1	**-1,67**
Burkina Faso	AG	NMIRF (Morocco report)	2	0	2	3	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	-1	1	**4**
Cabo Verde	AG	NMIRF	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	**3**
Canada	WEOG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0,67	-1	-1	0	1	-1	1	0	**-0,33**
Chad	AG	Single inter-ministerial	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	-1	**3**
Chile	GRULAC	Single inter-ministerial	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	0	-1	**8**
China	APG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	3	3	2	0	0	0	3	3,67	0	0	0	1	0	0	-1	**3,67**
Costa Rica	GRULAC	NMIRF	1	1	1	2	1	0	3	3	1	0	2	1	0	1	-1	**7**
Czech Republic	EEG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	-1	-1	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	**1**
Denmark	WEOG	NMIRF	1	-1	3	0	3	-1	3	2,67	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	**6,67**
Dominican Republic	GRULAC	NMIRF	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	**6**
Ecuador	GRULAC	NMIRF	3	3	1	3	3	-1	3	5	-1	1	2	1	-1	1	-1	**7**
Eswatini	AG	NMIRF	3	3	2	3	2	0	3	5,33	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	1	1	**2,33**
Ethiopia	AG	Hybrid	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	1	**1**
Finland	WEOG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	-1	**2**
Georgia	EEG	NMIRF	3	3	3	2	2	0	3	5,33	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	**11,33**
Germany	WEOG	Single ministerial	1	0	1	-1	1	0	1	1	0	-1	0	-1	0	1	-1	**-1**
Ghana	AG	Single inter-ministerial	2	3	2	0	0	0	3	3,33	0	0	0	1	0	0	-1	**3,33**
Guatemala	GRULAC	NMIRF	3	3	2	2	-1	-1	2	3,33	0	1	2	1	-1	0	-1	**5,33**
Haiti	GRULAC	NMIRF	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	-1	**4**
Iraq	APG	Single inter-ministerial	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	-1	-1	**1**

State	UN Regional Group	State classification in report	Parliament	Judiciary	CSOs	Statistics	NHRI	Business	Relevant State agencies	Weighted participation score	Integration SDGs	Clustering	Centralised repository / tracking database	Implementation monitoring	Human rights impact indicators	Holistic approach	Coordination responsibility	Total X Points
Italy	WEOG	NMIRF	1	1	1	0	-1	0	1	1	0	1	-1	1	0	1	1	4
Jamaica	GRULAC	NMIRF	-1	2	2	-1	0	0	3	1,67	-1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2,67
Jordan	APG	Single inter-ministerial	2	0	2	0	2	2	2	3,33	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	6,33
Kenya	AG	NMIRF	2	3	2	3	3	0	3	5,33	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	1	1	3,33
Kiribati	APG	NMIRF	2	3	2	3	2	0	3	4	0	1	-1	0	0	1	1	6
Latvia	EEG	Hybrid	-1	0	2	1	2	0	1	1,67	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	1	-1	-3,33
Lebanon	APG	NMIRF (Morocco report)	0	0	2	3	2	0	3	3,33	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5,33
Lesotho	AG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	1	2	2	1	-1	2	2	3	0	-1	0	0	0	-1	-1	0
Liberia	AG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	1
Lithuania	EEG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	2,33	0	0	0	1	0	0	-1	2,33
Madagascar	AG	NMIRF	3	0	3	3	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	5
Malaysia	APG	Hybrid	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	4,33	-1	1	1	1	1	-1	-1	5,33
Maldives	APG	NMIRF	3	3	2	3	2	-1	3	5	-1	-1	1	1	-1	1	1	6
Mali	AG	Single inter-ministerial	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	2,67	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3,67
Marshall Islands	APG	NMIRF	0	0	3	3	0	3	3	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	7
Mauritania	AG	NMIRF (Morocco report)	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	1,67	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3,67
Mauritius	AG	NMIRF	-1	0	3	3	3	3	3	4,67	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	7,67
Mexico	GRULAC	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	2	1	-1	0	-1	5
Moldova	EEG	NMIRF (Morocco report)	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	6,33	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	9,33
Mongolia	APG	Hybrid	1	0	2	2	1	-1	1	2	-1	1	0	1	0	-1	-1	1
Morocco	AG	NMIRF	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	4,33	1	1	2	1	-1	1	1	10,33
Mozambique	AG	NMIRF	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,33	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2,33
Netherlands	WEOG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	-1	0	0	-1	0	2
Niger	AG	NMIRF (Morocco report)	2	0	2	3	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	-1	1	4
Norway	WEOG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	-1	3	2	3	-1	-1	2,33	0	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	4,33
Panama	GRULAC	NMIRF	3	3	2	0	3	0	2	4,33	1	-1	2	1	0	0	-1	6,33
Paraguay	GRULAC	NMIRF	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	6	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	14
Philippines	APG	Single inter-ministerial	3	3	1	0	3	0	0	3,33	-1	-1	0	1	0	1	-1	2,33
Portugal	WEOG	NMIRF	3	0	2	3	3	0	3	4,67	0	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	6,67
Qatar	APG	Single inter-ministerial	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1,33	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	2,33

State	UN Regional Group	State classification in report	Parliament	Judiciary	CSOs	Statistics	NHRI	Business	Relevant State agencies	Weighted participation score	Integration SDGs	Clustering	Centralised repository / tracking database	Implementation monitoring	Human rights impact indicators	Holistic approach	Coordination responsibility	Total X Points
RoK	APG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	1	0	2	0	2	0	3	2,67	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	3,67
Rwanda	AG	NMIRF	3	1	1	0	3	1	1	3,33	-1	-1	1	1	-1	1	1	4,33
Samoa	APG	NMIRF	2	0	3	3	3	3	3	5,67	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	13,67
Seychelles	AG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	0	3	-1	2	3	3	4	0	-1	-1	-1	0	1	-1	1
Singapore	APG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	4
Slovenia	EEG	Single inter-ministerial	1	-1	1	2	1	-1	1	1,33	1	-1	1	1	-1	1	-1	2,33
South Africa	AG	Single ministerial	2	3	0	2	2	0	1	3,33	-1	-1	0	-1	0	-1	-1	-1,67
Spain	WEOG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	0	0	-1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	GRULAC	NMIRF	-1	2	2	3	2	2	3	4,33	-1	0	0	-1	-1	1	1	3,33
Sudan	AG	Single inter-ministerial	-1	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	-1	-1	1	0	1	-1	1	1	1
Sweden	WEOG	Single inter-ministerial	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1	1	1	2
Switzerland	WEOG	NMIRF	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1,33	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	5,33
Thailand	APG	Single inter-ministerial	1	3	1	0	3	-1	3	3,33	-1	-1	2	1	0	1	0	5,33
The Gambia	AG	Single inter-ministerial	3	0	3	3	3	0	0	4	-1	0	0	-1	-1	1	0	2
Togo	AG	Single inter-ministerial	0	0	2	1	2	2	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	4
Tonga	APG	Single inter-ministerial	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	-1	1	3
Tunisia	AG	NMIRF	0	0	2	3	0	0	3	2,67	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5,67
Ukraine	EEG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	1	0	1	2	1	0	2	2,33	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	1,33
United Kingdom	WEOG	Single ministerial	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	-1	-1
Uruguay	GRULAC	NMIRF	3	3	2	3	1	0	3	5	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	11
Uzbekistan	APG	NMIRF (Morocco report)	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	4	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	8
Vanuatu	APG	Single ministerial	1	0	1	2	-1	0	0	1	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	1	0	-2
Venezuela	GRULAC	NMIRF	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	3
Viet Nam	APG	Ad hoc inter-ministerial	2	3	2	0	0	2	2	3,67	0	0	0	1	0	0	-1	3,67

TABLE Y.

Points awarded by State

State	Est. law	Permanent	Regularity of meetings	Secretariat	Budget	Dedicated focal points/staff	Total Y Points
Afghanistan	-1	1	3	2	0	0	5
Angola	1	1	2	0	1	0	5
Argentina	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Australia	-1	-1	3	2	0	0	3
Azerbaijan	1	1	2	1	-1	1	5
Bahamas	-1	1	3	1	-1	1	4
Bahrain	1	0	0	2	-1	1	3
Bolivia	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Brazil	-1	1	0	0	-1	0	-1
Burkina Faso	1	1	3	2	0	0	7
Cabo Verde	1	1	2	2	0	0	6
Canada	-1	0	0	1	-1	0	-1
Chad	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chile	-1	0	0	2	0	0	1
China	-1	-1	1	2	-1	0	0
Costa Rica	1	1	2	2	-1	1	6
Czech Republic	-1	-1	2	1	-1	1	1
Denmark	0	1	3	2	-1	1	6
Dominican Republic	1	1	2	2	0	0	6
Ecuador	-1	1	2	2	-1	1	4
Eswatini	1	1	3	2	-1	1	7
Ethiopia	-1	1	3	2	0	0	5
Finland	-1	-1	-1	2	-1	0	-2
Georgia	1	1	3	2	-1	1	7
Germany	-1	1	-1	1	-1	0	-1
Ghana	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Guatemala	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
Haiti	1	0	2	2	-1	1	5
Iraq	1	1	-1	2	-1	1	3
Italy	1	1	3	1	1	-1	6
Jamaica	1	1	3	2	-1	1	7
Jordan	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Kenya	1	1	1	2	-1	1	5
Kiribati	1	1	3	2	1	1	9
Latvia	1	1	-1	2	-1	-1	1
Lebanon	1	1	0	2	0	0	4
Lesotho	1	1	-1	0	-1	1	1
Liberia	-1	-1	-1	1	-1	0	-3
Lithuania	-1	-1	-1	2	0	0	-1
Madagascar	1	1	2	2	0	1	7

State	Est. law	Permanent	Regularity of meetings	Secretariat	Budget	Dedicated focal points/staff	Total Y Points
Malaysia	-1	-1	2	2	-1	1	2
Maldives	1	1	3	2	-1	2	8
Mali	1	0	-1	2	-1	0	1
Marshall Islands	1	1	3	2	-1	0	6
Mauritania	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Mauritius	1	1	3	2	1	1	9
Mexico	-1	-1	0	1	-1	0	-2
Moldova	1	1	0	2	0	1	5
Mongolia	1	1	2	1	-1	-1	3
Morocco	1	1	3	3	1	2	11
Mozambique	1	1	2	2	1	2	9
Netherlands	-1	-1	2	-1	-1	0	-2
Niger	1	1	0	2	0	0	4
Norway	-1	1	2	-1	-1	-1	-1
Panama	1	1	3	2	-1	0	6
Paraguay	1	1	3	2	-1	1	7
Philippines	1	1	0	2	-1	0	3
Portugal	1	1	3	2	-1	-1	5
Qatar	1	0	-1	2	0	0	2
RoK	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	1	-4
Rwanda	1	1	3	1	-1	1	6
Samoa	1	1	3	2	-1	1	7
Seychelles	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-5
Singapore	-1	0	0	0	-1	-1	-3
Slovenia	0	0	2	2	-1	1	4
South Africa	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	0	-4
Spain	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-5
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1	1	3	2	1	1	9
Sudan	1	1	2	-1	-1	0	2
Sweden	0	1	3	-1	-1	0	2
Switzerland	0	0	1	2	0	1	4
Thailand	1	0	0	1	1	-1	2
The Gambia	0	1	-1	1	0	1	2
Togo	1	1	-1	2	-1	1	3
Tonga	1	-1	-1	2	0	0	1
Tunisia	1	1	2	2	-1	0	5
Ukraine	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-5
United Kingdom	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-5
Uruguay	1	1	3	2	-1	1	7
Uzbekistan	1	1	0	2	1	0	5
Vanuatu	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	1	-3
Venezuela	1	1	0	2	-1	1	4
Viet Nam	-1	-1	-1	2	-1	0	-2

ENDNOTES

1. Universal Rights Group (2020), 'Introducing 'The Pacific Principles of Practice' for effective national implementation', https://www.universal-rights.org/introducing-the-pacific-principles-of-practice-for-effective-national-implementation/

2. This corresponds to Brazil's former system at the time of the State's initial response to the URG survey in 2021. Following the change in government in 2023, Brazil changed its system to a more participatory single inter-ministerial system, led by the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship (Ministério dos Direitos Humanos e da Cidadania). It opened participation to other stakeholders like the UN Parliamentary Observatory for the Periodic Review of Human Rights (Observatório Parlamentar da Revisão Periódica de Direitos Humanos da ONU) and civil society led UPR Collective (Colectivo RPU). Brazil has also recently signed an MoU with Paraguay to install Simore+ and continues to make changes towards the establishment of a full-fledged NMIRF.

3. Information regarding South Africa was collected from desk research only. See OHCHR (2016), National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A study of state engagement with international human rights mechanisms; South Africa (2017), National report for the third cycle UPR, available: https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/za-index; However, South Africa is in the process of establishing an NMIRF, see OHCHR (2022) National report for the fourth cycle UPR, available: https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/za-index

4. Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law (2023), 'The Implementation of Human Rights Recommendations in the UK', https://binghamcentre.biicl.org/documents/2143_june_2023_the_implementation_of_human_rights_recommendations_in_the_uk.pdf.

5. Following the Taliban return to power in 2021, the effectiveness of the national mechanism has seen a considerable decline, following lack of engagement with the international human rights system.

6. The Danish Institute for Human Rights (2023), 'Report on the International Seminar on National Mechanisms, for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up in the field of human rights', https://www.humanrights.dk/publications/report-international-seminar-national-mechanisms-implementation-reporting-follow-field.

7. Op cit. ii

8. Op cit. iii

9. Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law (2023), 'The Implementation of Human Rights Recommendations in the UK', https://binghamcentre.biicl.org/documents/2143_june_2023_the_implementation_of_human_rights_recommendations_in_the_uk.pdf.

10. Op cit. v

11. Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (2023), 'Mecanismos Nacionales de Implementación de Recomendaciones de Derechos Humanos', https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/100642/121126/F2000545272/DECRETO

12. Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Paraguay, 'SIMORE Plus', https://www.mre.gov.py/simoreplus/

13. Délégation Interministérielle aux Droits de l'Homme, 'Organigramme', http://didh.gov.ma/fr/didh/organigramme/

14. UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2016), 'National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-Up', https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf

15. Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et de la Réforme de l'Administration Maroc (2021), 'Décret n° 2-11-150 du 7 joumada I 1432 (11 avril 2011) portant création d'une délégation interministérielle aux droits de l'Homme et fixant ses attributions et son organisation', http://bdj.mmsp.gov.ma/Fr/Document/8950-D%C3%A9cret-n-2-11-150-du-7-joumada-I-1432-11-avril-2.aspx?KeyPath=594/681/697/8950

16. Délégation Interministérielle aux Droits de l'Homme, 'Dialogues and Partnership – Civil Society', http://didh.gov.ma/en/dialogues-and-partnership/civil-society/

17. The Danish Institute for Human Rights (2021), 'Report on Country Experiences with HR-SDG Integrated National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up', https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/document/COUNTRY%20EXPERIENCES%20WITH%20HR-SDG%20INTEGRATED%20NATIONAL%20MECHANISMS__ENG_accessible.pdf

18. UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2016), 'National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-Up', https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf

19. **Established by law:** States with mechanism established by law: Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Eswatini, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Samoa, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela; States with no information provided: Argentina, Bolivia, Denmark, Ghana, Jordan, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, The Gambia; States with mechanism not established by law: Afghanistan, Australia, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Liberia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, RoK, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.

20. Republica Moldova (2019), 'HOTĂRÂRE Nr. 65 din 11-02-2019', https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129548&lang=ro

21. **Modes of legal establishment of mechanisms:** States established by cabinet decree: Morocco, Uruguay, Paraguay, Jamaica, Kiribati, Samoa, Lesotho, Tonga; Ministerial decree: Cabo Verde, Haiti, Iraq, Italy, Madagascar, Portugal, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya, Eswatini, Mauritius, Qatar, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Niger, Sudan, Mauritania, Mongolia; Presidential order: Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mozambique, Panama, Philippines, Togo, Venezuela; Government decree: Chad, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Tunisia; Bylaw: Latvia; Not specified: Georgia, Lebanon, Thailand, Uzbekistan.

22. Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law (2023), 'The Implementation of Human Rights Recommendations in the UK', https://binghamcentre.biicl.org/documents/2143_june_2023_the_implementation_of_human_rights_recommendations_in_the_uk.pdf.

23. **Regularity of mechanism meetings:** States with systematic meetings: Australia, Bahamas, Burkina Faso, Denmark, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Georgia, Italy, Jamaica, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Rwanda, Samoa, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, Uruguay; States with regular needs-based meetings: Angola, Azerbaijan, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sudan, Tunisia; States with non-reporting meetings: China, Kenya, Mauritania, Switzerland; States with no information provided: Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chad, Chile, Ghana, Guatemala, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Niger, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Venezuela; States only meeting for reporting: Finland, Germany, Iraq, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Mali, Qatar, RoK, Seychelles, Spain, The Gambia, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.

24. **Use of focal points/dedicated staff:** States with dedicated staff: Maldives, Morocco, Mozambique; States with focal points: Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Eswatini, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Moldova, Paraguay, RoK, Rwanda, Samoa, Slovenia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland, The Gambia, Togo, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela; States with no information provided: Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Netherlands, Niger, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam; States with neither focal points nor dedicated staff: Italy, Latvia, Mongolia, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand.

25. **Clustering:** States with clustering: Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Italy, Kiribati, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Portugal, Samoa, Singapore, Sudan, Switzerland, Uruguay; States with no information provided: Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Iraq, , Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Qatar, RoK, Spain, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, The Gambia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam; States without clustering: Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bolivia, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Italy, Kiribati, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Portugal, Samoa, Singapore, Sudan, Switzerland, Uruguay.

26. UN General Assembly (2021), 'National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21' The Niger', https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/050/30/PDF/G2105030.pdf?OpenElement

27. National Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 'Organisational Structure', https://lex.uz/docs/4098056?query=%D0%98%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BD%20%D2%B3%D1%83%D2%9B%D1%83%D2%9B%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8%20%D0%B1%D1%9E%D0%B9%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B0%20%D0%8E%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BD%20%D0%A0%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%B8%20%D0%9C%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9%20%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B8#4099872.

28. **Dedicated secretariat:** States with a dedicated secretariat: Morocco; States with secretariat within ministry: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, Haiti, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Moldova, Mozambique, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Samoa, Slovenia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam; States with informal secretariat: Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Liberia, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Rwanda, Thailand, The Gambia; States with no information provided: Angola, Brazil, Chad, Guatemala, Lesotho, Singapore; States without secretariat: Netherlands, Norway, RoK, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vanuatu.

29. **Budget:** States with budget: Angola, Guatemala, Italy, Kiribati, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand, Uzbekistan; States with no information provided: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jordan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritania, Moldova, Niger, Qatar, Switzerland, The Gambia, Tonga; States without budget: Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Eswatini, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Haiti., Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, RoK, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam.

30. **Holistic approach:** States with holistic approach: Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Georgia, Germany, Haiti, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Madagascar, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Norway, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, RoK, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The Gambia, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela; States with no information provided: Argentina, Bahrain, Chad, Chile, China, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Liberia, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Panama, Viet Nam; States without holistic approach: Australia, Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mongolia, Netherlands, Niger, South Africa, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

31. Op cit. ii

32. Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law (2023), 'The Implementation of Human Rights Recommendations in the UK', https://binghamcentre.biicl.org/documents/2143_june_2023_the_implementation_of_human_rights_recommendations_in_the_uk.pdf.

33. **Parliament:** States with full integration: Afghanistan, China, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Georgia, Guatemala, Iraq, Madagascar, Maldives, Moldova, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, The Gambia, Uruguay; States with active contribution: Bahamas, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam; States with passive consultation: Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lesotho, Mongolia, Qatar, RoK, Slovenia, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vanuatu; States with no information provided: Angola, Brazil, Canada, Chad, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mozambique, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia.; States with no participation: Australia, Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Jamaica, Latvia, Mauritius, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan.

34. United Nations Development Group (2017), 'UN Country Team Support to Tracking the Follow-Up of Human Rights Recommendations', https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/UNDG-HRWG-Study-print.pdf.

35. United Nations General Assembly (2020), 'National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21' Mauritania', https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/281/89/PDF/G2028189.pdf?OpenElement

36. **1) Judiciary:** States with full integration: Angola, China, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Kenya, Kiribati, Maldives, Moldova, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Uruguay, Viet Nam; States with active contribution: Bahrain, Chile, Jamaica, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Uzbekistan, Venezuela; States with passive consultation: Argentina, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Finland, Italy, Qatar, Rwanda; States with no information provided: Afghanistan, Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, Ethiopia, Germany, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, Niger, Portugal, RoK, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, The Gambia, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vanuatu; States with no participation: Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Czech Republic, Denmark, Norway, Slovenia. **2) Statistics bureau:** States with full integration: Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Eswatini, Kenya, Kiribati, Lebanon, Madagascar, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Moldova, Niger, Paraguay, Portugal, Samoa, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, The Gambia, Tonga, Tunisia, Uruguay; States with active contribution: Bahrain, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Malaysia, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu; States with passive consultation: Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Latvia, Lesotho, Togo, United Kingdom; States with no information provided: Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chad, China, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, Ghana, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Liberia, Lithuania, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, RoK, Rwanda, Sweden, Swit-

zerland, Thailand, Venezuela, Viet Nam; States with no participation: Australia, Germany, Jamaica, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Sudan. **3) Other State agencies:** States with full integration: Angola, Bahamas, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Georgia, Ghana, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lebanon, Madagascar, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Moldova, Paraguay, Portugal, RoK, Samoa, Seychelles, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand, Tonga, Tunisia, Uruguay; States with active contribution: Czech Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Jordan, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Panama, Togo, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam; States with passive consultation: Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Slovenia, South Africa, Venezuela; States with no information provided: Australia, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Canada, Ethiopia, Iraq, Liberia, Mauritania, Netherlands, Niger, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, The Gambia, United Kingdom, Vanuatu; States with no participation: Norway.

37. Department of Statistics South Africa (2019), 'Marginalised Groups Indicator Report 2019', https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/03-19-05/03-19-052019.pdf

38. **1) NHRI:** States with full integration: Azerbaijan, Chad, Denmark, Ecuador, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, Samoa, Thailand, The Gambia; States with active contribution: Burkina Faso, Chile, Czech Republic, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Georgia, Jordan, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, RoK, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo, United Kingdom; States with passive consultation: Afghanistan, Australia, Bahrain, Cabo Verde, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland, Germany, Moldova, Mongolia, Qatar, Slovenia, Ukraine, Uruguay; States with no information provided: Angola, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Haiti, Iraq, Jamaica, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mozambique, Switzerland, Tonga, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam; States with no participation: Bahamas, Guatemala, Italy, Lesotho, Singapore, Sudan, Sweden, Vanuatu. **2) Civil society:** States with full integration: Afghanistan, Bahamas, Chad, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Iraq, Liberia, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Norway, Paraguay, Samoa, Seychelles, The Gambia; States with active contribution: Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Panama, Portugal, RoK, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam; States with passive consultation: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Slovenia, Thailand, Ukraine, Vanuatu, Venezuela; States with no information provided: Brazil, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Tonga; States with no participation: none. **3) Private sector:** States with full integration: Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Moldova, Samoa, Seychelles; States with active contribution: Jordan, Lesotho, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam; States with passive consultation: Chile, Malaysia, Morocco, Rwanda; States with no information provided: Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Netherlands, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, RoK, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, The Gambia, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela; States with no participation: Bahamas, Denmark, Ecuador, Guatemala, Maldives, Mongolia, Norway, Slovenia, Thailand.

39. United Nations General Assembly (2018), 'National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21 Burkina Faso', https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/055/43/PDF/G1805543.pdf?OpenElement

40. Business Mauritius, 'Home', https://www.businessmauritius.org/

41. **SDG integration:** States with SDG integration: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Georgia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Panama, Paraguay, Samoa, Slovenia, Switzerland, Uzbekistan; States with no information provided: Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Italy, Jordan, Kiribati, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Portugal, Qatar, RoK, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam; States without SDG integration: Australia, Canada, Ecuador, Eswatini, Jamaica, Kenya, Latvia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Thailand, The Gambia.

42. **Centralised repository/tracking database:** States with tracking software: Angola, Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Samoa, Thailand, Uruguay; States with centralised repository: Afghanistan, Australia, Bahamas, Chile, Georgia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Moldova, Rwanda, Slovenia; States with no information provided: Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chad, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Niger, Philippines, Qatar, RoK, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, The Gambia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam; States with no centralised repository or tracking database: Azerbaijan, Brazil, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Italy, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Seychelles, United Kingdom, Vanuatu.

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