**WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

**DAY 1, OCT. 4 2016 – PANEL 2 – INTERVENTION OF PANELIST 3, Andrés Sánchez, UPR Branch, OHCHR.**

**Opportunities for civil society and other stakeholders in the UPR.**

• UPR is a unique tool for civil society, complementary to other international and regional human rights protection mechanisms. Its particularities give specific opportunities that can be taken advantage of by civil society and other stakeholders (political nature but with technical inputs with formal participation of civil society and other stakeholders; outputs that include political commitments from Governments; applied to all States, peer review- States have double role- reviewers and States under Review- Responsible for implementing; - periodic in nature - it is a process, not a session).

It is based on these particularities and nature that civil society can take better advantage of the UPR.

A key role of civil society: follow-up.

* It is in the implementation of recommendations already delivered that we can measure the success of the UPR and where the UPR can make a difference in the life of right holders. (we cannot go out of focus) Final purpose: changes in the enjoyment of human rights by right-holders.
* What does follow-up mean?
* Follow-up means focusing on implementation of previous recommendations in all stages of the UPR cycle, in the written submissions, in the advocacy and additional information given to States before sessions, in disseminating and informing on the UPR session, in advocating eventually on positions not taken before the adoption of the outcome, in disseminating and explaining the results and positions taken, most importantly, in taking all actions needed to push and support the implementation by state authorities in the ground, in preparing mid-term or partial evaluations and obviously, in collecting information to adequately monitor and assess the level of implementation.

Let me give some key elements for follow-up in the written contribution:

It is important not to forget that the written contribution makes part of the three-pronged documentation which drives the UPR. It brings alternative information to the process, complementing the national report presented by the State under Review and the UN Compilation. The participation of civil society organization and other stakeholders constitute an opportunity for States to receive relevant timely information directly from representatives of national organizations and victims who can give their own view on the reality they live regarding the enjoyment of human rights on the ground.

How can we enforce follow-up in these contributions?

The new guidelines for civil society available at our webpage encourage NGO’s to focus their inputs on this follow-up to implementation of previous recommendations, without leaving aside new subjects that may have not been addressed with enough strength in previous cycles, including key issues on economic, social and cultural rights.

NGOs can give invaluable inputs to assess the implementation of recommendations particularly reporting on:

a) Progress made in the implementation of recommendations, including its impact;

b) Regressive actions if any; and

c) The identification of the actions that remain to be taken for full implementation, if any, i.e. in the form of a recommendation to the State under Review.

d) Technical assistance/ international cooperation needed for the full implementation. As regards any non-implemented recommendations, challenges or needs of technical cooperation could also be identified.

In addition to the comments on the implementation of previous recommendations, measuring and reporting on **the level of implementation** of recommendations -including against indicators or using values (i.e. numbers, percentages, or categories such as “fully implemented”, “partially implemented”, “in the process of implementation” or “not implemented yet”), with relevant explanations. --- gives more a sense of making a follow-up rather than having a new assessment of a situation.

To facilitate this, we now have available online a matrix of thematically clustered recommendations has been made available to ‘other stakeholders’ on the OHCHR-UPR country pages and the webpage on UPR at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>.

A column is provided to encourage assessing level of implementation through values and comments on the implementation of previous recommendations.

Efforts on enhancing follow-up in submissions and information given by civil society and stakeholders should yield/produce:

* Reviewing States better informed on reality in the ground, but more importantly,
* Reviewing States in better conditions to make effective assessment of previous recommendations and previous commitments by the State under Review, and therefore,
* Reviewing States better prepared for their role as examiners.
* Reviewing States better oriented towards priority issues to be raised in the UPR
* Reviewing States better prepared to deliver key Specific Measurable A Relevant Time-bound recommendations.
* States under Review under better opportunity to have a meaningful dialogue, a chance to show clear advances and to assume commitments and recognize remaining challenges.
* A Human Rights Council with a stronger mechanism to address human rights situations in the world.

Role of non-governmental organizations regarding follow-up goes far beyond their written submissions and information provided to States. Main actors in UPR are States, as its nature is a peer review, but there are numerous ways and opportunities where NGOs may positively influence the process including:

o Raising awareness among civil society, public opinion, media and relevant authorities (before, during and after the review) about the meaning of the UPR, the recommendations made, and the state of their implementation. raise awareness among public opinion and other organizations and among state authorities if necessary, provide information to UN mechanisms, “bring Geneva to the country level and the country level go Geneva”, provide information (submissions) for the UPR, follow and participate in the UPR process in Geneva. Take advantage of the UN Webcast to give more impact on the country and to enable media to understand the process and generate discussion regarding the outcome. It is also an opportunity to engage institutions, or other parts of civil society, and to raise awareness to the public in general.

o Monitoring implementation of recommendations on the ground and enhancing accountability of relevant state institutions and of commitments made by the Government on behalf of the State.

o Suggesting proper effective measures or actions to comply with recommendations, including the establishment or strengthening of National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up, which represents an institutionalized mechanism to follow-up on international recommendations. This NMRF is also useful to identify institutional responsibilities regarding the implementation of each recommendation and to plan the necessary resources and mechanisms to effectively implement them.

o Promote the use of SMART (specific, measurable, indicators to measure the impact (effective change) of measures taken.

o Identify and suggest assistance needed, cooperation with regional mechanisms, in order to effectively implement the recommendations.

o Organizing consultation processes to assess progress in the implementation of recommendations and promote meaningful and inclusive consultations of civil society with the State under Review.

o Engaging with state institutions and other actors to promote programs, projects and cooperation oriented towards implementation.

Engage and partner with other actors present at the national level such as academic institutions, media, national human rights institutions, UN agencies, programs and funds, of course OHCHR,

Promote the elaboration of mid-term reviews (an opportunity for the state and for civil society to make a stop and have the chance to adopt corrective measures if necessary).

These reports that could be presented both in writing and under item 6 of the HRC enable the state to have a chance to stop and analyse its progress and also to provide information to the international community on progress made.

UPR serves as catalyst for dialog and discussions at the national level.

o Promote participation of civil society in the elaboration of the national report and open dialogue spaces with institutions on implementation

o Promote the elaboration of a National Human Rights Plan of Action, which should be the result of a meaningful and inclusive dialog.

o Promote the inter institutional dialog and coordination