

2025



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GOOD PRACTICES GUIDE FOR FOLLOW-UP ON UNITED NATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS





FOREWORD

Across the United Nations human rights system, we have witnessed a powerful and long-overdue evolution: SOGIESC issues are now recognised as integral to the universal promise of human dignity and equality. Over the past decade, the number, visibility, and scope of recommendations addressing the rights of LGBTI persons have grown substantially, reflecting both the tireless work of civil society and the increasing willingness of UN mechanisms and UN member states to confront discrimination and violence in all its forms.

Yet progress at the international level is only meaningful when it translates into real change in people's lives.

Far too often, the recommendations issued by Treaty Bodies, the Universal Periodic Review, Special Procedures, and the Sustainable Development Goals processes remain under-implemented or ignored altogether. Structural inequalities, shrinking civic space, criminalisation, and the under-resourcing of our communities continue to hinder meaningful follow-up. LGBTI human rights defenders, and particularly those working in hostile contexts, feel this gap between commitment and implementation every day.

This Good Practices Guide for Follow-Up on United Nations Recommendations is therefore more than a reference document. It is a practical roadmap, a collection of strategies, and a reflection of the lived expertise of advocates around the world who continue to push, persist, and persevere. By highlighting effective national-level approaches, cross-movement alliances, and innovative uses of UN mechanisms, this guide supports civil society organisations in navigating complex political landscapes and advancing accountability where it matters most: at home. ILGA World remains committed to strengthening the capacity of our global movement to engage with UN mechanisms not only at the moment recommendations are issued, but throughout the long and often difficult journey of ensuring they are implemented. Follow-up work requires patience, collaboration, and resilience. To embark on it, we must recognise the intersections between human rights and development, between international advocacy and grassroots organising, and between global commitments and local realities.

To the many activists, organisations, and communities whose knowledge shaped this guide: thank you. Your courage and determination continue to expand the boundaries of possibility and remind us that the UN human rights infrastructure – as abstract as it may seem sometimes, are an important tool to drive positive change on the ground. Your work ensures that UN recommendations do not remain abstract words on paper, but contribute to building societies where LGBTI people can live in safety, equality, and freedom.

May this guide serve as a tool, an inspiration, and a reminder that implementation is not only a technical process: it is a collective commitment to justice.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CED	Committee on Enforced Disappearances
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CMW	Committee on Migrant Workers
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EU	European Union
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
HRCtee	Human Rights Committee
IE SOGI	Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
ILGA World	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex
LOI	List of Issues
LOIPR	List of Issues Prior to Reporting
NAPs	National Action Plans
NHRI(s)	National Human Rights Institution(s)
NMIRF	National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up
NRTD(s)	National Recommendations Tracking Database(s)
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGIESC	sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VNR(s)	Voluntary National Review(s)
CAT	Convention against Torture/ Committee against Torture



01

Introduction



Over the last decade, recommendations addressing sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) have significantly increased and are now a common feature across United Nations (UN) human rights and development mechanisms including Treaty Bodies, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Special Procedures, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) processes. This growth reflects the more consistent, coordinated, and strategic engagement of LGBTI civil society in international advocacy spaces.

Nonetheless, there remains a significant gap between the recommendations issued by UN mechanisms and their actual implementation at the national level. This gap exists across various human rights issues and affected populations, but it is particularly pronounced in the case of SOGIESC recommendations, as LGBTI advocates often face unique challenges when engaging with governments and monitoring implementation efforts.

This guide is primarily intended for civil society advocates seeking to strengthen follow-up to SOGIESC-related recommendations issued by UN human rights and development mechanisms. It offers practical tools and showcases good

practices to hold States accountable and ensure that international human rights standards are effectively implemented at the domestic level. By documenting challenges and strategies for follow-up, this guide aims to support efforts to close the implementation gap and reinforce State accountability under international law.

This guide is organized into three sections, besides this first section of the introduction. Section 2 explores how different UN mechanisms follow up on the implementation of their recommendations and how civil society can engage in these processes. Section 3 focuses on national-level practices, highlighting both challenges and experiences from different regions, including concrete strategies for strengthening implementation, such as strategic engagement with governments and international actors, the establishment of effective National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRFs), the use of tracking databases and monitoring tools, the adoption of national strategies and action plans, and the building of coalitions across civil society to sustain pressure and accountability. Finally, the guide concludes with key recommendations to support more effective, inclusive, and sustained follow-up efforts.



02 Following-up recommendations through UN mechanisms

UN human rights mechanisms have developed a range of procedures to follow up on the recommendations they issue to States. While these procedures vary in formality and scope, they all aim to assess whether and how States are complying with their international commitments. In parallel, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is monitored through the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), where States present Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) as part of global and regional review processes.

This section provides an overview of the follow-up practices across key UN mechanisms including Treaty Bodies, the UPR, Special Procedures, and the SDGs framework and outlines how civil society organisations can strategically engage with these mechanisms to promote the implementation of SOGIESC-related recommendations. Understanding these entry points is essential for leveraging international accountability processes and reinforcing pressure for domestic reform.

2.1. Treaty Bodies

2.1.1. Concluding observations

2.1.1.1. Periodic nature of concluding observations

Concluding Observations issued by Treaty Bodies are part of the periodic review of States' compliance with their treaty obligations, a process that operates in cycles. After receiving

Concluding Observations each cycle, the State is required to address them in its next periodic report, typically every 4 to 6 years. During the following review cycle, the Committee examines whether and how the State has implemented these previous recommendations. If the State fails to provide sufficient information or implementation is lacking, the Committee will usually raise these issues again in the List of Issues (LOI) or List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR). In this way, recommendations from past cycles are continuously tracked and re-evaluated across cycles. Unaddressed or partially implemented recommendations may be reiterated and remain under follow-up in subsequent cycles.

Treaty Bodies frequently refer back to previous SOGIESC concluding observations when drafting new LOI or LOIPR, requesting updates on the State's compliance with those earlier recommendations.



“With reference to the Committee’s previous concluding observations (para. 11), please provide information on any measures taken to prohibit and punish discrimination and incitement to violence against vulnerable groups, including with regard to sexual orientation and in school settings, and ensure that all hate crimes are always investigated and prosecuted and the perpetrators convicted and punished. Please also provide information on steps taken to prevent and condemn hate speech during the period under review”.

List of issues prior to submission of the second periodic report of Andorra, [CAT/C/AND/QPR/2](#), 21 June 2018, para. 7.

“With reference to the previous concluding observations (paras. 49 and 50), please provide information on measures taken to ensure that all crimes and acts of violence committed against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity are properly and promptly investigated and prosecuted. Please also clarify whether so-called ‘conversion therapies’ and other forced, involuntary and coercive or abusive treatment have been prohibited”.

List of issues prior to submission of the eighth periodic report of Ecuador, [CAT/C/ECU/QPR/8](#), 28 December 2019, para. 36.

Treaty Bodies also frequently refer to the Concluding Observations of other Committees in the establishing LOI and LOIPR.

“Please provide information on: [...] (b) Measures taken to ensure that no one is subjected to unnecessary medical or surgical treatment during infancy or childhood (CRC/C/CHE/CO/2-4, para. 43 (b); CAT/C/CHE/CO/7, para. 20 (a); CEDAW/C/CHE/CO/4-5, para. 25 (c); and CCPR/C/CHE/CO/4, para. 25), and data on the number of irreversible surgical and other procedures that are performed on intersex children, disaggregated by age and geographic location”.

List of issues in relation to the initial report of Switzerland, [CRPD/C/CHE/Q/1](#), 29 October 2019, para. 14(b).

Moreover, some Committees signal future follow-up by explicitly requesting, in their Concluding Observations, that the State include specific information in its next periodic report.



“The Committee recommends that the State party: [...] (b) Provide information in its next periodic report on the situation of women facing intersecting forms of discrimination, including lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women, women living with HIV/AIDS, women with disabilities and women with albinism, and on measures taken to address such discrimination”.

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of South Africa, [CEDAW/C/ZAF/CO/5](#), 23 November 2021, para. 60.

Civil society organisations can engage in these mechanisms not only to influence new recommendations but also to strengthen the follow-up of previously issued ones. Firstly, they can submit reports on their findings and views regarding the progress (or lack thereof) in implementing previous SOGIESC recommendations. Civil society organisations reports may include suggested questions and recommendations that Treaty Bodies can use during their examination of the State report, including those related to earlier recommendations. Additionally, civil society organisations can submit written information to assist the Committee in drafting the LOI or the LOIPR for each State.

Civil society organisations may submit pre-session submissions specifically designed to inform the committee as it drafts this document. Also, they can attend Treaty Body sessions as observers with prior accreditation but cannot take part in the formal dialogue between the committee and the State. They can take part in briefings held before or during Treaty Body sessions, which may be either informal or formally included in the program.

For instance, the CESCR organizes a pre-session briefing where NGOs can present oral or written inputs. Most Treaty Bodies also allow civil society organisations to deliver oral briefings to committee members during formal sessions, typically in private meetings with interpretation provided. For more information on how to engage with the periodic reviews of the Treaty Bodies, you can check out the [OHCHR webpage on Guidelines and tools for treaty body reporting](#), as well as the [ISHR Guide on UN Treaty Bodies](#).

2.1.1.2. Follow-up procedure for selected concluding observations

In addition to the periodic review process, through which all recommendations are ultimately monitored, eight Treaty Bodies have established a short-term follow-up procedure for certain recommendations.¹ The follow-up procedures and documentation for each UN Treaty Body can be accessed through their respective pages on the OHCHR Treaty Body Database: [HRCtee](#), [CESCR](#), [CERD](#), [CAT](#), [CEDAW](#), [CRPD](#), [CED](#), [CMW](#).

¹The CRC has no formal follow-up procedure on Concluding Observations.



Under this process, committees select between two and five recommendations in their Concluding Observations and request that States submit a follow-up report within 12 to 24 months after the review. This allows for a much earlier assessment than waiting for the next full periodic review. The recommendations selected for this short-term follow-up are typically those considered serious, urgent, and achievable within a relatively short timeframe (12 to 24 months). States are expected to provide information on the extent to which these priority recommendations have been implemented during that period.

Dedicated follow-up rapporteurs or coordinators are appointed among committee members to oversee this process, sometimes assisted by country rapporteurs. They are responsible for analysing State follow-up reports and any additional information received, communicating with the State party, reporting to the rest of the committee, and drafting or proposing the committee's assessment and follow-up letters.

Civil society organisations can participate by submitting information on the State's implementation of the selected recommendations. Most committees do not have

a strict deadline specified for civil society, but submissions must be provided at least 4 weeks before the committee considers the State follow-up report (usually discussed in the following session)². Civil society organisations interested in engaging in the follow-up process should consult the committee's page for specific guidelines. Most of them have a requirement of a word limit between 3,300–3,500 words.

State follow-up reports, as well as submissions from civil society organisations and NHRIs, are published online in the OHCHR Treaty Body Database webpage of each committee.

Most UN Treaty Bodies use a grading system to assess the extent to which States have implemented priority recommendations under their follow-up procedures. Many of them assign an implementation grade, typically on a scale from A to E, ranging from “fully implemented” to “contrary measures”³, while other committees employ alternative descriptive scales instead of letter grades⁴. Higher grades (A or B) indicate satisfactory implementation and often lead to closure of follow-up, while lower grades (C to E) trigger requests for additional information, continued scrutiny, or further engagement in future reporting cycles.

² For example, the CESCR requires follow-up submissions from civil society within 24 months after the adoption of Concluding Observations or no later than four weeks before the session reviewing the State's follow-up report. The HRCtee has no fixed deadline, but civil society inputs responding to a State report should be submitted within one month of the report being posted online. For the CEDAW, submissions should be sent at least four weeks before the session examining the follow-up report. Treaty Bodies often publish a tentative schedule of reviews of follow-up reports for States to be considered in upcoming Committee sessions.

³ CCPR: A - Largely satisfactory, B1 - Partially satisfactory, substantial action taken, B2 - Partially satisfactory, initial steps taken, C1 - Not satisfactory, no action taken despite being feasible, C2 - Not satisfactory, not relevant measures taken, D1 - No cooperation, No reply received within the deadline, D2 - No cooperation, No reply received after reminders, E - Measures taken are contrary to the recommendation; CAT: A - Largely satisfactory; B1 - Partially satisfactory, substantial action taken; B2 - Partially satisfactory, initial steps taken; C - Not satisfactory, no action taken; D - Insufficient information to assess implementation, E - Measures taken are contrary to the Committee's recommendations; CED: A Satisfactory, B - Partially satisfactory, C - Not satisfactory, D - No reply regarding a recommendation, E - Measures contrary to recommendations.

⁴ CEDAW: Implemented, Substantially implemented, Partially implemented, Not implemented, Insufficient information, and Contrary measures; CESCR: Sufficient progress, Partial progress, No progress, Insufficient information, No response; CRPD: Satisfactory, Partially satisfactory, Unsatisfactory.



Some committees (CCPR, CAT and CEDAW) also assess, in addition to the level of implementation, the quality of the information provided⁵.

Committees send a formal follow-up letter directly to the State. This letter often includes a narrative assessment of each recommendation subject to follow-up. Some committees, such as CCPR and CAT, explicitly include grading. Based on this assessment, the committee informs the State of the concrete consequences of its evaluation, such as closing the follow-up process, requesting additional information or specific corrective measures within a defined timeframe, or indicating that the recommendation remains under review and will be re-examined in the next periodic reporting cycle.

In addition, committees include their follow-up assessment in annual or sessional reports, and some of them also publish separate follow-up reports. For example, the HRCtee publishes stand-alone follow-up reports for each State party reviewed after each session⁶, while the CED publishes a single follow-up report for all States reviewed during each session⁷.

Civil society input is not typically summarized in formal follow-up letters sent to States. However, in separate follow-up reports or in annual reports or sessional reports, committees acknowledge, and may sometimes summarize, shadow information from civil society. These inputs are used internationally.

SOGIESC recommendations have increasingly been subject to this follow-up process in most committees, some more consistently than others. According to ILGA World's Treaty Bodies Annual Report 2022, in 2022 Treaty Bodies selected 13 SOGIESC recommendations for their follow-up procedures, the highest number ever.



⁵ However, only the implementation grade is formally communicated to States in the follow-up letters; the quality score remains internal and serves to inform the Committee's future requests or engagement.

⁶ For example, check some recent follow-up resolutions issued by the HRCtee [here](#) and [here](#).

⁷ Which are available in their Treaty Bodies database [webpage](#).



Figure X: Number of SOGIESC recommendations selected for follow-up (2014-2022)

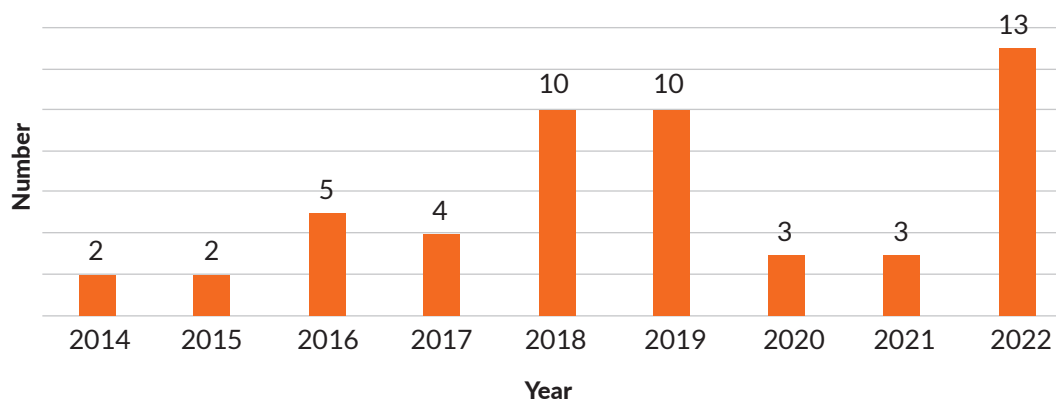


Figure 6. Number of SOGIESC recommendations selected for follow-up (2014-2022)

In 2022, Senegal was assessed on its implementation of the recommendations selected for follow-up in the Concluding Observations adopted in November 2019. The CESCR assessed Senegal's implementation of a recommendation concerning the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation and the repeal of legal provisions that criminalise consensual same-sex relations and others which are also discriminatory⁸.

The CESCR considered that “there are no purported amendments of the legislation that effectively prohibit discrimination, nor criminalise any direct or indirect form of discrimination on grounds of [...] sexual orientation [and] gender identity [...]”, and that “there is no information on steps taken or contemplated to decriminalise consensual homosexual relations [...] along with all the other legal provisions that are discriminatory with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity”. Therefore, Senegal was considered to make “no progress” in implementing the recommendation.⁹

In 2022, the HRCtee assessed Lithuania's implementation of a recommendation concerning the non-discriminatory application and interpretation of legislation, the equality of same-sex couples, and legal gender recognition¹⁰. The Committee discontinued the follow-up procedure, finding the information and actions taken to be “partially satisfactory”. It welcomed the information that the State implemented the Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination, that legal provisions discriminating against trans people in relation to certain professions were removed, and that a Constitutional Court recognised a same-sex couple's union conducted abroad. However, the Committee regretted the lack of information on measures to prevent the discriminatory interpretation of legislation, to fully recognize the equality of same-sex couples, and to implement administrative procedures for gender reassignment. The Committee reiterated its recommendation and requested the State party to report on these issues in its next periodic report.¹¹

⁸ Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Senegal, [E/C.12/SEN/CO/3](#), 13 November 2019, para. 13.

⁹ [Follow-up letter sent to the State party](#), 27 October 2022.

¹⁰ Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Lithuania, [CCPR/C/LTU/CO/4](#), 29 August 2018, para. 10.

¹¹ Report on follow-up to the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee*, Addendum, Evaluation of the information on follow-up to the concluding observations on Lithuania, [CCPR/C/135/2/Add.3](#), 20 September 2022.



It is worth highlighting that a civil society organisation, LGL – National LGBT Rights Organisation, and the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, submitted follow-up reports. These submissions were summarized by the Committee and served as key inputs for its conclusions.



Civil society organisations can use their submissions to advocate for specific SOGIESC recommendations to be included in the follow-up process. If they have the possibility to be present in Geneva, it is strongly recommended that they engage in advocacy during the main session of the Committee, ideally in coordination with other organisations, to push for the inclusion of SOGIESC recommendations among those selected for follow-up.

If a SOGIESC recommendation is selected, civil society organisations should monitor its implementation and prepare a follow-up shadow report to submit to the Committee. These reports are a key source of information to contrast the State's submission and to help shape the Committee's assessment of the level of implementation of the SOGIESC-related recommendation.

2.1.2. General comments and recommendations

There is no formal follow-up procedure for General Comments and Recommendations. However, their implementation is indirectly monitored through other Treaty Body mechanisms. Treaty Bodies often use General Comments and Recommendations as interpretive benchmarks when assessing compliance in subsequent Concluding Observations, evaluating whether States are aligning their laws and policies with the standards outlined therein. They may also be cited in LOI, LOIPR or referenced during interactive dialogues to clarify expectations and guide State responses. Additionally, General Comments and Recommendations are frequently used in the consideration of Individual Communications as authoritative interpretations of treaty obligations. States and civil society actors also regularly reference General Comments and Recommendations in their periodic and alternative reports to highlight progress, identify gaps, or support legal and policy arguments. In essence, they are treated as legitimate and authoritative interpretations of the respective treaty provisions.





2.1.3. Individual communications

Treaty Bodies have established dedicated follow-up mechanisms to monitor States' implementation of their Views (decisions) on individual communications¹². When a Treaty Body adopts a decision on an individual complaint, it typically requests the State concerned to provide information on the measures taken to implement the Views within a defined timeframe, usually between 90 and 180 days. Committees appoint either a Special Rapporteur or a Working Group on follow-up to individual communications, responsible for assessing the extent of implementation.

The State's response is then transmitted to the complainant for comments. If the State party fails to take appropriate action, the case is kept under consideration by the committee under the follow-up procedure. The committee analyses the follow-up information received from both the State and the complainant and assesses the level of implementation based on this material. Many committees use grading systems similar to those applied in the follow-up to Concluding Observations to evaluate compliance with their views.

Information and documentation related to the follow-up of Views are public and can be accessed through the OHCHR Treaty Body Database. The outcomes of the follow-up process are usually published in annual or sessional reports, which compile the information received, assess the status of implementation, and often assign a grade. Some committees, such as the CAT, publish a follow-up report after every session¹³. Others, such as the HRCtee, publish an annual report that includes updates on all ongoing follow-up to their Views.

In most cases, only the parties to the case may submit follow-up information on the implementation of Views. Nonetheless, the HRCtee and the CESCR also allow third parties, such as civil society organisations, to provide written submissions regarding the measures taken by States parties to comply with the committees' Views.¹⁴ Therefore, they can participate in the follow-up process of SOGIESC recommendations contained in Views concerning their country by submitting information on the status of implementation, identifying remaining gaps in compliance, and advocating for the full realization of the committee's recommendations.

¹² More information in the [OHCHR webpage](#).

¹³ You can access the CAT's follow-up reports on individual communications [here](#).

¹⁴ For instance, you can access the HRCtee Guidelines on third-party submissions [here](#).



2.2. Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

2.2.1. Periodic nature of the UPR

The UPR is structured as a periodic review mechanism in which each UN Member State's human rights record is reviewed every 4 to 5 years. During each cycle, States are expected to report on the implementation of recommendations received in the previous review and provide updated information on human rights developments¹⁵. This built-in periodicity serves as a natural follow-up mechanism: States are obliged to address progress (or lack thereof) on previously accepted recommendations, and new recommendations may be issued to address ongoing or emerging issues.

Civil society actors and other stakeholders play a crucial role in the UPR process by submitting alternative reports (also called "shadow reports"), which helps to ensure that recommendations are meaningfully implemented between cycles. [The technical guidelines for stakeholders submissions for the 4th cycle](#) strongly encourage stakeholders to include information on the implementation and follow-up to the recommendations from the preceding review, noting that such submissions will be given priority.

In addition to submitting shadow reports, civil society organisations can participate in UPR pre-sessions and advocate with other States to raise specific questions during the review, regarding

previously issued SOGIESC recommendations or to push for their reiteration. Engaging with the States that issued those recommendations in past cycles can be especially strategic. Providing them with updated information on the implementation (or lack thereof) of the recommendations they made can help ensure meaningful follow-up. For more detailed guidance on engaging with the UPR process, refer to the [SOGIESC UPR Advocacy Toolkit](#) prepared by ILGA World.

To assist both States and stakeholders in tracking the implementation of UPR recommendations, the OHCHR prepares a Matrix of Recommendations for each country, which provides an overview of recommendations from the last cycle. It is available in the [Documentation by country UPR webpage](#).

2.2.2. Mid-term reporting

Member States may submit mid-term reports halfway through their UPR cycle to outline the steps taken toward implementing accepted recommendations. However, this process is voluntary and not required by the UPR mechanism.

Civil society organisations can play an important role by encouraging their government to engage in mid-term reporting. If the State decides to submit a mid-term report, they can contribute by providing expertise, data, and implementation analysis to inform its content.

¹⁵ Indeed, **Resolution 16/21 (2011)** and subsequent resolutions of the Human Rights Council specified that "[t]he second and subsequent cycles of the review should focus on, inter alia, the implementation of the accepted recommendations and the developments of the human rights situation in the State under review".



Even when there is no political will from the government to prepare a mid-term report, civil society organisations can still submit an independent mid-term report to the UN. There are currently no technical guidelines or deadlines for stakeholders to submit a mid-term report, as this is a voluntary process. However, it is best to present it 2.5 years after the review of your country. Although there are no formal requirements, stakeholders should follow the same approach used when drafting their original UPR submission. For further guidance, refer to the [SOGIESC UPR Advocacy Toolkit](#).

The State report and stakeholders are uploaded to [UPR website](#). Also, the OHCHR suggests States and stakeholders to follow [this note and suggested mid-term report template](#) when drafting their mid-term reports.

2.2.3. UPR Voluntary Fund for Implementation

The [Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the UPR](#) was established in 2007 by Human Rights Council¹⁶. The Fund provides financial and technical assistance to help countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, implement UPR recommendations in consultation with, and with the consent of, the country concerned.

The Fund provides support to a wide range of activities, including the implementation of

priority UPR recommendations, the establishing of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up and the strengthening of the UN country teams' capacity to integrate recommendations emanating from the UPR into national efforts aimed at achieving the SDGs. Civil society can play a strategic role in maximizing the impact of the UPR Voluntary Fund by advocating with their governments to apply for support specifically to implement accepted SOGIESC-related recommendations. They can provide technical input during project design to ensure that proposed activities directly respond to one or more of these recommendations, and actively participate in implementation and monitoring processes.

2.3. Special Procedures

2.3.1. Thematic reports

There is no formal follow-up procedure for recommendations found in thematic reports. However, these often serve as important benchmarks for human rights standards and are used by mandate holders to inform and assess compliance during country visits. Recommendations by mandate holders are sometimes also relied on by other UN bodies and human rights mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review and Human Rights Treaty Bodies.

¹⁶ [Resolution 6/17 \(2007\)](#), and further strengthened by [Resolution 16/21 \(2011\)](#) and [Resolution 51/30 \(2022\)](#)



2.3.2. Country visits reports

There is no formal follow-up procedure for country visits reports. Nonetheless, sometimes a mandate holder might explicitly suggest that another mandate (or themselves) should conduct a future visit to deepen monitoring or address specific unresolved issues.

The presentation of the country visit report to the Human Rights Council during the interactive dialogue offers a crucial opportunity to set the stage for future follow-up, as it allows the mandate holder and the State concerned to engage publicly on the recommendations. Civil society organisations can take part in the session by delivering oral statements, in which

they may highlight key concerns, underline gaps in the State's initial response, or call for timely and concrete implementation of specific recommendations.

Mandate holders increasingly engage in follow-up activities after country visits, such as sending follow-up questionnaires or issuing calls for inputs on the implementation of recommendations from their country visit reports to both the State and stakeholders. These activities may also include meetings with national authorities or stakeholders. A nonexhaustive list of such activities is included in the Addendum to the Annual Reports on Special Procedures, available [here](#).

As reflected in the 2022 Addendum to the Annual Report on Special Procedures, the IE SOGI sent letters requesting follow-up information from States where country visits had been conducted since the beginning of the mandate. These responses are intended to inform a report on the implementation of the Independent Expert's country visit recommendations. In 2023, the IE SOGI continued this practice by sending follow-up letters to States where visits had taken place, inviting them to complete a questionnaire on the status of implementation of the recommendations issued in the respective country visit reports.

More recently, in October 2023, the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls published a [call for inputs](#) on follow-up to its country visits to nine countries in recent years, and sent communications to those governments requesting updates on the implementation of its recommendations.

Some Special Procedures mandate holders have already published follow-up analysis reports on their official country visits.



The Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation has issued such reports to assess progress on previously issued recommendations¹⁷. The follow-up process included a consultation phase, during which the mandate holder circulated questionnaires to the government and other stakeholders, inviting them to provide updated information on implementation efforts.

Mandate holders also work with States and other stakeholders to support the implementation of their recommendations, and collaborate with UN entities, including country teams, to help integrate their findings into UN programming.

2.3.3. Communications

Special Procedures have limited capacity to systematically follow up on communications or to monitor individual cases over time. However, when they receive updated information, they may issue a follow-up communication to the State concerned. They may also send follow-up communication if the State does not answer within the stated deadline. In some cases, communications are followed by press releases.

Communications sent by mandate-holders and replies by States are public and published [online](#). In addition, Special Procedures present a report to the Human Rights Council each session on the number of communications sent and replies received during that timeframe.

2.3.4. Unofficial visits

Even if mandate holders cannot publish a report with recommendations, unofficial visits may be valuable to follow-up on SOGIESC recommendations. They (i) create opportunities for dialogue between Special Procedures mandate holders and civil society, allowing the latter to highlight specific situations linked to previously issued UN recommendations (from Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies, or the UPR) or past Special Procedures communications; (ii) facilitate direct engagement between the mandate holder and State officials to address specific issues related to the implementation of prior UN recommendations; and (iii) promote dialogue between the State and LGBTI civil society, potentially leading to concrete commitments aligned with UN recommendations.

In 2023, the IE SOGI, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, conducted visits to Mexico from 17 to 22 July, and to Peru from 21 to 26 November. Both visits were supported and funded by Race & Equality, a civil society organisation based in the United States. In both countries, he met with State authorities, civil society advocates, university students, and LGBTI human rights organisations. A key highlight of the Mexico visit was the “Dialogue of authorities and the muxhe/trans community of the Istmo region with the Independent Expert,” held on 18 July in Istmo de Tehuantepec, which provided a unique space for direct exchange between local authorities and muxhe and trans community leaders.

For more information on how to engage with Special Procedures, check the [ISHR’s Practical Guide to the UN Special Procedures](#).

¹⁷ You can access them [here](#).



2.4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

While the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs provide a powerful global framework for advancing equality and inclusion, they differ significantly from the UN human rights system. They rest on different logics: human rights mechanisms are grounded in legal standards, rights-based obligations, and monitored by expert or political bodies, while the SDGs are political commitments expressed through development language, targets, and indicators. SDGs progress is reviewed through Voluntary National Reviews (VNR), where States report on specific targets and indicators, discussed at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Importantly, the SDGs contain no explicit reference to SOGIESC issues, in contrast to the increasing number of SOGIESC recommendations issued by UN human rights mechanisms.

For LGBTI activists, this gap represents both a challenge and an opportunity: while the SDGs lack explicit protections, they remain highly influential in shaping national development priorities. Civil society can use them to build alliances, frame demands in terms of development goals (such as health, education, or employment), and highlight the links between inclusive development and the fulfilment of

human rights. Practical guidance on how to engage with the 2030 Agenda from an LGBTI perspective is available in resources such as [How to Engage with the 2030 Agenda on LGBTI Issues: Simple Tips for Activists](#) developed by MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights.

2.4.1. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

VNRs are government-led reports that assess national progress in implementing the SDGs. These reviews are submitted to the HLPF and serve as a central accountability mechanism for the 2030 Agenda. To ensure their legitimacy and accuracy, it is essential that VNRs be developed through inclusive, participatory processes.

States should be encouraged to conduct broad consultations with a wide range of stakeholders throughout the VNR preparation process, including civil society organisations, grassroots groups, and marginalized communities. While some governments actively include civil society in shaping their reviews, others do not. In such cases, civil society actors should advocate for meaningful participation, including input into data collection, drafting, and presentation of the VNR. This helps ensure that diverse voices are reflected and that the review accurately captures challenges on the ground.





LGBTI organisations have increasingly leveraged the VNR process to push for the inclusion of SOGIESC issues. In 2021 and 2022, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues and the IE SOGI highlighted the strength of LGBTI advocacy during the VNR cycle, noting the high number of reports that included LGBTI issues—even though none of the SDGs or their indicators explicitly reference SOGIESC.

“[T]he 2030 Agenda remains largely blind with regard to minorities and indigenous peoples, especially in the lack of targeting of and disaggregating by some of the most significant vulnerability criteria globally, namely ethnicity and indigenous status. This can and should, however, be redressed in improving and strengthening the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as shown by the inclusion and significant focus on the LGBTI community in the 2020 voluntary national reviews synthesis report and many of the 47 voluntary national reviews, despite none of the measures or indicators of the Goals referring to this ground. Indeed, such an adjustment was also implicitly called for by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in June 2021, when she urged the collection of comprehensive official disaggregated data – on the ground of ethnicity – in order to be able to identify and more effectively combat structural racism and the “compounding inequalities” and “stark socioeconomic and political marginalization” that can “leave behind” Afrodescendent minorities”.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes, Minorities, equal participation, social and economic development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, [A/76/162](#), 7 January 2021, para. 78.

“Although no explicit references to sexual orientation and gender identity nor LGBTI were made in the final text of the 2030 Agenda nor included in the indicators or metrics for monitoring progress in its implementation, the mandate believes that the Goals cannot be achieved if those experiencing discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity continue to be left behind. The mandate therefore welcomes increasing efforts by States to include discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity in their national implementation plans, as well as the steadfast work of civil society organisations in bringing a sexual orientation and gender identity lens to the monitoring and implementation of the Goals at the national, regional and global levels.”

Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, [A/HRC/50/27](#), 22 November 2022, paras. 60 and 61.



2.4.2. Spotlight reports

Spotlight reports (also referred to as “shadow reports”) are civil society–driven assessments of SDGs implementation. Unlike the official VNRs, spotlight reports are not formally recognized by the United Nations system. However, they play a vital complementary role by providing independent analysis and often highlighting issues overlooked or downplayed by governments.

For LGBTI organisations, spotlight reports are an important tool to document how governments are failing to include SOGIESC issues in their SDGs strategies or VNRs. They allow activists to

present alternative data and evidence on how LGBTI communities experience exclusion in areas such as health, education, poverty reduction, and employment. By doing so, civil society can ensure that these realities are made visible in international debates, even when governments ignore them. Given their unofficial nature, it is crucial to disseminate spotlight reports widely and strategically. Publishing the report online increases accessibility, while targeted outreach such as sharing findings with government officials, UN agencies, NGOs, and international partners can strengthen its impact. Civil society actors are also encouraged to organize events, press briefings, or webinars to raise awareness of the report’s findings.¹⁸

A good example of this approach is the work of the [LGBTI Stakeholder Group](#), one of several Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) that inform and shape the development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The group regularly publishes spotlight reports submitted on LGBTI issues within the SDGs framework. You can access them [here](#).

2.4.3. High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and SDGs regional forums

Civil society organisations can engage in the HLPF in several ways, including as part of national delegations or official stakeholder groups (MGoS), such as the [LGBTI Stakeholder Group](#). Through the MGoS mechanism, civil society actors have access to all meetings and documents and can provide recommendations. Other MGoS include the Women’s Major Group or the Children and Youth Group, which often cooperate with the LGBTI Stakeholder Group. Beyond participation in the official sessions, civil society can organize or attend side events to present spotlight reports, build alliances, and

engage with policymakers, as well as submit position papers in advance to advocate for the inclusion of their priorities in outcome documents.

Many regions organize SDGs forums or peer review mechanisms that mirror the HLPF but focus on regional development priorities. Examples include UNECLAC in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, and Asia-Pacific SDGs forums. Civil society can participate in these forums by attending consultations, organizing side events, or submitting regional position papers. These spaces offer valuable opportunities to amplify regional voices and influence global reporting.

¹⁸ A useful resource on producing a spotlight report can be found [here](#).



Looking beyond the 2030 horizon, the 2024 UN Summit of the Future initiated formal discussions on the architecture of the post-2030 global development framework. Through the adoption of the [Pact for the Future](#), Member States committed to defining modalities for reviewing progress and establishing a renewed set of global priorities once the current Sustainable Development Goals expire. This process, which will intersect with the final HLPF cycles under the existing framework, presents a critical entry point for civil society engagement, including organisations working on SOGIESC issues, to influence the design, scope, and accountability mechanisms of any successor agenda.

2.5. Cross-fertilization of UN mechanisms and SDGs

There is growing recognition of the need to strengthen cross-fertilization between the work of Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies, and the UPR.

Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies have increasingly referenced and integrated each other's outputs into their assessments and recommendations. For instance, Special Procedure mandate holders often draw on Treaty Body outputs—such as Concluding Observations,

General Comments, and Views on individual communications to inform their analyses and recommendations. Conversely, Treaty Bodies may refer to thematic reports, findings from country visits, and communications issued by Special Procedures when evaluating a State's compliance with treaty obligations or drafting General Comments.

In terms of the UPR, the work of Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures contributes directly to the UPR process as their findings and recommendations are integrated into the OHCHR's compilations of each country, which inform the review and shape the recommendations made to States. In turn, the UPR's outcome documents, particularly the recommendations accepted or noted by States, are used by Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures to inform their own assessments.

Finally, UN human rights mechanisms have increasingly linked their assessments and recommendations to the SDGs, particularly targets related to equality and non-discrimination, thereby enhancing coherence between human rights obligations and development commitments.

“The Committee notes with concern the persistent discrimination against [...] LGBTIQ+ children, children living with HIV/AIDS, [...] and other children in vulnerable situations. Recalling target 10.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals and its previous recommendations, the Committee urges the State party: (a) To formulate a comprehensive and long-term anti-discrimination strategy with clear targets and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to modify and eliminate negative attitudes and practices and change deep-rooted stereotypes against children in vulnerable situations; [...]”.

Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Togo, [CRC/C/TGO/CO/5-6](#), 11 Oct 2023, para. 18.



“International human rights are predicated on the premise that all persons should enjoy all freedoms and rights without discrimination. In all societies, however, there are marginalized groups whose enjoyment of rights is compromised in some way, such as [...] intersex, transsexual, gay and lesbian persons [...]. Sustainable Development Goal 10 is aimed at reducing inequality within countries. Marginalized persons are often vulnerable to discrimination on multiple grounds; grounds of vulnerability in fact often intersect to create a particular disadvantage for an individual. This can be problematic for legislation predicated on a single ground, without cognisance of the aggravated disadvantages suffered owing to multiple grounds. Discrimination on any ground is a legitimate concern when promoting human rights in an equitable, fair society. It is a tool that can be used to limit the enjoyment of human rights by individuals and groups within society. International law clearly states that rights and freedoms should be enjoyed without distinction of any kind, including on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or other status. The Government of Cambodia has voluntarily agreed to be bound by many international treaties that enshrine this principle”.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, [A/HRC/33/62](#), 5 September 2016, para. 10.

“Enhance efforts to implement the National Action Plan for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons, particularly the review of academic curricula on gender stereotypes and gender identity, in line with Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 10”.

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Albania, [A/HRC/42/4](#), 3 July 2019 (by the Netherlands), para. 95.27.

Special Procedures have also issued thematic reports addressing specific SDGs and the intersections between their mandates and one or more goals.





In 2022, the IE SOGI published a thematic report on the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health of persons, communities, and populations affected by discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The report analysed how discrimination and violence based on SOGIESC undermine progress towards multiple SDGs—particularly SDG 3 on health, but also targets under SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions). It underscored that exclusion and stigma in health systems result in poorer health outcomes and reduced access to services among LGBTI persons, calling for the integration of SOGIESC concerns into national health policies, data collection, and SDGs monitoring frameworks. It further emphasized that fulfilling the right to health requires dismantling structural barriers—including criminalisation, discriminatory laws, and harmful social norms—thereby aligning States’ obligations under human rights law with their commitments under the 2030 Agenda.¹⁹

More recently, in July 2024, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders issued a report examining the contributions made by human rights defenders to achieving the SDGs, including those working on LGBTI rights²⁰. The report highlighted that defenders act as key agents in ensuring that sustainable development is grounded in human rights principles, by holding governments accountable, promoting inclusive policies, and advocating for the participation of marginalized groups.

Finally, the OHCHR has developed tools to improve coherence in the human rights and development systems by linking recommendations across UN mechanisms and aligning them with the SDGs. The [Universal Human Rights Index](#) compiles all recommendations issued to a country by UN mechanisms, organized by theme, affected population (including LGBTI), and relevant SDGs targets. The UPR Matrix of Recommendations

tracks recommendations received by each State during the last UPR cycle, and links them to specific rights and SDGs. They are available in the [Documentation by country UPR webpage](#). These tools show how recommendations from different bodies such as Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and the UPR overlap or reinforce each other, making it easier to identify priority issues and ensure consistency in follow-up.

¹⁹ Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, [A/HRC/50/27](#), 22 November 2022.

²⁰ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, [A/79/123](#), 9 July 2024.



03 Challenges and good practices in following up on UN recommendations at the national level

Civil society organisations across regions report both opportunities and obstacles when trying to engage state actors in the follow-up and implementation of UN human rights recommendations.

3.1. Challenges in following up on UN recommendations at the national level

3.1.1. Criminalisation of SOGIESC, institutional weakness, and democratic backsliding

In contexts where same-sex relations or gender expression are criminalised, and even more so where efforts exist to criminalise LGBTI advocacy itself, civil society organisations and advocates face direct and significant barriers to engaging in follow-up and implementation of UN recommendations.

Additionally, in some countries civil society actors highlight how institutional fragility and democratic instability severely hinder the follow-up process. It is often difficult to engage government actors on LGBTI issues or even bring them onto the public agenda because political conflict and institutional survival dominate the national conversation. In such settings, there is little to no space for sustained dialogue on rights implementation.

3.1.2. Shrinking civic spaces

In many countries, LGBTI advocates face increasing harassment, surveillance, and even criminalisation simply for engaging in human

rights work. Beyond overt legal restrictions, governments often deploy administrative, financial, and reputational tactics to suppress civil society. Activists across various contexts report facing defamation campaigns, threats against human rights defenders, and efforts by authorities to cut off financial lifelines.

These include imposing exorbitant taxes on international cooperation funds and placing restrictions on the use of such funding for advocacy related to human rights. Additionally, many LGBTI groups report a structural lack of funding and institutional capacity to consistently engage with the State follow-up international mechanisms, and more recently the withdrawal of much of their donor support. In contexts where immediate threats—such as violence, State repression, or the collapse of democratic norms dominate the agenda, sustained advocacy to monitor and promote the implementation of UN recommendations often becomes secondary or infeasible.

This shrinking civic space undermines the possibility of holding governments accountable to their international commitments and severely limits the role of civil society in ensuring that human rights recommendations translate into real change on the ground.



3.1.3. Lack of political will to implement SOGIESC recommendations and influence of anti-rights actors

A persistent barrier to the implementation of SOGIESC recommendations is the absence of sustained political will, which is often rooted in entrenched societal prejudice against LGBTI persons. These prejudices are reinforced by historical discrimination, dominant cultural narratives, and the influence of powerful anti-rights actors such as religious institutions, conservative political parties, and organized advocacy groups that portray SOGIESC rights as incompatible with “national values” or traditions. Political leaders may refrain from advancing such rights due to fear of backlash from these groups or because they share similar discriminatory views, embedding bias within State institutions and policymaking processes.

This resistance frequently results in selective implementation, whereby governments prioritize symbolic or low-cost measures while delaying or rejecting recommendations that require substantive legal or policy reforms. In other cases, commitments are diluted through narrow interpretations of recommendations that intentionally avoid explicit inclusion of LGBTI rights, thereby undermining their intended scope and impact.





3.1.4. Lack of effective state mechanisms for implementation and follow-up and national action plans

Despite increasing international emphasis on national coordination structures, many States still lack effective and inclusive mechanisms to report on and implement human rights recommendations.

Although the concept of National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Followup (NMIRFs) is not recent, States and the United Nations have in recent years put more focus on establishing and reinforcing these national mechanisms. Notably, the OHCHR's 2012 report ([A/66/860](#)) and the General Assembly [Resolution 68/268 \(2014\)](#) identified NMIRFs as a key recommendation and emphasized the need to improve national coordination and follow-up structures. Since then, the Human Rights Council has adopted four resolutions on NMIRFs (between 2015 and 2022)²¹.

However, the practical implementation of these mechanisms remains limited²². In most countries, NMIRFs have not been established or do not meet the minimum effectiveness criteria set out by OHCHR. These include being permanent, well-resourced, inclusive of civil society, and having the capacity to coordinate across ministries, assign responsibilities, and monitor implementation. In many countries, one of the main obstacles to the effective implementation

of UN human rights recommendations is the absence of structured, permanent State mechanisms dedicated to follow-up. Without clearly defined institutional frameworks and processes, responsibility for implementation often becomes fragmented, uncoordinated, or simply deprioritized.

Even in countries where some form of national follow-up mechanism exists typically interministerial committees or ad hoc working groups challenges persist. Many of these bodies lack political authority, technical capacity, and sustained funding. Crucially, they often operate in isolation from civil society and are not equipped to ensure comprehensive follow-up on SOGIESC recommendations. Ministries and government agencies work in silos, there is no centralized database to track implementation, and no clear lines of responsibility for individual recommendations.

Activists have expressed concern that, in many contexts, the main function of such mechanisms is to prepare reports for international bodies, rather than to implement recommendations at home. Engagement with civil society is often limited to collecting information for reporting purposes, with little to no influence over national implementation strategies or follow-up plans. In such cases, engagement may appear tokenistic rather than substantive.

²¹ [Resolution 30/25 \(2015\)](#), [Resolution 36/29 \(2017\)](#), [Resolution 42/30 \(2019\)](#), and [Resolution 51/33 \(2022\)](#).

²² For studies conducted on NMIRFs in Latin American and Caribbean States, see: Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Direitos Humanos – IDDH, [NMIRFs na América Latina e Caribe \(ALC\): a participação social no processo de implementação das obrigações internacionais de DHs](#) (2025); Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, [National Mechanisms to Implement International Recommendations and Decisions Concerning Human Rights](#) (2023).



Even where national development strategies are aligned with the SDGs, LGBTI people are frequently excluded from data collection, policy indicators, and implementation frameworks, making it impossible to monitor.

Ultimately, the absence of functioning NMIRFs and inclusive NAPs limits the ability of States to translate UN recommendations into meaningful domestic change, particularly for LGBTI populations, and weakens civil society's ability to hold governments accountable.

3.1.5. Non-SMART recommendations hinder implementation

Many recommendations issued by the UPR, Treaty Bodies, and Special Procedures are drafted in broad or vague terms, without being Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). This lack of precision makes it difficult to assess progress, set clear indicators, or demand concrete action within a defined timeframe. Vague recommendations can be interpreted in ways that omit explicit measures for LGBTI persons, or allow States to indefinitely postpone implementation.

3.1.6. Lack of data to monitor progress

A major barrier to effective follow-up on UN human rights recommendations and the SDGs is the persistent lack of disaggregated data related to SOGIESC. In many countries, governments either do not collect this data or actively resist doing so due to political sensitivities or legal restrictions. As a result, LGBTI populations remain largely invisible in national statistics and monitoring systems.

This data gap has direct consequences for follow-up efforts. Without SOGIESC-inclusive data, it is nearly impossible to assess the extent to which recommendations from Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, or the UPR have been implemented or to track progress toward relevant SDGs targets. This undermines evidence-based policy making and limits the ability of civil society to hold governments accountable.

Moreover, even where some data is collected such as in the context of health or education it is often fragmented, inconsistently categorized, or not publicly available. Civil society organisations report difficulties in accessing government data, and in many cases, are forced to rely on their own limited resources to conduct community-based monitoring and documentation. This not only places an additional burden on already underfunded organisations but also reinforces structural inequalities in access to information and participation in policymaking.

The absence of disaggregated data is especially damaging for individuals facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination—such as LGBTI persons with disabilities, youth, or indigenous communities—whose experiences are often rendered invisible within broader policy frameworks. Without targeted data collection, these populations risk being entirely excluded from national follow-up strategies and sustainable development planning.





3.1.7. Civil society limited capacity to engage with UN recommendations

In addition to facing external restrictions such as criminalisation and shrinking civic space, many civil society organisations working on SOGIESC issues, and particularly grassroots and community-led groups, struggle with limited capacity to engage meaningfully in the follow-up and implementation of UN human rights recommendations.

These limitations manifest across several dimensions:

- **Technical knowledge gaps:** Many organisations lack sustained exposure to the complex documentation processes, timelines, and institutional structures of the UN human rights system. This includes limited understanding of how to submit reports, participate in pre-sessional briefings, or track follow-up opportunities across various mechanisms such as Treaty Bodies, the UPR, or Special Procedures.
- **Language and accessibility barriers:** Much of the UN's documentation and engagement infrastructure operates in English and other official UN languages, which can exclude organisations working primarily in local languages. Additionally, digital barriers (such as poor internet access) and lack of training on how to navigate UN platforms and tools also impede participation.
- **Resource constraints:** Many LGBTI organisations operate with minimal or short term funding, with little flexibility to dedicate staff time or travel for advocacy purposes. High staff turnover and burnout, especially in high-risk contexts, further compromise institutional memory and long-term strategic planning.
- **Limited access to networks:** Civil society actors based outside of capital cities or global advocacy hubs often face difficulties connecting with national delegations, UN agencies, or international NGOs that could support or amplify their advocacy. This isolation reduces opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and coalition building.
- **Lack of institutionalized mechanisms for civil society participation:** Even when recommendations are issued, national-level mechanisms to consult or include civil society in implementation processes are often weak or non-existent.

These gaps significantly hinder the ability of civil society to follow up on recommendations, participate in implementation, and hold governments accountable. Moreover, they risk reinforcing power asymmetries between well-resourced international NGOs and local organisations with lived experience and direct connection to affected communities.



3.2. Good practices

3.2.1. Engaging strategically with government actors

Advocating for the implementation of UN recommendations often requires identifying the most strategic entry points within government. Civil society organisations often emphasize the importance of identifying individual allies within government institutions, such as ministries or human

rights commissions, who may be more open to dialogue and cooperation despite broader restrictive legal or political climates.

In some cases, highly politicized spaces -such as parliaments or senior ministries- may be difficult to influence due to lack of political will, bureaucratic inertia, or polarization. In such contexts, focusing on more technical or specialized government bodies can be more effective.

In November 2022, Mongolia received a recommendation issued by the CESCR in its Concluding Observations to “[r]aise awareness among health-care providers of healthcare issues specific to transgender persons and adopt and implement the eleventh revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, which, inter alia, removes the labelling of certain such issues as mental health conditions”²³. The LGBT Centre translated into Mongolian the recommendation issued by the CESCR. Rather than directing advocacy only at political actors, they targeted the National Psychiatric Centre. The LGBT Centre met with officials to discuss the implications of the recommendation and planned a training for psychologists on depathologising approaches.

It can also be useful to adapt the message to make it accessible and relevant to the institution in question. This may involve translating UN recommendations and related materials into the local language, simplifying legal or policy language, and providing background information. Often, civil society actors take on a pedagogical role: helping public officials understand what the recommendations mean in practice and how they connect to local realities. These efforts may require building sustained relationships and offering technical support to translate recommendations into policies or actions.

In parallel, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) can play an important bridging role, acting as crucial intermediaries between LGBTI civil society and government institutions. This is particularly relevant in countries where

LGBTI organisations face legal or political barriers to direct engagement with the State, for example, in contexts where SOGIESC are criminalised or heavily stigmatized. In such environments, NHRIs have proven to be reliable and effective entry points for establishing dialogue with other branches of government. Civil society organisations also report having developed formal collaborations with NHRIs on specific initiatives aimed at advancing UN recommendations or promoting the inclusion of LGBTI communities in efforts to implement the SDGs.

NHRIs are often tasked with preparing thematic reports, submitting amicus briefs, and formally intervening in government decision-making processes: all of which offer strategic openings to integrate and reinforce UN recommendations.

²³ Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Mongolia, [E/C.12/MNG/CO/5](#), 10 November 2022, para. 19(c).



In South Korea, the National Human Rights Commission has referenced UN recommendations to strengthen its own interventions, including recommendations on decriminalisation in the military, the recognition of same-sex couples, and legal gender recognition. In May 2023, the Commission submitted a formal recommendation to the Supreme Court calling for a revision of the “Guidelines for the Handling of Petition for Legal Sex Change Permit of Transgender People”, invoking UN recommendations to argue against surgical and parental consent requirements.¹

Finally, NHRIs can play a critical role in ensuring that international human rights recommendations are not confined to foreign affairs ministries or UN reporting units, but are instead integrated across all branches and levels

of government. One key way NHRIs contribute to this goal is by developing practical tools that make UN recommendations accessible and usable for public officials, civil society, and other stakeholders.

In South Korea, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea launched the website uhr.humanrights.go.kr in March 2024. This bilingual platform (Korean/English) was developed in response to the need for a comprehensive and centralized Korean-language resource on international human rights standards and related documents. It includes UN recommendations contained in General Comments, Treaty Body Concluding Observations, UPR recommendations, and more. The platform facilitates seamless access to these materials, supporting the interpretation and domestic enforcement of international obligations and enabling access by government officials, the judiciary, and other actors.





3.2.2. Engaging diplomatic missions and in-country or regional international actors

Diplomatic missions and international actors present in-country or regionally can serve as important allies for civil society organisations advocating for the implementation of UN human rights recommendations.

Some civil society organisations report that engaging with diplomatic missions in their countries has proven particularly helpful in advancing national-level follow-up. In the context of the UPR, for instance, it can be strategic to reach out to the embassies or permanent missions of the States that issued key recommendations. These States may be willing to follow up with the national government, raise the issue in bilateral dialogues, or support local initiatives that promote implementation.

In addition, UN country teams and specific UN agencies—including UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, and OHCHR—are often open to collaborating with civil society on advocacy campaigns, research, or technical cooperation projects aligned with international recommendations. These agencies can offer valuable platforms to amplify civil society concerns and help connect recommendations to national development plans or SDGs. In some countries, civil society has successfully partnered with UN agencies to monitor implementation progress, organize joint trainings for government officials, or integrate

SOGIESC recommendations into broader human rights or development programs.

Strategic engagement with both diplomatic missions and UN agencies can thus help broaden the range of actors invested in implementation and create multi-level pressure to transform international recommendations into concrete action on the ground.

3.2.3. Coalitions and cross-sector engagement

Coalition-building is a critical strategy to amplify the impact of civil society engagement in the follow-up and implementation of UN human rights recommendations. National coalitions composed of LGBTI organisations and human rights defenders provide a more coordinated, visible, and sustained presence when engaging governments, UN bodies, and the general public.

Membership-based organisations and national alliances help centralize advocacy efforts, share resources, build institutional memory, and enable a unified approach to tracking States' compliance with international recommendations. These coalitions often serve as national reference points for international partners and are well-positioned to articulate shared priorities, submit joint shadow reports, and coordinate follow-up actions across multiple human rights mechanisms.



galck+ (Kenya): The Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya is a membership-based umbrella body founded in 2006. It brings together LGBTQ+ organisations to support advocacy, capacity-building, and coalition work across the country. galck+ engages with national stakeholders and uses regional and international mechanisms such as the African Commission and the UPR to follow up on SOGIESC recommendations. It is often cited as a model for intersectional and multilevel organizing grounded in community-based advocacy.

Bahaghari (Philippines): A national alliance of LGBTQIA+ advocates, organisations, and formations across the Philippines. Founded in 2013 (with an earlier iteration established in 2012), Bahaghari engages in legal advocacy, research, media work, and mobilization particularly around the SOGIE Equality Bill and anti-discrimination legislation. It also actively participates in UN human rights processes, including the UPR and Treaty Body reviews.

Rainbow Action against Sexual-Minority Discrimination (South Korea): A coalition of LGBTQI+ groups advocating at both domestic and international levels. In addition to national campaigns and strategic litigation, it regularly engages with Treaty Bodies and the UPR process, submitting shadow reports and monitoring the implementation of recommendations. Rainbow Action also works through broader platforms, such as the South Korean Human Rights Organisations Network, to strengthen cross-sector coordination.

In addition, multistakeholder coalitions which bring together UN country offices, academic institutions, faith leaders, the private sector, and even government agencies can also be powerful tools for follow-up and implementation. By engaging diverse actors, these coalitions can

broaden political support, mobilize resources, and create more sustainable, coordinated approaches to advancing SOGIESC rights and holding States accountable to their international commitments.

In 2018, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Mongolia, in partnership with the LGBT Centre, supported the creation of the [Coalition for Equality](#). This multistakeholder platform brings together civil society organisations, international institutions, academia, and government actors to promote LGBTI rights, translate and disseminate UN recommendations, and strengthen implementation through joint advocacy and technical engagement.



3.2.4. Building synergies between legal advocacy, litigation before domestic courts, regional human rights mechanisms, and UN recommendations

UN human rights recommendations can serve as powerful tools to reinforce domestic legal strategies, especially in litigation and other forms of legal and political advocacy aimed at advancing the rights of LGBTI persons. While these recommendations are not legally binding, their normative authority, international visibility, and grounding in widely ratified treaties can lend

weight to legal arguments in national courts. Civil society organisations and legal advocates increasingly integrate the outputs of Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and the UPR into their briefs, amicus interventions, and courtroom arguments. In parallel, UN mechanisms may reference ongoing domestic cases, creating a two-way dynamic that amplifies visibility and political pressure. Although courts do not always explicitly cite these recommendations, they can nonetheless influence judicial reasoning, shape public discourse, and foster long-term legal and policy reform.

In On 18 July 2024, the Supreme Court of South Korea ruled that the National Health Insurance Service (NHIS) must extend dependent benefits to same-sex partners. When the litigation began in 2022, South Korea had already received recommendations from UN Treaty Bodies and in the UPR to strengthen its legal framework against discrimination based on sexual orientation.²⁴ More specifically, in its 2017 Concluding Observations, the CESCR urged the State to “revise legal and regulatory provisions that are discriminatory or have a discriminatory effect, such as those relating to social security, reproductive health and housing”.²⁵ By the time the case reached the Supreme Court, South Korea was undergoing its periodic review by the HRCtee. During the interactive dialogue, one Committee member said the following:

“We are aware that currently there’s a case involving a same-sex couple related to access to the state Party’s public health insurance scheme that is pending to fall the Supreme Court. May I ask whether the State party is considering the adoption of legal provisions that would ensure the legal recognition of same-sex couples so that their rights would then be guaranteed on an equal footing with opposite-sex couples?”²⁶

²⁴ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Republic of Korea, [A/HRC/37/11](#), 27 December 2017, paras. 132.32, 132.57, 132.38, 132.43, 132.65, 132.61, 132.36, 132.40, 132.44, 132.26, 132.59, 132.62, 132.39, 132.27, 132.60, 132.58, 132.64.

²⁵ Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Republic of Korea, [E/C.12/KOR/CO/4](#), 19 October 2017, para. 24.

²⁶ UN Web TV, 4054th Meeting, 139th Session, Human Rights Committee, 19 Oct 2023, minute 48, available [here](#). Also: Summary record of the 4054th meeting Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 19 October 2023, at 3 p.m., [CCPR/C/SR.4054](#), 1 November 2023, para. 20.



In its Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concern about “lack of legal recognition for same-sex couples, and the resulting economic and social discrimination against same sex-couples and their children in areas such as health insurance”. It recommended the State to “[a]dopt or amend legislation to ensure that same-sex couples and their children are not subjected to discrimination in the economic and social sphere, including by amending the Civil Code or introducing civil union for such couples”²⁷.

A few months later, during its interactive dialogue by the CEDAW, Committee members also raised the issue. They asked what steps would be taken if the Supreme Court ruled that insurance coverage should be provided for same-sex partners, and requested a timeline for the adoption of legal measures to protect and register cohabitating same-sex couples.²⁸

Activists report having relied on UN Treaty Body recommendations in their briefs for the 2024 Supreme Court case. Many amicus briefs including one submitted by ILGA World and ILGA Asia invoked recommendations of Treaty Bodies and the UPR. Although the Court did not explicitly reference these materials possibly to avoid setting a precedent regarding the binding nature of UN recommendations advocates believe that the arguments and political dynamics shaped by international guidance influenced the broader legal narrative and contributed to the Court’s reasoning.

Separately, in April 2023, the Life Partnership Bill (Bill No. 2121647) was introduced in the National Assembly, which recognizes same-sex unions and extends social security protections similar to those available to married couples. The bill is currently under review by the Legislation and Judiciary Committee, with no resolution yet.

This experience illustrates how international human rights recommendations can complement and reinforce domestic legal advocacy. While implementation is rarely immediate or automatic, UN guidance when used strategically alongside litigation and advocacy efforts can generate meaningful synergies that advance compliance and legal reform.

²⁷ Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of the Republic of Korea [CCPR/C/KOR/CO/5](#), 24 November 2023, paras. 13-14.

²⁸ Summary record of the 2062nd meeting Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 14 May 2024, at 3 p.m, [CEDAW/C/SR.2062](#), 18 June 2024, para. 42.



Other forms of legal and policy advocacy (such as administrative complaints, institutional lobbying, and public campaigning) can also benefit significantly from strategically invoking UN recommendations. By aligning their demands with internationally recognized standards, civil society actors can strengthen their legitimacy,

mobilize support across sectors, and increase pressure on government institutions. This approach has proven especially useful in addressing deeply entrenched human rights violations, where progress often requires sustained multi-level efforts over time.

The experience of civil society in Ecuador shows how sustained and coordinated engagement with UN mechanisms can reinforce follow-up and generate progress on deeply entrenched human rights violations. Since the late 2000s, Ecuadorian LGBTI organisations have documented and denounced the continued existence of so-called “conversion therapies,” including the arbitrary detention and abuse of LGBTI persons in private rehabilitation clinics. These efforts led the HRCtee to raise the issue in its 2009 Concluding Observations, urging Ecuador to prevent such practices, investigate abuses, and ensure redress for victims²⁹.

Although practices of conversion therapy have been banned in the Penal Code since 2014, civil society reported these centres kept running rampant in total impunity, as government officials lacked tools and guidance for its enforcement. In that context, civil society actively advocated the government for years to come up with a concrete policy to address the proliferation of centres providing these services, and took those concerns to the UPR as well.

Civil society actors continued monitoring and reporting, which prompted the Committee to return to the issue in its 2016 Concluding Observations and again in its 2021 LOIPR, asking Ecuador to clarify what steps it had taken to eradicate these practices and hold perpetrators accountable³⁰. Parallel engagement with the CAT reinforced this follow-up. In its 2017 Concluding Observations, CAT expressed concern over allegations of these practices and noted the lack of convictions despite the closure of several such centres³¹. In its 2019 LOIPR, the Committee asked Ecuador to clarify whether these practices had been legally prohibited³². The CAT revisited the issue in its 2024 Concluding Observations, again noting that despite progress, so-called “conversion therapies” persisted in private clinics and that investigation and protection mechanisms remained weak and urged to adopt legislative and policy measures to prohibit and eliminate these practices, ensure accountability, and provide redress to victims³³.

²⁹ Concluding observations by the Human Rights Committee, **CCPR/C/ECU/CO/5**, 4 November 2009, para.12.

³⁰ Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Ecuador, **CCPR/C/ECU/CO/6**, 11 August 2016, para. 11-12; List of issues prior to the submission of the seventh periodic report of Ecuador, **CCPR/C/ECU/QPR/7**, 27 Aug 2021, para. 7.

³¹ Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Ecuador, **CAT/C/ECU/CO/7**, 11 Jan 2017, para. 49.

³² List of issues prior to submission of the eighth periodic report of Ecuador, **CAT/C/ECU/QPR/8**, 8 December 2019, para. 36.

³³ Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ecuador, **CAT/C/ECU/CO/8**, 16 August 2024, para. 40.



In May 2017, Ecuador received two recommendations specifically addressing conversion therapies, which were accepted by the government. In parallel, Ecuadorian organisations worked with Special Procedures. Following country visits, in 2020 both the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on health expressed concern over these “clinics” and called on the State to take action³⁴. The IE SOGI also highlighted severe abuses documented by civil society and regional bodies³⁵, and specifically referred to the findings of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2015 of such practices in Ecuador, which were at the same time based on information provided by civil society actors³⁶.

Civil society explains that these recommendations played a crucial role in the ongoing advocacy efforts to encourage the government to create a policy enforcing the prohibition of conversion therapies. After years of advocacy, in May 2023, a working group was finally established, comprising officials from different government departments and engaging in dialogue with civil society. As a result, in November 2023 the Ministry of Women and Human Rights launched the “[Interinstitutional route for the identification, rescue, care of cases, closure, and judicial proceedings against centres and natural or legal persons offering practices to suppress or modify sexual orientation, identity, and/or gender expression](#)”. This policy instrument aims to guide and structure state action to enforce legislation and ensure the eradication of such practices.

The mutually reinforcing dynamic is also present between UN mechanisms and regional human rights systems, such as the Inter-American, African, and European systems. Regional human rights bodies frequently rely on UN outputs to contextualize or interpret rights violations. For example, the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights regularly cite the findings

of Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies in country and thematic reports, as well as in individual case decisions. UN recommendations are often used to help define the scope and content of regional treaty provisions, particularly through references to General Comments, Concluding Observations, and thematic reports.

³⁴ Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, on her mission to Ecuador,

[A/HRC/44/52/Add.2](#), 22 May 2020, paras. 91, 103; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health on his visit to Ecuador, [A/HRC/44/48/Add.1](#), 6 May 2020, para. 60.

³⁵ Practices of so-called “conversion therapy” Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, [A/HRC/44/53](#), 1 May 2020, para. 38.

³⁶ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, “Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Persons in the Americas”, 2015, para. 203.



Civil society can use regional human rights mechanisms to follow up on UN recommendations. Submitting cases or reports to regional bodies can prompt binding decisions or authoritative findings that align with and reinforce UN standards. In particular, judgments from regional courts such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, or the European Court of Human Rights are legally binding and may be subject to specific follow-up procedures. As

such, these rulings can be more readily enforced domestically, often carrying stronger political and legal weight. Additionally, States often have separate compliance mechanisms from order from human rights tribunals, often different from UN human rights mechanisms recommendations. This cross-system engagement not only strengthens implementation efforts and creates additional pressure points for States to comply with international obligations, but also create new avenues push for its compliance domestically.

Strategic use of UN standards in regional litigation – The case of Vicky Hernández et al. v. Honduras

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights not only orders individual reparations but also issues guarantees of non-repetition: broad structural measures aimed at preventing future violations. In its 2021 judgment in Vicky Hernández et al. v. Honduras, the Court found Honduras internationally responsible for the killing of a trans woman and human rights defender during a period marked by widespread violence against LGBTI persons. The Court ordered a set of transformative guarantees of non-repetition, including legal recognition of gender identity, a protocol for investigating violence against LGBTI persons, a permanent training program for law enforcement personnel, and the design of a data collection system to track violence against LGBTI persons.³⁷

These measures closely reflected prior recommendations by UN Treaty Bodies, including the Human Rights Committee's call for Honduras to legally recognize gender identity, protect LGBTI people from hate crimes, and collect disaggregated data on anti-LGBTI violence³⁸. The Court also explicitly drew on UN sources, particularly the findings of Special Procedures following country visits to Honduras, to articulate a context of violence and police abuse targeting trans women at the time of the events. Moreover, the Court referenced General Recommendations Nos. 28 and 35 of the CEDAW Committee to interpret gender-based violence under the Convention of Belém do Pará as encompassing violence against trans women.

Following the judgment, the Court initiated its monitoring phase, during which the State is required to periodically report on its progress in implementing the ordered measures. The Court will continue to supervise compliance until it considers all obligations fulfilled.

³⁷ I/A Court H. R., Case of Vicky Hernández et al. v. Honduras. Merits, Reparations and Costs. Judgment of March 26, 2021. Series C No. 422.

³⁸ Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Honduras, [CCPR/C/HND/CO/2](#), 22 August 2017, para. 11



3.2.5. Advocating for effective national mechanisms for follow-up and Implementation of UN recommendations

Civil society organisations play a crucial role in advocating for the establishment and strengthening of NMIRFs, and in ensuring that these bodies are inclusive, transparent, and effective. Where NMIRFs already exist, LGBTI organisations should push for meaningful participation, advocate for the inclusion of SOGIESC issues in follow-up priorities, and monitor institutional performance.

The OHCHR has emphasized that an effective NMIRF should:

- Be a standing body - its structure should be maintained beyond the preparation of a single report or review cycle. It may take the form of a ministerial, interministerial, or independent institutional entity.
- Be grounded in a comprehensive legislative or policy mandate, supported by a shared intragovernmental understanding of its role and strong political ownership at the highest level.
- Have dedicated, skilled, and permanent staff, capable of building institutional knowledge, expertise, and professionalism at the national level.
- Have 4 core functional capacities:
 - Engagement capacity: the ability to engage and liaise with international and regional human rights bodies;

to coordinate and facilitate the preparation of reports; and to respond to communications, recommendations, and follow-up questions.

- Coordination capacity: the ability to organize and coordinate the collection of information and data from across government entities and relevant State actors.
- Consultation capacity: the ability to lead and sustain structured consultations with NHRIs, civil society, and other stakeholders.
- Information management capacity: the ability to systematically compile and thematically cluster recommendations and decisions using user-friendly databases or spreadsheets; to identify responsible government ministries or agencies for implementation; and to support the development of follow-up plans—including timelines—with relevant institutions to ensure meaningful implementation.³⁹

NMIRFs must not only support States in fulfilling their reporting obligations but also coordinate and monitor the actual implementation of recommendations. This requires going beyond formal reporting cycles and ensuring that the mechanism has the authority, capacity, and political backing to articulate actions across ministries, assign responsibilities, track progress, and identify gaps in implementation.

³⁹ OHCHR, [National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A Study of State engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms](#) (2016). Also: [The Pacific Principles of Practice of National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up](#) (2019).



In Portugal, the [National Human Rights Committee](#) was created in March 2010 by the Council of Ministers, which is responsible for intergovernmental coordination with the aim of promoting an integrated approach to human rights policies. The Committee aims to define the position of Portugal in international forums and to implement its obligations under international human rights conventions. Given the broad scope of international instruments on human rights that Portugal is a party to, the Committee coordinates all governmental action on human rights including implementing the international and regional reporting obligations of Portugal (to Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, the UPR and the Council of Europe).

The Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Human Rights Division within the Ministry acts as the Committee's permanent secretariat. All ministers are represented on the Committee, and the National Statistics Office is also a member. In addition to its members, the Committee is supported by a network of human rights focal points in ministries. 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. Its mailing list of members and ministerial human rights focal points is regularly updated by the secretariat.⁴⁰

Equally important is the role of civil society. NMIRFs should not treat engagement with civil society organisations as merely instrumental for compiling reports. Instead, they must facilitate sustained, structured, and meaningful participation of civil society actors particularly those representing marginalized groups in all stages of the implementation process. This includes setting follow-up priorities, contributing to national action plans, evaluating progress, and advising on necessary policy adjustments. LGBTI

organisations, in particular, should advocate for mechanisms that are inclusive of diverse voices and responsive to SOGIESC recommendations. They should also seek formal avenues of participation such as standing consultation groups, civil society liaison officers, or advisory boards and push for transparent processes where their contributions inform both planning and execution of follow-up efforts.

⁴⁰ OHCHR, [National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A Study of State engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms](#) (2016), pp. 43-46.



3.2.6. Monitoring tools for implementation: Matrices and National Recommendation Tracking Databases (NRTDs)

3.2.6.1. Implementation matrices

Monitoring the implementation of human rights recommendations requires tools that present information in a structured, accessible, and comparable way. One widely used approach is the recommendation matrix a table that records the recommendation, the actions taken, progress achieved, and other relevant details. These matrices can be applied in any human rights context, regardless of the mechanism that issued the recommendations.

Within the UPR, however, matrices have become particularly common for States, NHRIs, and civil society organisations to track implementation of recommendations received in each cycle. For example, the OHCHR provides a [suggested template](#) for UPR mid-term reporting, which includes columns for (i) the recommendation text, (ii) the government's position (supported/noted), (iii) the status of implementation⁴¹, and a (iv) description of activities undertaken, results,

and challenges. The OHCHR also encourages stakeholders, when submitting their periodic review report, to provide an adapted version of the thematically clustered recommendations matrix published on the [Documentation by country UPR webpage](#), adding a column with information on the implementation of previous recommendations⁴².

In practice, many mid-term reports by States and civil society use either the OHCHR template or an adapted version that expands the information captured. Additional useful fields include:

- Indicators/data points evidencing progress;
- Responsible institutions (lead and supporting ministries/agencies);
- Timeframes and milestones for completion;
- Budget allocations or resources committed (where available);
- Complementary action by other stakeholders (NHRIs, NGOs);
- Links to related UN recommendations from other mechanisms; and
- Thematic clustering, including tagging for affected populations and SDGs.

Distinctively, the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR) developed in 2012 the first comprehensive UPR monitoring matrix (see Annex 1), which included the following columns: (i) number of the recommendation; (ii) summary of the recommendation; (iii) similar recommendations made by other national or international mechanisms (including Treaty Bodies' Concluding Observations); (iv) indicators to track progress; (v) types of measures taken by the State; (vi) types of measures taken by independent institutions; and (vii) identification of the body responsible for implementation⁴³. Many States and civil society organisations later based their own matrices on this model. UPR Info subsequently developed its own version (see Annex 2). In addition, the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights created a version adapted to track Treaty Bodies' Concluding Observations (see Annex 3)⁴⁴.

⁴¹ (a) Implemented, (b) Partially implemented, (c) In the process of being implemented, and (d) Not implemented.

⁴² OHCHR, [Universal Periodic Review \(Fourth Cycle\): Information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders' written submissions](#).

⁴³ WGHR, [Tracking Implementation: A Monitoring Tool for Recommendations from the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review for India](#) (2013), p. 6.

⁴⁴ Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, [The Universal Periodic Review Midterm Reporting Process: Lessons for the Treaty Bodies](#) (2019), p. 14.



In Kenya, the Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice has institutionalised the use of an implementation matrix, called the National Implementation Plan, for the follow-up of UPR recommendations. First introduced during the second cycle, this tool was further developed in the [Implementation Plan \(2021–2025\) for the 3rd Cycle Recommendations under the UPR Process](#) in collaboration with the National Commission on Human Rights and civil society, and with the support of OHCHR. The matrix clusters recommendations thematically and includes detailed columns for specific government actions, indicators to measure progress, the supporting policy and legislative framework, responsible government actors, partners, and timeframes. Importantly, the design of both the second and third cycle matrices was informed by the implementation plan created by the Kenya UPR Stakeholders' Coalition, with many of its proposed actions incorporated into the official framework.⁴⁵

Despite their usefulness, such matrices are often limited to recommendations from a specific review cycle and mechanism. They typically do not consolidate recommendations from all relevant sources (such as Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures) or link them comprehensively to the SDGs. They also rarely cluster recommendations across mechanisms in an integrated manner—limitations that have prompted some States to develop more advanced digital tools.

3.2.6.2. National Recommendations Tracking Databases (NRTDs)

NRTDs are specialized digital platforms that enable governments and other stakeholders to collect, systematize, and monitor the implementation of recommendations issued to a State by human rights mechanisms. Properly designed, these tools go beyond simple record keeping: they serve as centralized implementation management systems that support follow-up, facilitate inter-institutional coordination, and promote transparency.



⁴⁵ United Nations Development Program, [UN good practices. How the universal periodic review process supports sustainable development](#) (2022), pp. 35–36.



NRTDs are increasingly recognized as a core component of a NMIRF, enabling States to track obligations arising from multiple human rights mechanisms, including the UPR, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and regional human rights bodies. Their functionalities typically include:

- Integrating recommendations across mechanisms (UPR, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and regional human rights bodies) into a single searchable platform, avoiding fragmentation;
- Automating thematic clustering and tagging by issue, affected population, and related SDGs targets, enabling cross-mechanism comparisons;
- Assigning and tracking responsibilities for each recommendation, with secure accounts for lead and supporting institutions to directly update progress;
- Incorporating measurable indicators and progress scoring to allow for dynamic monitoring and visualization of results over time;
- Enabling multi-user collaboration across government branches and, in some cases, allow civil society to submit parallel progress inputs;
- Providing open access platforms, increasing transparency, and enabling independent monitoring.

SIMORE Plus (Sistema de Monitoreo de Recomendaciones en Derechos Humanos) is a digital monitoring and reporting tool designed to track the implementation of recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms and the Inter-American Human Rights System. It was initially developed in Paraguay as a joint initiative of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, with support from the OHCHR in Paraguay.

In Paraguay, SIMORE Plus is coordinated by the General Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Directorate of Human Rights at the Ministry of Justice. The tool operates through a permanent inter-institutional mechanism, based on a network of approximately 170 focal points from around 70 public institutions across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, as well as other relevant entities responsible for implementing international human rights recommendations.

Due to its success, SIMORE Plus has been adopted or is under adaptation in several other Latin American countries, including the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Uruguay, and Brazil.





Each national version of SIMORE Plus serves two main functions:

- Compiling and systematizing international human rights recommendations, including those from UN and regional bodies, and linking them to specific SDGs and targets. The tool also helps identify responsible institutions and provides public access to updated information on implementation progress. For example, its search function includes a “populations” category, where users can filter recommendations specifically addressing LGBTI persons.
- Supporting the preparation of national reports and assessments on human rights, allowing state institutions to regularly input information on steps taken to implement recommendations. A dedicated portal (OSC-Plus) allows civil society organisations to register and submit comments on government implementation efforts. These comments are shared with both administrators and focal points, encouraging transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.⁴⁶

Notably, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has adopted a regional version of the tool: [SIMORE Interamericano](#). Officially launched in 2022, this platform monitors the implementation of IACHR recommendations arising from thematic and country reports, Merits reports, precautionary measures, and friendly settlement agreements. Unlike national versions, SIMORE Interamericano is managed directly by the IACHR and operates independently of States. However, it actively promotes cooperation with governments and provides channels for civil society and victims to engage in the follow-up process.

Launched in September 2024, New Zealand’s [Human Rights Monitor](#) is an online platform administered by the Ministry of Justice and integrated into the country’s NMIRF, which is overseen by an interagency International Human Rights Governance Group. It records recommendations made to New Zealand by UN human rights mechanisms and tracks the actions taken by the Government in response. The platform is continuously updated to reflect both progress on actions and new international human rights recommendations.

Recommendations are clustered by affected persons, such as LGBTI communities, and by human rights issue. Each recommendation is linked to one or more government actions taken to implement it, and those actions are in turn tagged to specific progress indicators. This allows users to see, for any given recommendation, the actions the Government is taking and the corresponding indicators, which are updated by the responsible government agencies.

⁴⁶ The Geneva Human Rights Platform, “SIMORE PLUS”, available at <https://www.genevaacademy.ch/geneva-humanrights-platform/tracking-tools/detail/3-simore-plus>



Even when there is no such tool planned to be integrated by the government, civil society organisations can develop similar digital initiatives to track implementation. These tools are often

designed to fill gaps in official monitoring, promote transparency, and provide independent assessments of State compliance.

[Plataforma RPU Brasil](#) was developed in 2018 and is maintained by the UPR Brazil Coalition, a network of civil society organisations, it serves as an online platform to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the UPR. The platform compiles all recommendations received by Brazil across different UPR cycles, classifying them by theme, affected population, and level of implementation.

Each recommendation entry contains detailed information, including the original text of the recommendation, the State's position during the UPR session, independent assessments from coalition members, and links to relevant evidence or reports. This allows users whether from civil society, academia, or the general public to verify progress and identify areas where action is still needed. Plataforma RPU Brasil is updated periodically based on coalition research and consultations with affected communities.

3.2.7. Integrating UN human rights recommendations and SDGs into national policy frameworks: The role of national strategies and NAPs

A core element of effective follow-up is the integration of recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms and their links to the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs into national policies, plans, and strategies. This process ensures that international human rights commitments are not treated as isolated

obligations but are embedded into the routine work of government institutions.

For LGBTI organisations, integration processes present strategic opportunities to ensure that SOGIESC recommendations are not sidelined. By framing these recommendations in connection with national development goals - such as health, education, or employment civil society can broaden political support and leverage cross-sector commitments.



3.2.7.1. National Strategies

One pathway to achieve this integration is through national strategies such as sustainable development strategies that set long-term policy priorities and address human rights and SDGs in a coordinated, cross-sector manner. Typically led at the highest level of government, these strategies assign responsibilities across ministries, establish national indicators, and create mechanisms for

consultation and monitoring. Where SOGIESC concerns are explicitly included, they provide a structural basis for incorporating them into sectoral policies (e.g., health, education, equality), ensuring sustained institutional attention, funding, and political backing. Their effectiveness depends on being supported by permanent follow-up structures, transparent participation processes, and dedicated monitoring tools, such as national recommendation-tracking databases.

Germany's 2021 [Sustainable Development Strategy](#), coordinated by the Federal Chancellery, serves as the overarching framework for implementing the 17 SDGs at the national level. A Sustainable Development Council comprising civil society, academic, and business representatives advises the government and ensures participatory input. Each federal ministry appoints a Sustainability Coordinator to oversee sectoral implementation, while progress is monitored through national indicators linked to the SDGs. The strategy includes SOGIESC concerns, providing a basis to ensure their integration into sectoral policies on health, education, and equality, and to track their implementation through the existing SDGs indicator system.

3.2.7.2. NAPs

In addition to national strategies, integration of UN recommendations and SDGs commitments can be advanced through National Action Plans (NAPs) structured frameworks that translate international obligations into concrete, time-bound actions at the domestic level.

Civil society organisations, including LGBTI groups, can play a vital role in advocating for the development of NAPs and ensuring that they incorporate key recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms. For example, NAPs can serve as frameworks to:

- Integrate and cluster UN recommendations across mechanisms (Treaty Bodies, UPR, Special Procedures) into national policy agendas, and link to SDGs;
- Identify concrete actions, responsible government institutions, timelines, and indicators for implementation;
- Establish mechanisms for civil society participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the plan, and
- Secure high-level political commitment and allocate resources for implementation.



NAPs can take different forms depending on the national context and policy priorities. One example is a human rights recommendations implementation plan developed for a specific UN mechanism's review cycle. Such plans help national authorities cluster recommendations thematically, assign responsibilities to relevant agencies or departments, establish timeframes, and track progress through agreed indicators. In other contexts, NAPs are designed as comprehensive human rights plans that address a wide range of rights and populations over a set period, guiding government policy priorities. These plans can incorporate specific measures for LGBTI persons.

In others contexts, they take the form of LGBTI-specific strategies, focused exclusively on advancing the rights and inclusion of LGBTI individuals. Regardless of their scope, NAPs offer valuable opportunities for civil society to push for the inclusion of UN recommendations, advocate for measurable commitments, and ensure that national policies reflect international human rights standards.⁴⁷

For example, in November 2020, the European Commission launched its first-ever [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy](#), encouraging European Union Member States to adopt national action plans on LGBTIQ equality. As of now, 12 out of 27 EU Member States have developed or adopted such plans⁴⁸. However, most of these remain ad hoc initiatives, rather than components of permanent policy mechanism⁴⁹. According to the LGBTIQ Equality Subgroup of the European Commission, NAPs should be:

- Be developed through inclusive and participatory processes, ensuring meaningful consultation with LGBTI communities;
- Accurately assess the state of LGBTI equality to inform evidence-based policymaking;
- Set clear, ambitious and measurable priorities; and
- Include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track implementation and impact.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ OHCHR, [National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A Study of State engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms](#) (2016), pp. 24-25.

⁴⁸ Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. European Commission, [Charting progress: A comparative analysis of national LGBTIQ equality action plans in the EU](#) (2023).

⁴⁹ In France, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Spain, the adoption of such plans is or will become part of a permanent policy mechanism.

⁵⁰ European Commission LGBTIQ Equality Subgroup, [Guidelines for Strategies and Action Plans to Enhance LGBTIQ Equality](#) (2022), pp. 9-10.



Malta's [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2027](#) is an example of an institutionalized approach to national action planning on SOGIESC. Developed under the leadership of the Human Rights Directorate within the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, it is part of a permanent policy mechanism and is closely linked to Malta's broader national human rights agenda.

The strategy was elaborated through structured consultations with civil society organisations, as well as with experts, trade unions, other governmental entities, and the private sector. The final strategy was reviewed and confirmed by the LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council, a formal advisory body composed of civil society and institutional representatives. Responsibility for implementing the strategy's actions rests with the relevant government bodies identified in the plan, under the coordination and supervision of the SOGIESC Unit within the Human Rights Directorate.

The 2023–2027 Strategy builds on and formally evaluates its predecessor, identifying lessons learned and gaps to guide the next cycle. It is the third national LGBTI plan adopted by Malta, following the LGBTIQ Equality Action Plan 2015–2017 and the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018–2022.

The strategy outlines concrete measures, timelines, and measurable indicators, and is monitored by the SOGIESC Unit, which produces periodic progress reports, including a Mid-Year Progress Report and an Annual Report presented during a stakeholder conference. Baseline data for the strategy was developed in collaboration with the National Statistics Office, enabling the identification of data gaps and fostering disaggregated data collection on the socioeconomic situation of LGBTI populations.

Civil society is actively involved in follow-ups through structured participation in the LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council, which receives and reviews monitoring reports, provides feedback, and advises on the implementation of specific measures. In addition, civil society organisations contribute to thematic working groups convened by the SOGIESC Unit and participate in evaluation processes at the end of the plan's cycle, ensuring continuity, accountability, and relevance of future strategies.





NAPs offer a powerful tool to integrate recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms into domestic policy making. In practice, this potential often depends on the political will of government actors and the advocacy of civil society. UN recommendations such as those issued by Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, or the UPR can provide strong leverage for including specific issues or indicators in NAPs when cited by participating stakeholders.

However, most NAPs whether general human rights plans or LGBTI-specific strategies do not include centralized or institutionalized mechanisms for reviewing, prioritizing, and systematically incorporating UN recommendations. This gap limits the potential for coherent alignment between international commitments and national implementation. Strengthening institutional processes to ensure that incoming UN recommendations are tracked, clustered, and translated into actionable measures within national plans remains an area for further development and advocacy. This is closely linked to the absence or weakness of effective NIRFMs, the national structures responsible for coordinating the follow-up to international human rights recommendations.

3.2.8. Capacity-building for LGBTI civil society

Strengthening the capacity of LGBTI civil society organisations is critical to ensuring they can play an effective role in the follow-

up and implementation of UN human rights recommendations and SDGs. Capacity-building efforts should combine technical knowledge, strategic advocacy skills, and institutional strengthening to support sustained engagement at both national and international levels.

3.2.8.1. Engagement with national actors

At the national level, capacity-building initiatives can empower LGBTI civil society to link UN recommendations to domestic legal, policy, and budgetary frameworks, and to participate meaningfully in dialogues with government institutions, parliaments, and national human rights bodies. Key elements include:

- Mapping relevant State institutions and identifying entry points for advocacy;
- Linking SOGIESC-related recommendations to national development priorities and budget processes; and
- Monitoring State compliance through evidence-based reporting.

Long-term effectiveness is enhanced by:

- Securing core, multi-year funding to allow organisations to dedicate staff to follow up and advocacy;
- Establishing national platforms or coalitions for coordinated engagement; and
- Translating tools and guidance into local languages and formats accessible to grassroots groups.



In Kenya, in December 2024, organisations such as Pema Kenya, galck+, and The Power of Pride, in collaboration with UNDP and Pan Africa ILGA, organized a national convening to strengthen LGBTI civil society organisations capacity. This included training on how to align advocacy with the SDGs and national development plans⁵¹.

3.2.8.2. Engagement with UN mechanisms

As discussed in Section 2 of this Guide, the same UN mechanisms that issue recommendations also provide opportunities for follow-up. Civil society plays a key role in these processes by submitting updated information, participating in review sessions, and advocating with States to reiterate or strengthen recommendations. Engaging effectively with UN mechanisms also creates the opportunity to influence the formulation of recommendations so that they meet SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Whether through lobbying States in the UPR, drafting shadow reports for Treaty Bodies, or providing inputs to Special Procedures, civil society can ensure that recommendations are actionable, measurable, and time-bound. This increases accountability, facilitates monitoring, and enhances impact. Practical guidance on drafting SMART recommendations is available in ILGA World's [SOGIESC UPR Advocacy Toolkit](#).

Sustained engagement can be further supported through:

- Mentorship and peer-learning models, connecting experienced advocates with emerging groups;
- Dedicated training on using UN tools such as the Universal Human Rights Index (UHRI) and UPR Matrix of Recommendations; and
- Accessible, user-friendly guidance materials, such as ILGA World's [SOGIESC UPR Advocacy Toolkit](#).

3.2.9. Gathering SOGIESC-specific data to monitor implementation of recommendations

Civil society organisations should consistently advocate for governments to collect and publish SOGIESC-disaggregated data across key sectors such as health, education, employment, and access to justice. Official data collection is essential for measuring the impact of policies, assessing compliance with human rights obligations, and ensuring that LGBTI persons are not left behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, in many contexts where such data are not available, civil society has developed innovative participatory monitoring tools to fill this gap. Community-led initiatives not only help document lived experiences of LGBTI individuals, but also provide actionable evidence to support advocacy, inform policy change, and track the implementation of UN recommendations and SDGs commitments.



⁵¹ <https://www.instagram.com/p/DDOscH5upvT/?hl=en>



Recognizing that communities previously lacked functional channels to report poor service, discrimination, or mistreatment, Positive Vibes developed [ma'Box](#) in 2021 as part of its broader community-led monitoring tools, in collaboration with local partners across East and Southern Africa. ma'Box is a virtual, community-managed suggestion box platform that allows health service users to provide anonymous or open, real-time feedback on specific facilities. Operated directly by communities through organisations such as PEMA Kenya—it enables rapid identification of problems and supports transparent dialogue between service providers and community members to address them. Since 2021, ma'Box has been rolled out in five countries: Botswana (2021, second cycle in 2023), Zambia (2022), Lesotho (2021 pilot, renewed in 2023), Mozambique (2024), and Kenya (2024).

More information about the tool and its implementation in Kenya can be found in the 2024 report [what's in the ma'Box? participatory data analysis and interpretation from community monitoring of health facilities in Mombasa, Kenya](#), published by PEMA Kenya and Positive Vibes.

3.2.10. Community-led involvement and leadership in implementation

Direct involvement of LGBTI communities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of policies is essential to ensure that international human rights recommendations are meaningfully translated into lived realities. When implementation processes are community-led, they are more likely to reflect the actual needs, priorities, and experiences of marginalized

groups and to foster trust, accountability, and sustainability.

In many contexts, States have little incentive to implement politically sensitive SOGIESC related recommendations unless pressured by sustained community advocacy. Community-driven initiatives can catalyse action from reluctant governments. They can also serve as parallel or complementary mechanisms for implementation when official processes are weak or exclusionary.

In Nigeria, an African country where SOGIE is criminalized, activists developed a community-led emergency response framework focused on securing access to basic services such as housing and clean water for LGBTI individuals and other marginalized populations. The initiative is grounded in participatory consultations with affected communities across different regions. Advocates plan to validate the framework through formal engagement with the NHRI, ensuring institutional recognition and encouraging government adoption. This example highlights how grassroots leadership can drive inclusive implementation efforts and bridge the gap between human rights standards and on-the-ground realities.



04

Conclusion and recommendations



Significant challenges remain in advocating for the implementation of UN recommendations and SDGs, particularly in contexts marked by the criminalisation of SOGIESC and shrinking civic space, the absence of dedicated follow-up mechanisms, weak or fragmented national coordination, and the lack of integration of recommendations into broader policy frameworks. Other recurring obstacles include the absence of official disaggregated data on SOGIESC issues, insufficient resources for sustained advocacy, and governments' reluctance to assign clear institutional responsibilities or allocate budgets for implementation.

Nonetheless, civil society organisations have developed effective strategies to address these barriers, many of which are documented in this guide. These practices demonstrate that even under restrictive conditions, civil society actors can strengthen accountability and advance implementation by leveraging both international and national processes. The following recommendations, drawn from these experiences, provide guidance for civil society actors seeking to enhance their follow-up work:

- **Strategic advocacy.** Engage strategically with government actors, identifying entry points that may be more open to dialogue. In highly politicised contexts, NHRIs or technical entities and agencies (such as those focused on health, education, or statistics) may provide more receptive spaces for engagement than politicalized ministries. Partnerships with international actors, including the OHCHR, UN agencies, donors, and diplomatic missions, can also reinforce pressure on governments and provide additional avenues for advocacy.
- **National follow-up mechanisms.** Advocate for the establishment or strengthening of NMIRFs that are permanent, adequately resourced, inclusive of civil society, and empowered to coordinate across ministries. Effective NMIRFs should have the capacity to assign responsibilities, set measurable indicators, and monitor implementation of UN recommendations, including those related to SOGIESC.
- **Monitoring tools.** Call for governments to adopt public, cross-mechanism tracking systems such as NRTDs, integrating recommendations from the UPR, treaty bodies, special procedures, and regional mechanisms. Such platforms should allow clustering, SDGs tagging, assignment of institutional responsibilities, and progress tracking with indicators. Where systems like SIMORE Plus exist, civil society should actively use their parallel-input functions to increase transparency. Where governments fail to establish such systems, civil society organisations can create their own tools—such as implementation matrices or digital platforms (as seen in Brazil)—to monitor recommendations and hold States accountable.
- **National strategies and action plans.** Advocate for the adoption of national human rights strategies or action plans that



explicitly incorporate UN recommendations and link them to sectoral policies on health, education, employment, and equality. Civil society should insist on participatory and inclusive processes that ensure the involvement of LGBTI organisations in the design and monitoring of such plans. NAPs should contain measurable commitments, timelines, and indicators, and include monitoring mechanisms with civil society participation. UN recommendations can also be used as leverage to embed SOGIESC priorities into national development agendas and SDG-related frameworks.

- Domestic–international synergy. Combine engagement with UN follow-up processes and advocacy before national and regional actors. International recommendations are rarely implemented immediately; they are most effective when reinforced through national legal and political advocacy, strategic litigation, and sustained campaigning. Using UN recommendations to support arguments before domestic or regional courts, or to influence policy debates, strengthens their authority. Conversely, evidence from national advocacy and litigation can reinforce advocacy at the UN level, creating a mutually reinforcing cycle.
- Data and evidence on SOGIESC. Advocate for States to collect and publish official disaggregated data on SOGIESC. Where this is not feasible, unsafe, or resisted, civil society can generate their own evidence through community-led monitoring mechanisms (such as participatory surveys, feedback platforms, or initiatives like ma'Box). Independent, credible data can fill gaps in official reporting and provide

powerful tools for advocacy, monitoring, and litigation.

- Coalitions and alliances. Invest in building and strengthening broad-based coalitions across sectors, ensuring that SOGIESC issues are visible within wider human rights and development platforms. Such coalitions can distribute workload, enhance legitimacy, and increase the political cost of government inaction. Where possible, create structured governance arrangements to sustain coalitions across multiple UN cycles.
- Capacity building. Strengthen the capacities of civil society actors in: (i) International advocacy including the ability to influence the formulation of SMART recommendations, and to engage with UN follow-up procedures effectively. And (ii) National follow-up advocacy equipping civil society to engage government officials, parliamentarians, and NHRIs, and to use UN recommendations in political, legal, and policy advocacy, including integration into national development plans.



Annex 1 Monitoring table of UPR recommendations: Global template

Number of recommendations	Indicates the number of recommendation/s made on a specific issue during UPR1 and UPR2 cycles.	
Summary of recommendations	Recommendations may be categorised and rationalized for the purpose of this table, as some of them are repetitive, while others deal with more than one subject matter.	
Was the same recommendation made of other mechanisms?	National These mechanisms could include official documents, such as, guidelines from relevant ministries and constitutional bodies. Reports of commissions and government committees etc.	
	International These mechanisms could include: 1. Concluding observations (UN treaty bodies) 2. Recommendations (UN, special procedures) 3. Recommendations from other relevant UN bodies (such as ILO) 4. Millinnium development goals and sub-goals	
Possible indicators/- data to track progress of implementation	Specific indicators (both statistical and qualitive) which can be used to track the progress of implementation of the relevant UPR recommendations. This section is critical for the UPR mid-term review, as it could be the basis for tracking the progress of implementationsafter two years	
Current status: Type of measure/ intervention made by the State	Budgetary	Information that gives an overview of the current status of implementa- tion of the relevant UPR recommendations and any other monitoring mechanism.
	Legislative	
	Policy	
	Monitoring mechanism	
	Judicial pronouncement	
Current status: Type of measure/ interventions made by the independent institution	Information that has been provided in guidelines/statements/ specialized documents/ reports produced by these independent institutions. ¹ They may relate to the status of women, children, minorities, access to information, indigenous people, persons with disabilities etc.	
Who is responsible for the implementation?	Specific ministry/department/government institution which is accountable for implementation of the relevant recommendations, as also, other government bodies such as those responsible for training, etc. (e.g. HR education in police trainings).	

Source: WGHR, **Tracking Implementation: A Monitoring Tool for Recommendations from the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review for India** (2013), p. 6.



Annex 2 Monitoring matrix to track implementation of UPR recommendations

Number of UPR Recommendations	Include name of recommending State	Include (or use as reference similar recommendations from earlier UPR cycles)	Include information on whether the recommendation was accepted or noted
Recommendation Summary	Recommendations that are similar can be merged and rationalized for the purpose of the exercise, as some of them are repetitive while others deal with more than one subject matter. This row can also be used to give more specificity to recommendations that may appear too general/vague.		
Was the same recommendation made by other International and National Bodies	These instances could include: (a) Recommendations from the UN Treaty Bodies; (b) Recommendations from UN Special Procedures		
Related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)	Identify both the overarching SDG's and the relevant targets under each SDG		
Possible indicators/data to track progress of implementation	Specific indicators (both statistical and qualitative) which can be used to track the progress of the implementation of the recommendation. This action is critical as it will be the basis on which analysis can be made on the progress of the implementation in the period between the UPR cycles.		
Current Status: Type of measure/ intervention being undertaken/to be undertaken by the State	Budgetary	Information that gives a good overview of the current status of implementation of the recommendation.	
	Legislative		
	Policy	Information that can give direction to concrete steps to be taken by the relevant government department for the implementation of the UPR recommendations.	
	Monitoring mechanism		
	Judicial pronouncement		
Complementary action by other stakeholders	This row would indicate complementary actions by NHR's/NGO's/other independent bodies to assist the State in implementing the UPR recommendations.		
Tracking Implementation	Time frame This row would indicate the time frame the State allocates to implement the UPR Recos.		
Government Bodies	Rating This row gives, on a periodical basis, the status of implementation: Completed; Partially completed (in progress); Not implemented		
Tracking Implementation Independent Bodies	Time frame This row would indicate the time frame the relevant independent body determines that it would take to implement the UPR Recos.		
	Rating This row would indicate an assessment by the independent body of the progress being made by the State such as: Implemented; Weak response by the State; Overdue needs to be addressed.		



Annex 3 Monitoring matrix for treaty body concluding observations

Document number and paragraph of TB CoB	Indicate the text of TB CoBs/other recommendations.	
Recommendation Summary	Recommendations that are similar can be merged and rationalized for the purpose of the exercise, as some of them are repetitive while others deal with more than one subject matter. This row can also be used to give more specificity to recommendations that may appear too general/vague.	
Was the same recommendation made by other International and National Bodies	These references could include: (a) Recommendations from the UPR cycles; (b) Recommendations from UN Special Procedures	
Related SDG's	Identify both the overarching SDG's and the relevant targets under each SDG	
Possible indicators/ data to track progress of implementation	Specific indicators (statistical and qualitative) can be used to track the progress of the recommendation's implementation. This section is critical as it will be the basis on which analysis can be made on the progress of the implementation in the period between TB reviews of State parties. Indicators can also be drawn from SDG targets and priority issues identified by the TBs for their follow-up work.	
Current Status: Type of measure/ intervention being undertaken/to be undertaken by the State	Budgetary	Information that gives a comprehensive overview of the current status of implementation of the recommendation.
	Legislative	
	Policy	Information that can give direction to concrete steps to be taken by the relevant government department for the implementation of the UPR recommendations.
	Monitoring mechanism	
	Judicial pronouncement	
Complementary action by other stakeholders	This row would indicate complementary actions by NHR's/NGO's/other independent bodies to assist the State in implementing the TB CoBs.	
Tracking Implementation Government Bodies	Time frame	This row would indicate the time frame allocated by the State to implement the TB CoBs.
	Rating	This row would give, on a periodical basis, the status of implementation such as: Completed; Partially completed (in progress); Not implemented
Tracking Implementation Independent Bodies	Time frame	This column would indicate the time frame the relevant independent body determines that it would take to implement the TB CoBs.
	Rating	This column would indicate assessments by independent bodies of the progress being made by the State such as: Implemented; Weak response by the State; Overdue needs to be addressed.

Source: Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, [The Universal Periodic Review Midterm Reporting Process: Lessons for the Treaty Bodies](#), (2019), p. 14.



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