

UPR Working Groups: Description and function for the UPR Process

There are three basic steps or phases in the UPR process and workgroups can participate in each phase.

A) BEFORE THE REVIEW (now until Spring 2020)

1. The country being reviewed prepares a report on how well it is doing protecting and serving human rights. This includes any actions it has taken to put into place changes requested during the last review,
2. Stakeholders (organizations which work with those directly impacted by human rights violations) prepare and submit their reports, called submissions (see template available on USSHRN website)
3. Stakeholders lobby the countries of the UN, here in the US, or by email, to ask support for their issue and ask that country to make a recommendation at the time of the actual review in Geneva
4. The USHRN compiles a summary document to send to the UN
5. The UN compiles a summary document for use at the review.
6. Three countries (called Troikas) are selected to lead and coordinate the review of each other country. The Troikas are selected by the Human Rights Council

B) DURING THE REVIEW (Spring 2020)

1. Stakeholders who are in Geneva meet and lobby with countries about their issues, through side events and through individual meetings
2. A three hour review between the US and other countries takes place, based upon the information that the countries have received from both stakeholder and from the Human Rights Council. Stakeholders do NOT participate in this discussion so all lobbying has to be done before this discussion.
3. The Working Group of the UPR for that country (not to be confused with our own working groups) submits a report containing recommendations made during the course of the discussions
4. The report of that Working Group is adopted by the Human Rights Council two days after the review

C) AFTER THE REVIEW

1. The Human rights Council formally adopts the report of the Working Group at its next scheduled session
2. The country being reviewed decides which recommendations it will adopt to work on until the next UPR
3. Stakeholders monitor the government at home to measure how they are doing on complying with those recommendations.

Why have Working Groups?

Our UPR workgroups are organized by issue/topic. This allows maximum participation of members in the UPR process, while assuring that the UN does not receive duplicates of information on a particular issue/theme. It allows us to provide a united effort to lobby for our particular issue area. It is a vehicle for the sharing of information that may be of interest/assistance to others in our workgroups.

How does a Working Group operate?

One of the key things in a workgroup is flexibility. Since all of our human rights are interrelated and interdependent, there will naturally be some overlap in workgroups. In the compilation of reports, lobbying at home and in Geneva the workgroup shares information and sometimes events, side-events or reports.

Each workgroup should submit at least one stakeholder report. The workgroup may decide to submit as many reports as it wants, and coordination makes certain that information is not duplicated. There may be members of workgroups who are interested in participating, and want to stay informed, but are not able to write a submission. There may be individuals/organizations who would prefer to sign onto, or endorse, another groups report instead of, or in addition to, submitting their own.

Each workgroup has two co-chairs, who will be responsible for facilitating meetings and scheduling meetings. Some workgroups may be larger than others, and the group and its co-chairs may decide to break up into issue areas for purposes of writing submissions one-pagers etc. or even for purposes of meetings.

There may be members of workgroups who have much experience in international mechanisms, and there may be those groups/individuals who are new to the process. The workgroup can function to assist those new to the process by providing information on how the

process works.

Can I belong to more than one workgroup?

You may belong to as many workgroups as you desire, and many people/organizations choose more than one group. You may decide to be principally involved in one or two groups (active writing of reports or one-pagers) and less actively in others.

Does the entire workgroup go to Geneva?

Anyone who has the desire and funding can participate in the Geneva review. Those members who are not able to go to Geneva can also have meaningful participation through their workgroups, by being in contact with those of the group who are in Geneva. Workgroup members who do not travel to Geneva may be of great help to the workgroup in disseminating information about the UPR review while it is taking place; to increase the public awareness here at home while the process is ongoing. Blogging, press releases, tweets and Facebook posts can be done by all in the workgroup, whether or not they are in Geneva.

Is there work to be done after Geneva?

A very large part of the UPR work is done here at home. There will be many ways to participate in this work on a national, state and local level. Workgroups can have representative set meetings with other countries, establish email communications, set up and/or attend US Government consultations, and participate in public awareness and education here at home.

How much time will it take?

This depends upon your level of participation in the workgroup. If you are actively submitting a report or holding meetings it will take more time than if you are simply joining the group to keep up on what is happening in your issue area. The co-chairs will allow you to select a level of participation that works for you or your organization.