

# Advocacy report

**Meeting attended: 36th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms**

**Theme:** *The universal periodic review and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5)*

Palais de Nations Rm XX 10-1pm 15 September 2017, attended by GWI UN Representative Amy Paunila

**Subject of meeting:**

This panel discussion presented an opportunity for participants to explore the potential role the UPR mechanism can play in advancing the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Goal 5, at the global, regional and country levels.

**Specifically refers to SDG no. 5, but all goals have gender equality integrated.**

**Chair :** H.E. **Mr. Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli**, President of the Human Rights Council

**Opening Statement:** **Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Moderator:** **Ms. Claire Somerville**, Executive Director of the Gender Centre, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

**Panellists :**

**Mr. Roland Chauville**, Executive Director of UPR Info

**Ms. Salma Nims**, Secretary General of the Commission for Women in Jordan

**Ms. Dorothy Nyasulu**, Assistant Representative, Malawi Country Office, United Nations Population Fund

**Ms. Eva Grambye**, Deputy Executive Director, International Division, Danish Institute for Human Rights

This panel discussion explored how the UPR mechanism can advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 5. Ms Salma Nims, Secretary General of the Commission for Women in Jordan, and Ms. Dorothy Nyasulu, Assistant Representative, Malawi Country Office, United Nations Population Fund, both emphasised the positive impact that UPR recommendations had made in their countries. For example, in Jordan the legal loophole for rapists, Article 308, was rescinded in August 2017, and in Malawi women's sexual and reproductive rights have been realised as human rights. Additionally, extensive, countrywide training in Malawian government offices has been undertaken in order to address a variety of women's issues. Ms Eva Grambye from the Danish Institute for Human Rights pointed out that the UPR can provide an important means of prioritisation: the frequency of UPR recommendations helps to identify priorities for SDG implementation.

As the UPR moves into its third cycle it was noted that human rights legislation provided a legally binding framework while the Global Goals were the realisation. The UPR mechanism brings accountability to the goals' achievement monitoring. This is where civil society can play a valuable monitoring and reporting role. Additionally, Mr Roland Chauville from UPR Info proposed a new strategy for the third cycle of the UPR. One year after the adoption, each State should report on five recommendations of its choice during the Item 6 General Debate. This would encourage States to start working on the implementation immediately after their review. If gender-related recommendations are included amongst the five, this would further accelerate efforts to combat gender discrimination.

### **Next steps, how GWI members can use this information**

A criticism brought by Ms. Dorothy Nyasalu was that recommendations can sometimes be too vague to be useful; e.g. 'improve maternal mortality'. More specific language is more useful, this can be encouraged by civil society who participate in reports and review. It was also noted that there was a lot of emphasis on Goal 5, but gender progress on all goals should be considered. The great value of civil society in both submitting shadow reports and monitoring implementation of SDG achievements cannot be underestimated. GWI membership can therefore contribute in the following ways:

- Use high frequency recommendations as a starting basis for their own advocacy, or as additional strength for key areas for GWI advocacy
- Participate at the reporting stage to ensure women's and girls' real stories and voices are used as the catalyst for positive change
- Report on monitoring of initiatives undertaken to advance the SDGs as a result of UPR recommendations.

### **Reference documents:**

[Human Rights Council resolution 6/30](#), "Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system" (*adopted by consensus on 14 December 2007*)