



Mr President

The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) is the network of more than 120 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) across the world, with currently 78 NHRIs being accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

GANHRI has established a Working Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which comprises: Argentina's *Defensor del Pueblo de la Nación*; the *Danish Institute for Human Rights*; the *German Institute for Human Rights*, *Ghana's Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice* and the *National Commission on Human Rights of Indonesia, Komnas HAM*.

The GANHRI Working Group welcomes this year's combined focus on the 2030 Agenda, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and gender equality.

With the adoption of the **Mérida Declaration on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development**¹ at the 12th International Conference of NHRIs in 2015, NHRIs from across regions committed to collaborate in mutual capacity-building and sharing of experiences to contribute to a Human Rights-Based Approach to the implementation of the Agenda.

The Mérida Declaration is grounded on the understanding of human rights and the 2030 Agenda as mutually reinforcing frameworks, and points to the potential of using international human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review, to assess and guide SDG implementation, including Goal 5 on gender equality.

In order to realise the synergies between human rights and sustainable development adequately, it is crucial to live up to the 2030 Agenda's crosscutting commitment of "leaving no one behind". One of the most pervasive obstacles to reach this crosscutting aim is gender inequality. Gender equality is expressed explicitly in Goal 5 but also reflected more implicitly across all elements of the Agenda. Gender equality is at the heart of both the 2030 Agenda and human rights.

NHRIs are already addressing gender inequality in their daily work, which was reaffirmed by the 2012 Amman Declaration and Programme of Action² on the role of NHRIs in promoting gender equality.

Specifically, NHRIs can address gender inequality by:

- Advising national and local governments on gender issues and gender mainstreaming,

¹ [Mérida Declaration](#)

² [Amman Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

- Securing gender-sensitive data through national and local indicators, monitoring and reporting of progress,
- Holding governments accountable on gender-related commitments,
- Investigating gender rights violations

Each year, NHRIs coordinate side-events at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in order to showcase their unique value in protecting and fulfilling the human rights of women. At the 61st session of the CSW, best practices of NHRIs working for women's economic participation were highlighted. One of these were the *National Human Rights Commission of India* (NHRC), which have carried out research on trafficking in women and children and formulated an *Integrated Plan of Action to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking with Special Focus on Children and Women* in cooperation with agencies and ministries. Other best practices cover the *Samoan Office of the Ombudsman* who has launched the country's first Family Violence Inquiry and the *German Institute for Human Rights* (GIHR) who has conducted a field study on severe forms of labour exploitation with a focus on female workers. The study resulted in a proposed strategy for the German government and the insights fed into a contribution of the European Network of NHRIs (ENNHRI) to the UN CEDAW Committee.

Further, NHRIs play a critical role in supporting States' reporting and follow-up to UPR recommendations and, not least, securing accountability in the implementation process of both UPR recommendations and the SDGs. Consequently, NHRIs can play a key role in assisting States and other actors in integrating UPR recommendations into SDG implementation and review processes. A few NHRIs have already taken an instrumental approach to integrating UPR recommendations with the SDGs:

- In Argentina, the *Defensor del Pueblo de la Nación* has mapped overlapping issues between UPR recommendations and SDGs and initiated more than 50 studies, which are all explicitly linked to the SDGs, including SDG 5.6 on universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. The results will annually be sent to the relevant national authorities and to the United Nations system. Based on UPR recommendations on gender equality, the Defensoría has implemented concrete measures to address gender inequality, such as creating a Femicide Observatory³.
- In Denmark, the *Danish Institute for Human Rights* is working on a methodology for matching UPR recommendations with SDG targets. Worth to mention is that more than a quarter of all the UPR recommendations relate to women's rights and gender equality, and over 6,000 recommendations can be linked directly to one of the targets under SDG 5⁴.
- In New Zealand, the *New Zealand Human Rights Commission* has developed an online tool that aligns the National Human Rights Plan of Action (NPA) with UPR recommendations in order to monitor the Government's implementation UPR recommendations. The Commission is planning to integrate the SDGs in its next NPA, prior to New Zealand's third UPR cycle⁵.

³ [Defensor del Pueblo de la Nación](#)

⁴ [Danish Institute for Human Rights](#)

⁵ [New Zealand Human Rights Commission](#)

By approaching alignment between the human rights framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through an instrumental approach, NHRIs can ultimately build bridges between the two frameworks and strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of them both in the process.

As independent institutions, NHRIs have a unique bridge-building role and are in the position to operationalise their expertise on the human rights system and gender equality to support the realisation of SDG 5 and the crosscutting gender aspects of the 2030 Agenda. The GANHRI Working Group on the 2030 Agenda will continue to provide support and share knowledge and experiences among NHRIs in their engagement with the UPR, the 2030 Agenda and gender equality.