

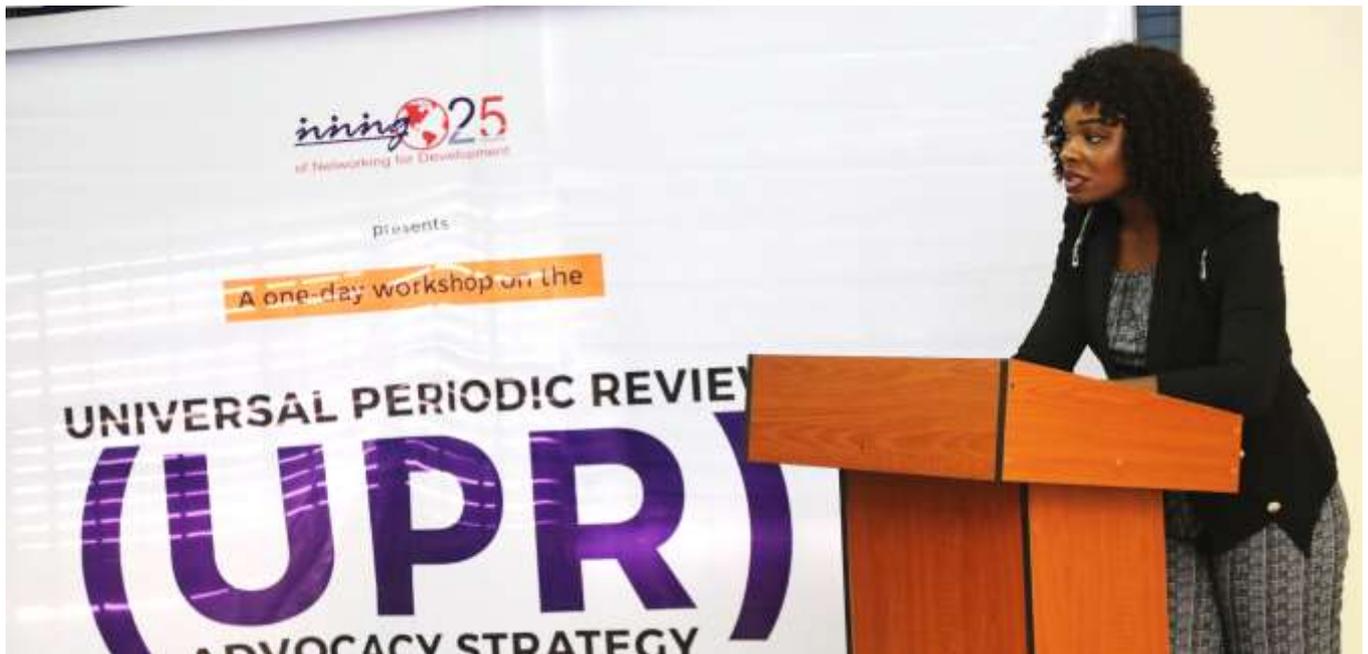
UPR

ADVOCACY STRATEGY



PROJECT REPORT

BACKGROUND



In March 2018, the Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNGO) and Civicus jointly made a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report on Nigeria to the UN Human Rights Council. In the run-up to the review in November 2018, NNGO carried out the following activities:

- Workshop to discuss and develop advocacy strategies on issues identified by the UPR.
- Awareness raising through social media on the UPR process and issues identified.
- UPR report shared with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the National Assembly.

This report focuses on key activities carried out as listed above and insights gained from the project. It provides a synthesis of both an advocacy plan developed as well as the rich conversations from the extensive dialogue process that took place amongst over 71 organisations from 8 States of the Federation.

The results of these activities have been compiled into the following main sessions:

- UPR Advocacy for Nigeria: a top-level analysis of conversations at the workshop drawing together submissions from the group work carried out by participants.
- UPR awareness raising amongst Nigerian civil society organisations.
- Government Engagement on the UPR findings.

The report concludes with key thoughts on next steps and implementation of the advocacy strategy.

UPR ADVOCACY FOR NIGERIA

On Wednesday, 6th June 2018, the Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO) supported by CIVICUS, organised a one-day workshop on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Advocacy Strategy. The workshop was held at Vantage Hub: Mosesola House, Lagos Nigeria and gathered seventy-one (71) participants. Participants comprised non-profit organisations, faith-based organisations, media, academics, networks and groups that are actively working on rights issues.

The aim of the workshop was to develop an advocacy strategy in view of the outcomes of findings from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) carried out by NNNGO and Civicus in the run-up to the review that will take place in November 2018. To this effect, an agenda was mapped out and broken down into four key sections:

1. Opening session and welcome
2. Overview of the Universal Periodic Review and research findings from the UPR report
3. Break out session
4. Report back and wrap up

The **opening session** started with a welcome address by the Executive Director of NNNGO, Mr. Oyebisi Oluseyi. He presented an overview of the workshop agenda and urged participants to make informed contributions towards the discourse.

An overview of the Universal Periodic Review and research findings from the UPR report was done by Ms Chidinma Okpara, the lead researcher for the UPR report that was earlier submitted in collaboration with CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizens Participation. The overview included insights on the previous (2nd) UPR for Nigeria. Of the 219 recommendations by 88 States made to Nigeria; 184 were accepted and 35 were noted. Accordingly, Nigeria received 10 recommendations relating to civic space, all of which were accepted to be implemented. It was also noted that the initial 10 recommendations received by the

Nigerian government in the previous UPR relating to Civic space have not been fully implemented. Insights on why it is necessary for civil society to be actively involved in the UPR process and the stages they can be involved in were then mentioned.

A break-out session was then held for advocacy strategy planning. Here, participants were split into four groups to develop a strategic plan for the UPR using the SMART Advocacy Strategy Worksheet. In this brainstorming session, participants provided answers on who to involve in implementing the strategy, their SMART objectives, identified the policy makers related to their set objectives, reviewed their context on what is already happening

outside their organisation that may impact the strategy (presenting obstacles and opportunities), gave a better knowledge of their decision makers (i.e. what they value and how best to gain their support), they considered various ways to argue their case (providing evidence to support their objectives, completing a five-point message box for their decision makers and determined the messenger for each decision maker).

They further developed a work plan and budget on how to access internal resources, specify advocacy activities and assign responsibilities; how to set benchmarks for success and concluded by reviewing assignments and next steps on how to implement the UPR.

The breakout session ushered in the **Plenary session**, where participants reported the results of their group work. Here, participants presented their varied views and opinions on what the advocacy strategy should look like and how best it should be implemented.

The workshop concluded by affirming the need for all stakeholders especially CSOs and NGOs to be actively involved in the UPR process to ensure the rights of people are not clamped down and that the government of Nigeria implements all recommendations it had accepted during the last review.

Outcome of the Workshop



This section gives a summary on the outcome of the break-out session based on the submission of participants. Participants were divided into four groups in order to allow for easy deliberations. Details of group deliberations based on the SMART worksheet can be found in the **Annex 1** of this document.

Group One

The first group comprising eighteen participants stated that the goal of the campaign for them will be that the Federal government of Nigeria implements the 10 recommendations relating to civic space by October 2023. This goal will be supported by three specific objectives which include; to create public awareness on the 10 recommendations that affect civic space, get a bill sponsored in the National Assembly to amend the official secret Act of 2004 and develop a collaboration with the Human Rights committee to foster implementation and amendment of relevant bills

This group identified Deputy Minority Whip of the National Assembly, Senator Biodun Olujimi and House Leader of the House of Representatives, Hon. Femi Gbajabamila as proposed decision makers for the actualisation of the campaign. These lawmakers have demonstrated interests in issues of human rights especially in the areas of women and children's rights and can be accessed through their affiliation with ordinary citizens.

Current trends of human rights infringements would be leveraged upon to collate data and sighted as examples to back up emotional arguments on which the campaigns would be based upon. Ethical arguments which will be founded upon religious and cultural roots of the country would also be harnessed to support the campaign.

Challenges were noted to be in form of inaccessibility to these law makers and decision makers due to bureaucracy and lack of sufficient funds to carry out the campaign. Another challenge could be the upcoming 2019 elections which sets the primary elections of political parties at around the period of the campaign. Attention was however, called to the opportunity that the elections may present; politicians could be prevailed upon to include human rights issues in their manifesto and implement these recommendations when they get elected.

Group Two

This group of eighteen participants identified the overriding goal during their discussion as; ensuring effective implementation of section 40 under chapter 4 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended. Specific objectives identified by this group include; the need to create awareness about these human right issues across the country and the need to create space for civil society to be heard.

In achieving this goal, they identified the Senate President, Dr. Bukola Saraki and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara as key decisionmakers. Their decision was based on the position that these individuals hold as heads of the legislative arms of the country and their interest in issues relating to human rights which they displayed in the recent times.



The media especially social media can be employed as a sensitizing tool. Religious associations such as CAN and FOMWAN can also be used to create awareness about human rights issues so that citizens can make informed requests when interacting with law makers and politicians.

Group Three

This group also had eighteen participants who identified their goal as the need to achieve human rights protection in Nigeria. This goal will be achieved through specific objectives which include; ensure the implementation of the recommendations made by NNGO and CIVICUS by June 2020, sensitization of stakeholders, advocacy visits to decision makers and reviewing the implementation of the recommendations on civic space.



They identified Senior Advocate of Nigeria and Human Rights Activist, Femi Falana, Nobel Laurette, Wole Soyinka, Ayuba Walter, Oby Ezenkwensili, Joe Odumakin, Pat Utomi, Monday Ubani and Biola AKinyode as actors who can facilitate the actualisation of these objectives. NGOs such as Partnership for Justice, Committee for Defence of Human Rights, Women Arise and JDPC were identified as proposed organisational champions for the protection of civic space.

This group also identified political instability, foreign influence, lack of trust and funding as challenges to the actualisation of the goal. A breakdown of activities which would allow for the actualisation of the goal as identified by the group include: monthly campaigns, media engagements, thunder claps.



Group Three

This group which comprised the remaining seventeen participants identified their goal as Promoting and protection of fundamental human rights in compliance with the international human right obligation to maintain a safe and enabling environment for civil society.

Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Femi Falana and Human Rights Activist, Joe Odumakin were identified as key decisionmakers, CAN, PFN and MURIC were identified as proposed faith-based organisations. In order to actualise the goal, the legislature and executive arms were identified as key because these arms are

in charge of making and enforcing laws.

This group also identified the challenges of insufficient funds but noted the fact that Nigeria has a large youth population to be an opportunity. This will make it easy to create awareness on social media and ensure the spread of the message.



UPR Awareness raising amongst Nigerian civil society organisations

Despite impressive work done by civil society organisations on rights-based issues, not many are aware of the UPR and its processes. 30 web and social media creative products were designed based on the UPR report and circulated via different social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp. **See annex 2 for copies.** Text messages were also sent to nearly 2,500 members of the Network using bulk SMS services. On the 6th of June 2018 a thunder clap was held by participants attending the Advocacy Strategy Workshop using #NGUPR2018.

Government Engagement on the UPR Findings

Based on the UPR findings and the need to engage government on outcomes, copies of the UPR submission were sent to the following government structures (**See annex 3 for copies**):

- Chairman, Civil Societies and Development Partners Committee: Hon. Ohiozogh Peter Akpatason
- Chairman, Diaspora and Civil Societies Committee: Senator Rose Oko
- Chairman, Human Rights Committee: Hon. Edward Gyang Pwajok
- Chairman, Judiciary Human Rights & Legal Matters Committee: Senator David Umaru
- Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Hon. Minister Geoffrey Onyeama
- Attorney General of the Federation: Mr. Abubakar Malami, SAN
- National Human Right commission: Mr. Anthony Ojukwu.

Understanding the need to ensure that other State parties involved in the UPR gives adequate recommendations to Nigeria, a letter along with copies of the UPR report was also sent to the following diplomatic missions in Nigeria:

1. Embassy of Denmark in Nigeria: Ambassador Torben Gettermann
2. Embassy of Belgium: Ambassador Stéphane De Loecker
3. Embassy of Finland: Ambassador Pirjo Suomela-Chowdhury
4. Embassy of France: Ambassador Denys Gauer
5. Embassy of Hungary: Ambassador Gabor Ternak
6. Embassy of Netherlands: Ambassador Robert J. Petri
7. Embassy of Romania: Ambassador Gheorghe Predescu
8. German Embassy: Ambassador Bernhard Schlagheck
9. Greek Embassy: Ambassador Alekos Ikonomopoulos
10. United States Embassy in Nigeria: Ambassador W. Stuart Symington
11. Polish Embassy in Nigeria: Ambassador Andrez Dycha
12. British High Commission to Nigeria: Ambassador Paul Arkwright

NEXT STEPS

A robust advocacy strategy will be developed from the submissions made by participants at the workshop along with an implementation plan and clear budget. Further to this, audience will be sought with relevant agencies of government on how best critical stakeholders can come together to ensure that civic space continues to be protected in Nigeria.

In the run-up to the November 2018 review, our work as a Network is cut out over the next few months in ensuring that the Nigerian government implements its commitment to the implementation of the recommendations it had accepted during the 2nd UPR.

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