GANHRI
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

THE ROLE AND EXPERIENCES OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the critical role of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in the establishment and effective operation of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up (NMIRFs). It provides an in-depth analysis of NHRIs' experiences, challenges, and contributions in ensuring that international human rights obligations are effectively translated into national policies and actions on the ground.

NHRIs, operating in accordance with the Paris Principles, serve as independent State institutions tasked with promoting and protecting human rights. They act as bridges between national governments and international human rights mechanisms, advising on legal frameworks, monitoring human rights implementation, and fostering inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue. On the other hand, NMIRFs are government-established structures responsible for coordinating and tracking the implementation of recommendations from international and regional human rights bodies. While these entities have distinct mandates, their collaboration is key to enhancing accountability and promoting sustainable, rights-based national practices.

Drawing on desk research, global consultations, and case studies from diverse regions, this paper highlights best practices and innovative approaches undertaken by NHRIs to support the work of national mechanisms. It underscores the importance of ensuring the independence of national human rights institutions while fostering their constructive engagement with national mechanisms to strengthen national human rights protection.

The findings of this report informed the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) global policy on the establishment of national mechanisms. This policy aims to support the individual engagement of NHRIs in their national contexts as well collective engagement through GANHRI by providing actionable recommendations to assist States in the adoption of sustainable, transparent, and participatory approaches to ensure the effective implementation of international human rights norms and commitments.

INTRODUCTION

States have the duty to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights. By ratifying treaties and engaging with various international and regional human rights bodies mechanisms, they commit to fulfilling these obligations. International and mechanisms bodies, such as the Special Procedures, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Treaty bodies provide crucial guidance to States through recommendations aimed at improving compliance with human rights obligations and standards. These recommendations, which emerge from periodic reviews and thematic reports, are instrumental in shaping legal reforms, policies, and institutional practices to promote and protect human rights at the national level. The translation of international recommendations into national action is thus essential for the effective promotion and protection of human rights at country level.

In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action[1] adopted in 1993, States underlined the need for effective implementation and reporting processes at national level. They highlighted the crucial role that national human rights institutions (NHRIs) can play in support of the promotion and protection of human rights, including by bridging the gap between international obligations and national realities. NHRIs are independent bodies established by States with a broad constitutional or legislative mandate to protect and promote human rights in line with the Paris Principles. They operate independently from but in close coordination with the government and civil society. As expert bodies at national level, NHRIs work towards the domestic application of international human rights norms and standards, with full understanding of the local context. They have a role in encouraging States to ratify international human rights treaties; in advising on the domestication of treaties and international recommendations; and in monitoring their implementation and reporting back to UN bodies and mechanisms on progress made and remaining challenges. NHRIs also play an important role in promoting access of national-level stakeholders including individual rights-holders to international human rights protection systems.

In recent years, with a view to better meet their implementation obligations, States have increasingly established consolidated structures designated to coordinate the reporting and follow-up of international and regional norms and recommendations, in the form of a national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up (NMIRF). NMIRFs are government structures mandated to coordinate and prepare reports for, as well as engage with, international and regional human rights mechanisms. They are also tasked with coordinating and tracking national follow-up and implementation in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. It is important to note that unlike NHRIs, NMIRF are not accredited. Many NMIRFs have developed organically and there are significant variations in how NMIRFs are constituted.

[1] Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted on 25 June 1993.

Since 2015, the Human Rights Council (HRC) has consistently encouraged States to establish and strengthen NMIRFs, thus illustrating their recognition as important national actors to support the promotion and protection of human rights.[2] The topic is a key priority on the international human rights agenda, as more States are establishing or strengthening their respective NMIRFs, especially in the context of the decision of the Chairs of the treaty bodies to establish a predictable schedule for reviewing states' reports[3] as well as the beginning of the fourth cycle of the UPR which focuses on implementation. Furthermore, under the leadership of Morocco, Paraguay, and Portugal, an International Network of NMIRFs was officially launched in May 2024, as an outcome of the International Seminar held in Marrakech in 2022 and follow-up meeting in Asuncion in 2024.

In its recent resolution 57/32 on enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights,[4] the HRC recognized the distinct, complementary and mutually reinforcing roles of NHRIs and NMIRFs. In line with their mandates, NHRIs are increasingly engaging with these mechanisms in a variety of ways. From their set-up to their effective operations, NHRIs make essential contributions to the work of the NMIRF. In fact, NHRIs across regions have been among the first recommending their States to establish effective NMIRFs and have supported their setting-up. In particular, NHRIs have been keen to highlight the need to ensure that NMIRFs reflect guidance provided by the OHCHR.

This report examines the role and experiences of NHRIs in the establishment and effective operation of NMIRFs. It also serves as a basis for the elaboration of GANHRI's recommendations aimed at informing global discussions on effective domestic implementation of international and regional norms and commitments, including in relation to the set-up and operations of NMIRFs.

The paper is structured into four distinct sections that provide a comprehensive view of the role of NHRIs. The first section outlines the research methodology used to gather information and data on the NHRI-NMIRF interactions globally. The following section delves into the respective mandates, historical context, and frameworks of NHRIs and NMIRFs. The paper then examines the role and experiences of NHRIs, showcasing concrete examples, highlighting good practices and challenges identified. Finally, the paper concludes with an analysis of key findings, reflecting on the implications for effective domestic implementation of international and regional human rights obligations, including the establishment and operation of NMIRFs.

[2] The Human Rights Council, under the leadership of the Geneva Group of Friends on NMIRFs, has been heavily involved in the promotion of these mechanisms, including through the adoption of four resolutions on the topic since 2015. See, National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up | OHCHR.
[3] Conclusions of the Chairs of the treaty bodies at the 34th meeting of the Chairs of the treaty bodies, 17 June 2022.
[4] Enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights, A/HRC/RES/57/32, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 11 October 2024.

METHODOLOGY

The development of this position paper was informed by a comprehensive research methodology that combined the following components:

- **A desk research and literature review:** a thorough desk research and literature review on NMIRFs and their interactions with NHRIs was conducted. This involved examining a wide range of sources, including academic articles, reports from international human rights bodies, NHRIs, civil society organizations and other relevant publications. The literature review offered a broad understanding of the theoretical frameworks, operational practices, and challenges associated with NMIRFs, as well as the critical role of NHRIs in these processes.

- **A global consultation with GANHRI members:** to incorporate the practical perspectives and experiences of NHRIs across regions, a global consultation was carried out through a survey distributed to GANHRI members between July and August 2024. This survey aimed to capture the experiences, challenges, best practices and lessons learnt of NHRIs in engaging with NMIRFs. Fifty-eight (58) NHRIs responded to the survey, offering a comprehensive and evidence-based overview on the ways NHRIs engage with NMIRFs.

- **Individual consultations with selected NHRIs:** in order to gain deeper insights into specific experiences, individual consultations were conducted with two NHRIs that indicated a willingness to contribute further. These consultations enabled in-depth discussions about the different contexts in which these NHRIs operate, the strategies they have employed to support NMIRFs as well as their specific challenges and concerns.

- **Individual consultations with GANHRI partners:** individual consultations were also conducted with key partners from the United Nations, civil society and academia. These consultations focused on exploring how civil society organizations and academic experts view the emergence of NMIRFs, the challenges they observed, the role of NHRIs and civil society in the work of NMIRFs, as well as their recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of NMIRFs. The perspectives from these partners provided valuable external viewpoints.

Through the integration of these diverse sources of data and perspectives, this position paper aims to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of the role and experiences of NHRIs in the establishment and effective operation of NMIRFs. The methodology ensured that the findings and recommendations are grounded in both existing knowledge and the lived experiences of NHRIs and their partners worldwide.

BACKGROUND

The role of NHRIs in the domestic implementation of international norms

NHRIs are independent bodies established by States with a broad constitutional or legislative mandate to protect and promote human rights. The Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/134,[5] set out the framework that guides the establishment and operations of NHRIs. The Paris Principles provide the international community, including Member States, the UN and NHRIs themselves, with the minimum requirements for the establishment and functioning of NHRIs. These requirements, and the protection associated with it, help ensure that NHRIs can effectively contribute to advancing human rights.

The core functions of NHRIs fall under their two main responsibilities, i.e. human rights promotion and human rights protection. As part of their mandate, NHRIs advise the government on human rights issues, engage in public education and awareness-raising about human rights monitor and report on the human rights situation within their country and investigate allegations of human rights abuses. They advocate for law and policy reforms to align national standards with international human rights obligations and collaborate with international and regional human rights bodies. Additionally, NHRIs support vulnerable groups by providing a platform for grievances, facilitating access to justice, and, in some cases, handling individual complaints.

NHRIs are distinct from non-governmental and other civil society organizations (CSOs), as they are mandated by the State and protected through constitutional or legislative norms. At the same time, the Paris Principles call on NHRIs to work cooperatively and engage with a broad range of groups across the community, including CSOs and State institutions.

At the international level, NHRIs serve as a bridge between the national and international human rights protection systems. Their expert contributions inform the discussions and decisions of UN fora, while their work in-country helps to translate UN outcomes into tangible change on the ground. Independent and effective NHRIs are recognized as trusted partners of the international human rights system and critical actors to support the effective implementation of human right obligations at national level. In their respective resolutions of 2022[6] and 2023[7] on NHRIs, the HRC and the General Assembly both underscored the importance of effective, independent, and pluralistic NHRIs, recognizing their role in collaborating with governments to ensure full respect for human rights at the national level.

[5] National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, A/RES/48/134, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 20 December 1993.
[6] NHRIs, A/HRC/RES/51/31, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 7 October 2022.
[7] NHRIs, A/RES/78/204, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2023.

Building on their mandates and functions under the Paris Principles, NHRIs may:

- Advise the State on ratification and domestication of international instruments, and on implementation of UN obligations and recommendations, including in the development of concrete, targeted and time-bound strategies;
- Investigate human rights situations, which includes receiving complaints;
- Monitoring implementation of recommendation and the impact on human rights on the ground;
- Regularly report on progress made and on remaining challenges at national and international level, including through reporting to Parliament and UN mechanisms;
- Cooperate and engage with right-holders, communities and civil society, and with the UN system in the area of the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Promote access of national-level stakeholders, including individual rights-holders, to international human rights.

Furthermore, given the links between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and human rights standards, NHRIs also play an important role in the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

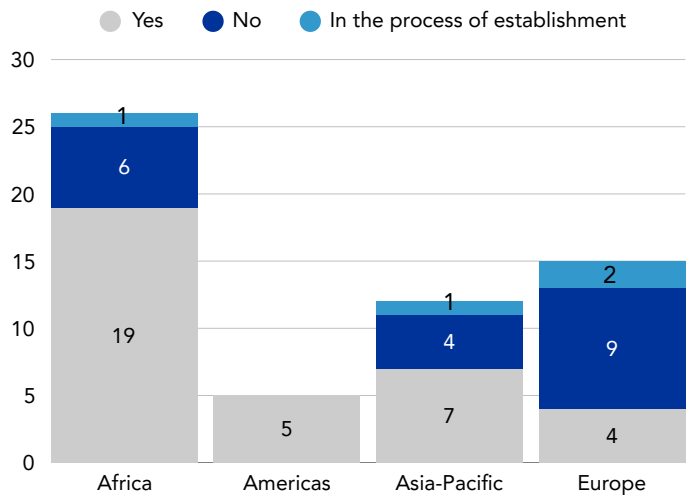
The role of NMIRFs in the domestic implementation of international norms

A national mechanism for reporting and follow-up is defined by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as "a national public mechanism or structure that is mandated to coordinate and prepare reports to and engage with international and regional human rights mechanisms, and to coordinate and track national follow-up and implementation of the treaty obligations and the recommendations emanating from these mechanisms."[8] NMIRFs vary widely in structure across countries, but generally fall into four main types:[9] ad-hoc mechanisms, created by a single ministry for specific reports and dissolved after; ministerial mechanisms, which operate within one ministry with ongoing coordination and reporting; interministerial mechanisms, involving multiple ministries with a joint structure that persists beyond reporting; and institutionally separate mechanisms, which have their own budget, staff, and internal structure for coordination and reporting.

The growing interest of States in the establishment of NMIRFs can be illustrated by the results of the survey: out of the fifty-eight (58) NHRIs respondents, thirty-nine (39) indicated the existence or the ongoing establishment of a NMIRF in their in operating context.

[8] OHCHR Publication, National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A Practical Guide to Effective State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms.
[9] OHCHR Publication, National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A Study of State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms, HR/PUB/16/1/Add.1, 2016.

Figure 1: The existence of a NMIRF in the NHRI operating context: breakdown by region



The core responsibilities of a NMIRF includes facilitating inter-ministerial coordination and engagement with national stakeholders, including NHRIs and civil society; preparing of state reports to international and regional human rights bodies; coordinating and overseeing the implementation and the follow-up of recommendations from these bodies. The NMIRF acts as a multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder platform to support the State's implementation of human rights obligations and recommendations.

NMIRFs are not designed to implement the State's obligations themselves but should be understood as coordination hubs that enable relevant entities to act effectively. NMIRFs are increasingly engaged in planning and tracking activities, including by leading the development of national human rights implementation and action plans. They also play a crucial role in establishing linkages between human rights obligations and the SDGs, while supporting the mainstreaming of human rights across national policies and practices. To date, there is no universal legal and institutional framework on NMIRFs. However, OHCHR has identified four key elements to guide States on the establishment of an effective national mechanism:[10]

- Engagement capacity, which encompasses reporting to and liaising with international human rights bodies.
- Coordination capacity, i.e. collecting and organizing information across state entities.
- Consultation, i.e. facilitating dialogue with NHRIs and civil society.
- Information management, which encompasses tracking recommendations, assigning responsibilities, and monitoring progress.

[10] OHCHR Publication, National mechanisms for reporting and follow-up: A study of State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms.

More recently, the Marrakech Guidance Framework,[11] developed following the Tenth Glion Retreat held in October 2024, provides good practices and lessons learned from all regions for the establishment and development of effective NMIRFs.

The figure below highlights the core functions of NMIRFs identified by NHRIs respondents to the survey.

Figure 2: The functions of the NMIRF in the NHRI operating context

In **Morocco**, the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights *(Délégation interministérielle aux droits de l'homme/DIDH*) was created in April 2011 by government decree, following the recommendations of the Advisory Council on Human Rights (the NHRI at the time) and civil society organizations.[12] The DIDH qualifies as an institutionally separate mechanism, as it possesses its own staff and budget separate from other individual ministries. It is divided into three Directorates led by the Interministerial Delegate for Human Rights: 1) Dialogue and Partnership with National Organizations and Associations, which oversees cooperation with Morocco's NHRI and civil society organizations, as well as with regional human rights mechanisms; 2) Direct Coordination and Promotion of Human Rights, which coordinates implementation and reporting actions with and across government departments 3) Legal Studies and International Cooperation, which is directly responsible for engagement with the UN human rights system, including following-up on the implementation of recommendations and the preparation of national reports.[13]

[11] Marrakech Guidance Framework, 17 October 2024.
[12] The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Report on the International Seminar on national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up in the field of human rights, Marrakech 7-8 December 2022, April 2023, p. 40.
[13] See, Universal Rights Group, The emergence and evolution of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up: a first global survey of national human rights implementation and reporting system, April 2024.

In **the Philippines**, the Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC) was established in 2002 (replacing the Philippine Human Rights Committee created in 1988) by a presidential administrative order. The PHRC is composed of officials from key ministries[14] and chaired by the Executive Secretary. In addition to the traditional functions of a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, the PHRC is also tasked with formulating the National Human Rights Action Plan; assisting victims of human rights violations and their families, especially victims of enforced or involuntary disappearances in enforcing their rights under relevant national laws; assessing and monitoring all aspects of the human rights situation in the country and collating all necessary data on human rights violations and abuses; setting up and implementing a media program to portray an accurate assessment of the human rights situation in the country.[15]

In **Egypt**, the Egyptian Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights (SSCHR) was established by a Prime Ministerial decree of November 2018. It is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and composed of 12 ministries and national agencies.[16] The SSCHR also possesses a broad mandate which includes preparing and tracking the implementation of the Egyptian National Human Rights Strategy; proposing laws and legislative amendments relevant to enhancing human rights in Egypt; developing policies, programs, and plans to raise awareness and build capacities in the field of human rights.

In **Samoa**, the National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow Up of Samoa was established in 2016. It is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and composed by "all key government agencies or ministries who are involved with the implementation of treaty obligations and other commitments."[17] The NMIRF coordinates all human rights and SDG related national reporting, including drafting both reports to the UN human rights mechanisms as well as the VNR through its SDG Taskforce.

[14] The Secretary of Justice, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Interior and Local Government, the Secretary of National Defense, the Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, the Secretary of Budget and Management, the Press Secretary, the Director-General of the National Economic Development Authority, the Chief Presidential Legal Counsel, the Lead Convenor of the National Anti-Poverty Commission. See, Republic of the Philippines, Official Gazette, Administrative Order no. 163.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Social Solidarity, the General Intelligence Service, the Public Prosecution, the Administrative Control Authority, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, and the State Information Service. See, SSCHR Mandate.

[17] The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Report on country experiences with HR-SDG integrated national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, p. 38.

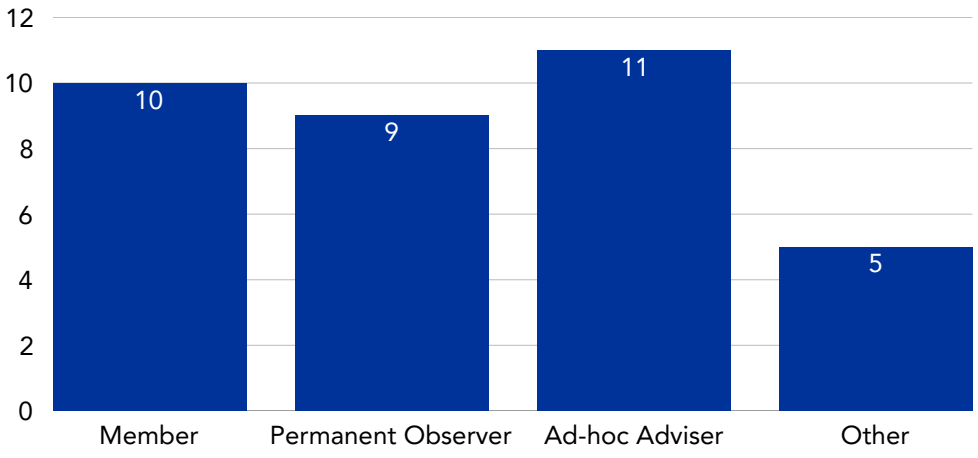
THE ROLE AND EXPERIENCES OF NHRIs IN THE SET-UP AND EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS OF NMIRFs

The status of NHRIs within NMIRFs

The global survey revealed that 97% of NHRIs with existing NMIRFs in their countries engage with them. They do so under different umbrellas and in various ways, depending on the set-up and functions of the NMIRF as well as their own understanding of their role and functions as NHRI.

While some NHRIs participate within their NMIRF as a member, most respondent indicated holding an observer status (whether permanent or upon invitation) or acting as ad-hoc advisors. NHRIs where mechanisms are formed on needs basis also indicated engaging with the mechanism as advisor or observer (e.g. National Human Rights Commission of Korea, *Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos* of Chile, *Procuraduría de los Derechos Humano* of Guatemala).

Figure 3: NHRI engagement capacity with NMIRFs



In **Denmark**, the Interministerial Human Rights Committee (IHRC) was established in December 2014 by a government decision and is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which also serves as the secretariat. All ministries are considered members of the IHRC. The Danish Institute for Human Rights is invited to participate in the meetings of the IHCR on an ad-hoc basis.

Kenya's National Committee on International and Regional Human Rights Obligations was established in March 2019. It comprises of 18 key implementing ministries and stakeholders,[18] including the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. The Committee is chaired by the Office of the Attorney-General.

In **Portugal**, the National Human Rights Committee was established in 2010 based on a voluntary commitment made by the State after its first UPR in 2009.[19] It is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprises of key ministries[20] as well as the National Institute for Statistics. The *Provedor de Justiça* (Ombudsman), the Public Prosecutor and Parliament all have a standing observer status.

The national mechanism of **Panama** (*Comisión Nacional Permanente para velar por el cumplimiento y seguimiento de los compromisos adquiridos por Panamá en el ámbito nacional e internacional en materia de derechos humanos/CNPDH*) was established in 2012 by executive decree. It is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and composed of key ministries and other national stakeholders.[21] The Ombudsperson Office of Panama (*Defensoria del Pueblo*) participates to the work of the NMIRF as a member with a right to speak and vote.

[18] These include the ministries in charge of labour and social protection; public service, gender and youth affairs; foreign affairs; health; lands and physical planning; transport, infrastructure, housing and urban development; education; and interior and coordination of national government. It also comprises of the Office of the Attorney-General and Department of Justice, the national statistical office, the Judiciary, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Independent Policing and Oversight Authority, the Kenya Prison Service, the National Police Service, the National Gender and Equality Commission and the Council of Governors. The Committee may co-opt any person(s) and or organizations (including non-state actors) it considers necessary for the proper performance of its functions.

[19] Sébastien Lorion, Rachel Murray, Interactions between National Human Rights Institutions and National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up: Research and Recommendations, p. 53.

[20] The Portuguese National Human Rights Committee includes representatives from: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for the Citizenship and Equality, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Florests and Rural Development. See, Structure - The PNHRC - Portuguese National Human Rights Committee (mne.gov.pt).

[21] Ministry of Government; Ministry of Education; Ministry of the Presidency; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Labor and Workforce Development; Ministry of Social Development; Ministry of Public Security; National Assembly; Supreme Court of Justice. The Controller General's Office; the Attorney General's Office; the Ministry of Economy and Finance; and the Council of Rectors may be invited on a permanent basis.

The contributions of NHRIs to the set-up and operation of NMIRFs

As independent national bodies with a unique human rights expertise, NHRIs can make essential contributions to the objectives of the NMIRF at all stages of its set-up and operation. They have continuously advocated for States to adopt a coordinated approach to reporting, follow-up and implementation of their human rights obligations on the ground. While maintaining their independence, in line with the Paris Principles, NHRIs provide vital support to the daily work of the NMIRF. In the process of establishment of the NMIRF, NHRIs advise States on the set-up, the working methods and operations.

In its response to OHCHR's questionnaire related to the UN General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the National Human Rights Commission of **Nigeria** recommended that "all States should be encouraged to set-up or strengthen national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up"[22] as a way to strengthen cooperation with treaty bodies.

The Human Rights Commission of **New Zealand** welcomed the establishment of the high-level national mechanism in the country, which is also the result of years of advocacy led by the Commission and other stakeholders.[23]

In its annual thematic report 2022, **the Netherlands** Institute for Human Rights recommended that the Dutch Government creates "a permanent infrastructure within the central government that ensures a uniform and structural approach to preparing treaty reporting and encourages national dialogue."[24]

The National Human Rights Commission of **Korea** is currently undertaking a study on how to systematize the domestic implementation of UN human rights bodies recommendations. Based on the findings of the study, the NHRI will formulate a proposal to State authorities on the best NMIRF model suitable for the country.

[22] National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria, Comments of the National Human Rights Commission to questionnaire in relation to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268, [Accessed on 18 July 2024].
[23] Human Rights Commission of New Zealand, Press release of 12 May 2022, "New National Mechanism welcomed by Commission," [Accessed on 18 July 2024]
[24] The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, Human Rights in the Netherlands 2022 – From reporting to dialogue: the added value of treaty reporting, p. 78.

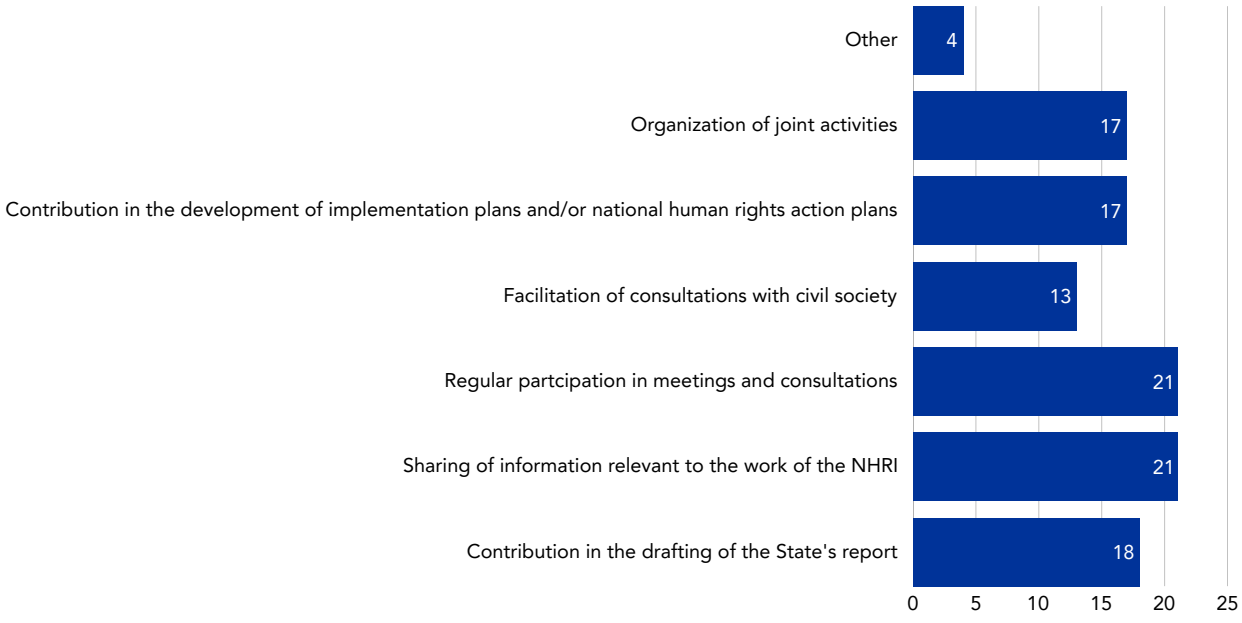
The Human Rights Commission of **Zambia** assisted the State in the establishment of the country's NMIRF and is currently working to build its capacity.

The **Swedish** Institute for Human Rights has highlighted the importance of establishing a fully-fledged national mechanism in Sweden in its Annual Report for 2024. In follow-up dialogues with the Government, the Institute has clarified these recommendations, emphasizing, among other things, the need for a higher involvement of implementing actors and improved dialogues with civil society. During the coming months, the Institute intend to seek input from various stakeholders and develop proposals on how the external dimension of a Swedish national mechanism could be designed.

The CNDH of **Morocco**, when it was still the Advisory Council on Human Rights, issued the recommendation that led to the establishment of the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights in Morocco in 2011.

NHRIs are often engaging in regular meetings and/or continuous exchanges of information with the NMIRF, depending on their membership status. These interactions allow NHRIs to be informed of the work of the NMIRF, as well as to share information on their own activities. NHRIs may provide updates on human rights developments and highlight emerging issues. These exchanges can also facilitate strategic and focused engagement of NHRIs with national authorities on key issues.

Figure 4: The contributions of NHRIs to the work of NMIRFs



The Ombudsman of **Portugal** is invited to attend all meetings of the National Human Rights Committee, both at the plenary and working group levels. During these meetings, the Ombudsman's representative may speak or be invited to express an opinion on the subject. In addition, the NHRI is copied in all correspondence of the NMIRF.

Regular high-level interactions between the Chairperson and Commissioners of the Commission on Human Rights of **the Philippines** (CHRP) and the Presidential Human Rights Committee Secretariat leadership have contributed to the mapping out of common goals and objectives. It has also helped the NHRI influence the work of the NMIRF.

In **Ecuador**, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights (MMDH) coordinates the SIDERECHOS (*Sistema de Información de Derechos Humanos*), which serves as a digital platform to follow up, monitor and assess the implementation of international and regional recommendations as well as relevant national policies. The use of this digital platform facilitates the participation the *Defensoria del Pueblo* in the work of the NMIRF as well as the sharing of information.

The **Cameroon** Human Rights Commission is systematically invited to participate in the sessions of the Interministerial Committee.

The National Human Rights Council of **Morocco** is regularly invited to take part in meetings convened by the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights, not only in the context of preparing national reports, but also for evaluating public policies, contributing to the development of international human rights instruments—including draft conventions such as the legally binding instrument on business and human rights, general comments, and individual communications submitted to UN mechanisms, whether treaty bodies or special procedures. The Council also participates in consultations related to the development of national action plans.

Regardless of their relationship with the NMIRF, NHRIs make significant contributions to the state reporting process. In most cases, NHRIs, together with civil society, are consulted in reporting phases and may even provide substantial comments to the initial draft state report and at later stages. They bring to this process authoritative and evidence-based information and provide the required level of objectivity to the assessment. Their involvement ensures that reports to UN human rights bodies and mechanisms reflect a comprehensive and accurate view of the state's human rights situation.

In **Estonia**, the Chancellor of Justice's independent perspective on the country's reports regarding the implementation of international treaties and recommendations is frequently sought. Recently, the NHRI has observed a positive trend where some of the state's reports have also incorporated the Chancellor of Justice's critiques concerning deficiencies in the implementation of these recommendations, rather than only highlighting positive or neutral aspects.

In **Ecuador**, the *Defensoria del Pueblo* provides its inputs to the drafting of the country's report to the UPR and treaty bodies.

During the national consultations for the country's UPR report, the National Human Rights Council of **Côte d'Ivoire** (*Conseil national des droits de l'homme de Côte d'Ivoire*) took part in the work of consolidating the report, through exchanges and the sharing of relevant information, which were taken into account in the final report.

The Human Rights Commission of **New Zealand** has contributed to the preparations of country's next review of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women by providing data to the newly established NMIRF.

As part of its mandate as defined by its law, the National Human Rights Council of **Morocco** regularly contributes, upon invitation by the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights, to the preparation of national reports submitted by the State to United Nations treaty bodies. By way of example, and not limitation, in March 2023, the Council was consulted during the preparation of the State's report to the Committee on Migrant Workers and participated in nationwide consultation meetings held in cities such as Tangier, Agadir, and Oujda.

The **Kenya** National Commission on Human Rights provided information for the State's response to the List of Issues in relation to Kenya's Sixth Periodic Report under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In many instances, NHRIs support the NMIRF to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society in all consultation processes. CSOs are at the forefront of addressing human rights issues, working directly with communities, providing valuable information and expertise from the national and local grassroots levels, and representing the voices of marginalized and vulnerable communities. Participation of CSOs into the work of the NMIRF helps ensure that the realities, experiences and key concerns of individuals and communities are brought forward and integrated into all decision-making processes and policies.

The **Cameroon** Human Rights Commission has been solicited several times to organize consultations with civil society organization in order to gather their opinions and contributions to the State reports to human rights mechanism, including in preparation for the country's reports to the Committee against Torture in 2021, and to the UPR in 2023. Part of the budget for the consultation with civil society is allocated by the Ministry of Justice and the Prime Minister's office on the proposal of the Interministerial Committee.

In **Denmark**, the Danish Institute for Human Rights has been instrumental in ensuring that civil society organizations are invited to NMIRF's meetings whenever the NHRI is also invited. It has also assisted the NMIRF in organizing public hearings with the general public and civil society for the preparation of state reports.[25]

NHRIs have acquired expertise in human rights reporting and implementation, which is unique. In addition to sharing their knowledge of UN processes, NHRIs provide technical expertise on human rights implementation and advise States on appropriate evaluation and planning processes, including the development, implementation, and monitoring of human rights implementation plans. They offer advice on aligning these plans with international standards and commitments, ensuring that human rights priorities are effectively addressed within national policies. They help refine and improve these action plans, leading to more targeted and impactful human rights initiatives. In doing so, NHRIs can highlight the linkages between international standards and domestic efforts. NHRIs can highlight where substantive reforms or adaptations are required to ensure compliance with human rights recommendations.

In **Kenya**, the National Committee on International and Regional Human Rights Obligations—to which the Kenyan NHRI is a member—together with the OHCHR and UPR Info convened several meetings under the second UPR cycle to plan for country dialogues on implementation of recommendations arising out of this cycle. The country dialogues brought together members of the NMRIF, civil society organizations and members of the diplomatic corps. The objectives of the dialogues were to discuss the status of implementation of the second cycle UPR recommendations and to set the stage for commencement of the preparation for the third cycle UPR. This organized collaboration successfully led to the acceptance of a record number of recommendations by the Government during the third cycle UPR.

[25] Sébastien Lorion, Rachel Murray, Interactions between National Human Rights Institutions and National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up: Research and Recommendations, p. 98.

Furthermore, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights participated in the preparation of the Government's Implementation Plan on the recommendations received under the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review processes.

In December 2023, following the Human Rights Committee's review of the **Republic of Korea**, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea held a public forum which brought together civil society and six ministries and agencies to discuss the development of a plan to implement the most recent concluding observations.

The **Cameroon** Human Rights Commission provided technical advice to the Interministerial Committee on processing individual complaints or when looking for ways to better implement recommendations for reparation of recognized human rights violations.

After the 2021 UPR review, **Denmark**'s Interministerial Human Rights Committee convened a meeting with the Danish Institute for Human Rights and civil society before finalizing the list of accepted or noted recommendations. The Committee also solicits civil society's inputs and assessments as to the implementation of the recommendations.

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) of **Tanzania**, in collaboration with the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs (MoCLA) developed National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) 2013-2017. The establishment and implementation of the NHRAP coordinated by the NHRI and the NMIRF was a benchmark in the promotion of human rights in Tanzania and was a successful step of the government towards among the recommendations forwarded during the UPR processes.

Following **Cape Verde**'s latest UPR review in 2023, the NHRI (*Comissão Nacional para os Direitos Humanos e a Cidadania*) held meetings with the Interministerial Commission (the country's NMIRF) to define a concerted strategy for implementing the recommendations. The NMIRF translated the recommendations and matrix and shared them with the NHRI for dissemination.

NHRIs often lead trainings and capacity-building initiatives of government officials, including the NMIRF. These efforts contribute to building the knowledge and human rights expertise within all government structures, and to strengthen the NMIRF's overall capacity to meet its obligations. In addition, NHRIs may collaborate with the NMIRF through joint activities aimed at raising awareness and promoting human rights among the public or in the organization of training programs for relevant stakeholders.

In October 2022, the **Malawi** Human Rights Commission, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a training on UPR. Members of the national mechanism attended the training, including the Ministry of Justice which coordinates the mechanism, as well as members of the Parliament.

Under the auspices of the UN Joint Programme on Human Rights, **the Philippine**'s Presidential Human Rights Committee sought to improve its consultation and information management capacities. The CHRP is a member of the Technical Working Group (TWG NMIRF) that assisted the NMIRF in this regard, along with OHCHR, other executive agencies, and CSO representatives. The NHRI contributed to the development and implementation of the action plan to improve the work of the TWG NMIRF. This action plan included CSO consultations prior to treaty-body reporting in the last three years and development of the National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD), which is an information management tool for tracking the implementation of recommendations from international human rights mechanisms.

In July 2022, the **Ethiopian** Human Rights Commission organized a consultative meeting on monitoring and implementing the recommendations of UN treaty bodies and the UPR, which gathered 70 participants from States and non-State entities. The meeting served to enhance understanding about the existing national framework for reporting, follow up and implementation; to build capacity on monitoring and implementing the recommendations of treaty bodies and the UPR; and to strengthen collaboration and coordination among stakeholders to improve their implementation and monitoring role.[26] More recently, the NHRI, in collaboration with OHCHR and the Ministry of Justice, organized a workshop for the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up and the Inter-Ministerial Committee, aimed to support the government of Ethiopia in fulfilling its reporting obligations, including the timely and high-quality submission of reports on the UPR and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.[27]

[26] See, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, "Consultative meeting on monitoring and implementing the recommendations of United Nations human rights treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review," 13 July 2022, [Accessed on 26 August 2024].
[27] See, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, "State reporting workshop on the Universal Periodic Review and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," 26 February 2024, [Accessed on 26 August 2024].

The National Human Rights Council of **Morocco**, in cooperation with the DIDH, the General Directorate of National Security (DGSN) and the OHCHR, organized, on 16-18 November 2022 at the DGSN headquarters in Kénitra, Morocco, a regional conference on "the Role of Security Institutions in Torture Prevention during Arrest, Interrogation and Custody" for security officials from the MENA region to explore issues of torture prevention, namely through the mechanisms provided for in the OPCAT.

The **Danish** Institute for Human Rights regularly conducts joint initiatives in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in promotion of normative developments, including the promotion of anti-torture norms and bodies, the recognition of human rights as an integral part of the realization of the SDGs, the impact of new technologies on human rights.[28]

The contributions of NHRIs in the monitoring of State action, including the NMIRF

NHRIs have a responsibility to monitor the human rights situation within their country . Human rights monitoring commonly has two dimensions: oversight of the human rights situation within the country and on-site inspection of places where the risk of human rights violation may be high. Under the Paris Principles, NHRIs are required to prepare annual "state of human rights" reports that are presented to the government or parliament. These reports may deal with the situation of all human rights across the country, or they may address the human rights situation of a specific group of people. Other NHRI reports may examine the human rights situation in one part of the country or in relation to one issue.

NHRIs undertake their monitoring work through research and investigation. This will often involve seeking information from State agencies, CSOs, victims of human rights violations, media reporting and other sources. Through their monitoring and reporting, NHRIs can draw "the attention of the Government to situations in any part of the country where human rights are violated and make proposals to it for initiatives to put an end to such situations and, where necessary, express an opinion on the positions and reactions of the Government."[29] Therefore, NHRIs play an essential role in holding States accountable for fulfilling their respective international human rights obligations, including by monitoring the work of the NMIRF. They independently monitor and track State's progress in the implementation of recommendations received in various ways, identify the gaps and make recommendations for improvement.

[28] Sébastien Lorion, Rachel Murray, Interactions between National Human Rights Institutions and National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up: Research and Recommendations, p. 84.
[29] Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (The Paris Principles), A/RES/48/134, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 1993.

Based on their human rights expertise and independent assessment, NHRIs provide recommendations to States in their annual and/or thematic reports on how to strengthen their reporting, monitoring and implementation obligations, including in relation to the work and functioning of the NMIRF. They may specifically advocate for legislative reforms and/or institutional improvements to enhance the capacity of the NMIRF to effectively operate and meet its obligations.

The annual report published by the **Egyptian** National Council for Human Rights on the status of human rights receives significant attention from the national mechanism. In response, the national mechanism has mandated that the report be thoroughly reviewed by the relevant ministries. These ministries are then required to address the inquiries raised by the National Council for Human Rights. Subsequently, a comprehensive response is prepared and presented by the Prime Minister, addressing the issues outlined in the NHRI's report.

In its 2022 annual thematic report,[30] **the Netherlands** Institute for Human Rights provided a critical analysis and evaluation of human rights treaty reporting in the Netherlands. The report highlighted challenges in the follow-up, implementation and monitoring of recommendations received by the Government of the Netherlands. The Institute made multiple recommendations to strengthen the Dutch infrastructure and national dialogue on treaty reporting. Several recommendations were recently well received by the Government of the Netherlands, including their agreement that the human rights monitoring process could be used to encourage broader civic dialogue in the future.

In its 2021-2022 report on the State of Human Rights in the country, the Human Rights Commission of **Zambia** formulated several recommendations to the Government suggesting to "amend the Ratification of International Agreements Act No. 34 of 2016 to establish a National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow Up and provide for legal mandate and function for the mechanism"[31] as well as "operationalise the National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow Up mechanism to strengthen national coordination mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up including developing an action plan to implement all recommendations from human rights mechanisms."[32]

[30] The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, Human Rights in the Netherlands 2022 – From reporting to dialogue: the added value of treaty reporting, July 2023.
[31] The Human Rights Commission of Zambia, The state of Human Rights in Zambia: 2021-2022, p. 22.
[32] Ibid.

The National Human Rights Commission of **Korea** initiated and advocated for the enactment of a human rights policy framework act which defined the role of the government in the follow-up and implementation of UN human rights recommendations. Some articles of the proposed legislation covered the creation of an NMIRF, its structure and functioning. The draft legislation was not enacted, however the NHRI is planning to make a new proposal.

Some NHRIs have developed independent and public online databases to track the implementation status of international and regional recommendations, which also integrate links to the SDGs.

The **Norwegian** National Human Institution developed an online tool in order to track the international human rights recommendations received by the country and the government ministries responsible for their follow-up.[33]

Similarly, the **United Kingdom**'s Equality and Human Rights Commission's Human Rights Tracker is designed to monitor and assess progress on the implementation of the human rights obligations and recommendations received by the United Kingdom and Welsh Governments. The tracker gathers all recommendations submitted to the United Kingdom by UN treaty bodies and the UPR, provides a guide on how these recommendations are monitored and reported, contains a detailed assessment of the Government's progress in meeting its human rights obligations.[34]

While NHRIs may contribute to the state reporting, they principally engage with the UN in their independent capacity, as required by the Paris Principles. Independent, pluralistic and effective NHRIs are recognized trusted partners of the international community, providing independent, credible and evidence-based information on the human rights situation in their operating context. They do so in various ways, including by submitting alternative reports and other written contributions prior to and following the examination of the State report, meeting publicly or privately with UN treaty body members as well as Special Procedures mandate holders, participating in sessions and interactive dialogues, and delivering oral statements.

Their participation is a crucial counterbalance to government submissions and helps to highlight areas where States may have underreported or misrepresent ted progress. In return, this information can assist the UN in their work to develop targeted and detailed recommendations, which are meaningful and relevant to the specificities of each national situation.

[33] See, Archive for International Recommendations - NIM (nhri.no), [Accessed on 29 August 2024].
[34] See, Welcome to the human rights tracker | Human Rights Tracker, [Accessed on 29 August 2024].

In their engagements with NMIRFs, NHRIs are constantly mindful of their own independence. NHRIs may find it necessary to offer critical comments of the NMIRF in its independent report.

In 2024, the **Kenya** National Commission on Human Rights submitted a UPR mid-term report,[35] in which it provided detailed information on the implementation of accepted recommendations by the Government during its third cycle. In compiling this report, the NHRI actively engaged with various relevant ministries as well as with civil society organizations. The report highlights progress in the implementation of these recommendations as well as challenges remaining.

Costa Rica's *Defensoría de los Habitantes* submitted its written contributions to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in order to support the process of elaboration of the country's list of issues prior to reporting. The NHRI emphasized several challenges in the State's implementation of the human rights obligations under the Convention and provided several recommendations to the Committee.[36]

The **German** Institute for Human Rights delivered a statement[37] in response to the adoption of the UPR outcome report of Germany at the 55th session of the Human Rights Council. The NHRI identified key priorities that must be addressed by the State and recommended the adoption of an implementation plan, in consultation with civil society and the NHRI.

The National Human Rights Council of **Côte d'Ivoire** provided a written submission to the Committee against Torture ahead of the country's examination at its 80th session. The submission highlights progress made by the Government in implementing its obligations under the Convention, as well as challenges faced. The NHRI provides several recommendations, including the adoption of a law to establish the National Preventive Mechanism before the end of 2024.[38]

Lastly, outside of the facilitating role they may have in relation to the NMIRF, NHRIs also work independently and closely with CSOs, thus adding another layer of monitoring and accountability.

[35] See, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, 3rd Cycle Universal Periodic Review Mid-Term Report January 2021- December 2023.
[36] *La Defensoría de los Habitantes de Costa Rica*, Written submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 1 December 2017.
[37] German Institute for Human Rights, Statement delivered by the German Institute for Human Rights – UPR Outcome of Germany, 25 March 2024.
[38] Conseil National des droits de l'homme, Communication écrite du Conseil National des droits de l'homme – Côte d'Ivoire, 80ème session du Comité contre la torture (8-26 juillet 2024).

Ahead of **New Zealand**'s third UPR cycle, the Human Rights Commission supported civil society engagement by facilitating submissions of reports and consultations. From February to June 2018, the Commission held public and targeted consultations with groups like Māori, Pasifika, women, sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities. It also coordinated New Zealand's first in-country UPR pre-session in Wellington in October 2018, facilitated by UPR Info, following civil society training sessions in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. During the consultations, the Commission provided information on the UPR process and submission guidelines.[39]

The contributions of other national stakeholders in the operation and monitoring of NMIRFs

The important contributions of other key national stakeholders to ensure effective domestic implementation of human rights obligations, including in relation to the work of NMIRFs, were highlighted throughout the consultations.

As previously outlined, civil society is a vital actor in the national implementation agenda, bringing forward the voices and experiences of individuals and communities at the national, local and grassroots levels. Together with NHRIs, CSOs act as watch dogs, monitoring the state action and pushing forward issues that may be considered sensitive. They are also partners in the implementation process, providing expertise and knowledge, informing and educating the general public on their rights and developments at the international level and links to the national situation. An open, safe and enabling civic space, free from any forms of reprisals, is therefore key to ensure effective implementation of international norms and standards on the ground.

NHRIs across regions have emphasized the importance of States holding meaningful consultations with CSOs at all stages of the implementation, reporting and follow-up processes, including through the NMIRF where it is established. In many instances, they play a key role in facilitating such engagement, as previously highlighted.

[39] OHCHR, Study on Emerging Good Practices from the Universal Periodic Review, 9 June 2021, p. 15.

In **Liberia**, the NMIRF includes the membership of selected civil society organizations.

In **Portugal**, civil society organizations may be involved in consultations of the NMIRF. This happens, for example, in the context of the drafting process of the state report for the UPR, in which the draft state report is shared with civil society organizations and a special meeting of the NHRC takes place, open these organisations, for discussion of the draft report before its final adoption. At least one of the three yearly plenary meetings of the NHRC is organized with civil society. More meetings are held with civil society groups at working group level, often convened in response to requests from these groups or to discuss draft national reports to treaty bodies.

In **Kenya**, the Kenyan national mechanism convenes consultation meetings with the members of the Kenya's Stakeholders Coalition on the UPR—comprising of over 200 civil society organizations—on the efforts made to implement UPR recommendations. They are also involved in the preparation of the Government's Implementation Plans for UPR recommendations. The NMIRF also convenes preparatory meetings and consultative workshops with civil society actors and requests their inputs to draft State reports to other international and regional human rights mechanisms.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the CCPR Centre supported civil society organizations in the development of an implementation plan for recommendations received from the Human Rights Committee. The implementation plan was shared with, commented and validated by the NMIRF.[40]

To effectively operate, NMIRFs must also engage with other branches of the State in particular the national parliament and representative of the judiciary. The parliament plays a key role in domestic implementation as a large number of international obligations and recommendations require to be translated into new legislation or legislative amendment. It is therefore essential that the NMIRF involves national parliamentarians in its work. On the other hand, judicial engagement is essential to address issues related to access to justice as well as enforce the views and decisions of human rights mechanisms on individual communications and ensure that the victims have access to effective remedies. NHRI respondents to the survey indicated various levels of interactions and collaboration between the NMIRF and these stakeholders.

[40] Interview with Patrick Mutzenberg, Director of the Center for Civil and Political Rights, 28 August 2024.

The **Moroccan** DIDH engages with other national stakeholders, such as Judiciary, Parliament, National statistics offices. In the preparation process of the national report submitted as part of the fourth UPR session in November 2022, the DIDH has followed up three phases of the said process: 1) the launch of the preparation process, mobilization of institutional stakeholders and collection of essential data; 2) the organization of consultations with the civil society, which were jointly organized with regional commissions of CNDH Morocco, regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the UPR mechanism; 3) examination and discussion on the draft national report at the two chambers of the Parliament (19-25 July 2022); 4) adoption of the final version of the report.

In **the Philippines**, the Presidential Human Rights Committee engages with the parliament as resource person during parliamentary consultations for proposed legislations relevant to human rights. Both the judiciary and the parliament may be invited as observers in the work of the NMIRF.

In **Panama**, the Supreme Court of Justice and the National Assembly are members of the national mechanism with the right to speak and vote.

The **Egypt** National Council for Human Rights has noticed that the judiciary has engaged effectively in discussions with the country's national mechanism regarding amendments to laws and legislation. Similarly, the Parliament has actively participated in debates concerning proposed legal amendments and the recommendations received from UN bodies.

Challenges and perspectives from NHRIs and other stakeholders

NMIRFs are increasingly recognized as useful tools in the national human rights system to ensure a coordinated, sustainable and inclusive approach to reporting, follow-up and implementation of the State's human rights obligations. For several stakeholders, including civil society organizations, NMIRFs serve as an entry point to engage with the government about its international commitments. Nonetheless, several challenges and limitations to the effective functioning of NMIRFs can be identified.

One of the primary issues identified by several NHRIs is the reliance on ad-hoc mechanisms, which often lack the continuity and stability necessary for sustained human rights monitoring and reporting. NHRIs and civil society organizations that engage with ad-hoc mechanisms emphasized the difficulties faced by their respective States to follow-up, implement and monitor progress of the recommendations received at the national level, once the reporting process is over. These observations mirror the results of the regional consultations held by OHCHR in 2021.

The report states that "ad-hoc structures (…) were found to be less effective in creating sustainable national capacity to enhance national human rights expertise, meet human rights reporting obligations and implement recommendations from the human rights mechanisms."[41]

The lack of technical expertise and the need for capacity-building were also identified as an important challenge to the effective operation of the NMIRF. In several instances, NHRIs mentioned that the members of the NMIRF may not always possess sufficient human rights knowledge and expertise to properly address the issues at hand. In other cases, the focal points may not have the political influence and leadership required for effective decision making and taking action, thus limiting the effectiveness and sustainability of the NMIRF. In addition, NMIRFs may face high staff turnover which can limit institutional memory and building of expertise.

While NHRIs may play a vital role to support and build capacity of the NMIRF, their influence can be limited. In some of the cases where NHRIs act as an ad-hoc advisor or observer and are only involved in the work of the NMIRF upon invitation, they have expressed feeling effectively restricted in their ability to engage and shape its operations and priorities. The lack of continuous engagement with and involvement of the NHRI can significantly weaken the overall impact of the NMIRF. Nonetheless, the need to maintain a clear balance between their support to the NMIRFs and their status as independent institutions was stressed throughout the consultations. While NHRIs can support the work of the NMIRF, their independence must be respected and preserved. The ability for NHRIs, along with human rights defenders and civil society, to operate independently and play their role as watchdogs of the State, free from any form of reprisals, was emphasized by all NHRIs and partners.

With regards to engagement with other national stakeholders, NHRIs and partners indicated that civil society organizations are not always consulted in the work of the NMIRF. They underlined the need for clear and systematic processes of engagement with all stakeholders to ensure a holistic approach to the implementation of human rights obligations. The important role of local governments was also highlighted as they are uniquely positioned to understand and address the specific human rights challenges of their communities. In addition to being the primary recipients of a large number of recommendations, local governments can also make significant contributions to the reporting process.

In terms of information management, NHRIs and partners welcomed the creation and use of digital tracking tools and databases in the day-to-day work of several NMIRFs, to support the monitoring, implementation and reporting of State's progress. However, a number of these tools are not made accessible to all stakeholders, including the wider general public, which limits accountability, transparency and effective access to information.

[41] Regional consultations on experiences and good practices relating to the establishment and development of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up: A Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, p. 3.

Several NHRIs expressed concerns about the growing development of NMIRFs, as this may result in States putting more focus on compliance with the processes of the international system rather than on the policies and the specific substance and nature of each individual international human rights treaties. Human rights implementation requires substantive reforms to laws and policies. It is important that international examination processes remain focused on substantive reforms rather than compliance with procedural reporting requirements. To ensure this it is vital that NMIRFs connect international examination processes with domestic policy discussions. NHRIs can and have played a role in connecting these processes.

NHRIs also highlighted the need to consider the impact of establishing NMIRFs on existing structures.

Comparisons were drawn between the roles and mandates of the NMIRF and the designated Disability Focal Point under Article 33 (1) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to highlight difference of approaches, even if there may be overlaps in their functions – NMIRFs have focus on streamlining international reporting and follow-up, while Disability Focal Points directly support the effective domestication of the CRPD. It is crucial that States take into consideration their specific human rights obligations, including under the CRPD, when establishing the NMIRF.

CONCLUSION

The engagement of NHRIs in the establishment and functioning of NMIRFs is both a critical and complex process. As independent actors mandated to promote and protect human rights, NHRIs play an essential role in ensuring that international human rights obligations are translated into effective national policies and practices. Their contributions to the work of NMIRFs – whether through advocacy for their creation, technical support for their operations, independent monitoring of state actions, or facilitation of multi-stakeholder engagement – highlight their value in strengthening national human rights systems.

While NMIRFs have become increasingly recognized as valuable structures for coordinating human rights implementation and reporting, their effectiveness is contingent on several factors. The findings of this research indicate that sustainable, well-resourced, and transparent mechanisms that engage NHRIs and civil society in meaningful ways tend to be the most effective. However, challenges persist, including the ad-hoc nature of some mechanisms, limited technical expertise, inconsistent engagement with NHRIs and civil society, and concerns about the potential focus on procedural compliance over substantive human rights improvements.

To maximize the impact of NMIRFs, States must adopt a holistic approach that prioritizes implementation alongside reporting and ensures inclusive, participatory, and rights-based processes. A clear distinction between the roles and mandates of NMIRFs and NHRIs is crucial to maintain the independence of NHRIs while fostering constructive collaboration. Moreover, the importance of transparency and accountability in NMIRF operations cannot be overstated, as these elements contribute to building trust and reinforcing a genuine commitment to human rights.

As States continue to establish and refine their NMIRFs, the lessons learned from the experiences of NHRIs across different regions provide valuable guidance on best practices. Strengthening institutional frameworks, ensuring meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, and fostering a culture of accountability will be essential steps in improving the domestic implementation of international human rights obligations.

GANHRI
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland | www.ganhri.org | info@ganhri.org

© GANHRI, July 2025

Disclaimer: This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of GANHRI and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

NHRI.EU
Strong NHRIs. Strong Communities

Co-funded by
the European Union