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UN completes first review of human rights records of all Member States



High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay

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The Human Rights Council completed its first review of the records of every Member State on Thursday, with Haiti being the last country to be considered in the process, which examined records of each State for the past four years.

The process, called the universal periodic review ([UPR](#)), gives countries the opportunity to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights conditions in their countries and fulfil their obligations, and it is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their situations are assessed.

“The UPR has proved to be an innovative, transparent, collaborative instrument for change and has made it possible – for the first time ever – for all UN Member States to be reviewed on an equal basis,” [said](#) Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The true measure of the effectiveness of the UPR will be in the amount of positive change that it generates on the ground – how it improves laws, policies and practices and the enjoyment of human rights by people.

“It has been truly universal, with government officials representing every single one of the 193 Member States, and very active participation by local, regional and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well. Some 80 per cent of government delegations were led by ministers who travelled to Geneva for the review, which clearly demonstrates the importance States attached to the UPR process,” she said.

Ms. Pillay also said that the UPR has proven to be a useful tool for countries both at national and international levels as it has provided a framework where national entities and civil society can establish a dialogue and has stimulated cooperation between countries as well as the exchange of best practices.

“I am encouraged that the UPR has already begun serving as a catalyst for change,” she said. However, she noted that thousands of recommendations had been made, and said in the future it is necessary to make pointed and constructive recommendations for the process to have an impact.

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