



PRESS RELEASE

Apia, Thursday 24 February 2022 – CSOs begin groundwork in preparation for UPR 2026

The Office of the Ombudsman National Human Rights Institution of Samoa in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights Pacific Office in Suva, Fiji (OHCHR Pacific) jointly conducted a follow-up workshop with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on the outcome of Samoa's third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) held on 2 November 2021.

A total of 11 CSOs took part in the workshop all of which participated in the UPR process in 2021 through providing alternative reports. The alternative reports which contained various recommendations from CSOs greatly influenced recommendations issued by UN member states and consolidated in a [report](#) by the UPR Working Group (WG). A total of 8 [submissions](#) from more than 15 local CSOs.

In March 2022, the WG's report will be officially adopted by the Human Rights Council. During the formal adoption of the report an opportunity will be given to the State to respond to the recommendations, as well as to NHRI Samoa and CSOs to make interventions.

The WG's report contains a total of 145 human rights-related recommendations from UN member states for Samoa to look into implementing. Out of the 145 recommendations, 112 have been supported by Samoa and 33 noted.

Following the adoption of the report, the state will commence its implementation work. CSOs as well as NHRI Samoa have a crucial role to play in monitoring and following-up on the progress of the State's implementation efforts. Feedback from this will help inform Samoa's next UPR scheduled for 2026.

The monitoring and follow-up work by CSOs will involve CSOs/NGOs taking stock of the recommendations consistent with their recommendations and from this look at ways to continue to lobby the implementation of these recommendations by the State in the next 5 years.

The Ombudsman, Luamanuvao Katalaina Sapolu reiterated in her opening remarks that the effective implementation of the recommendations from UN member states would be difficult and, in many instances, impossible without the involvement of civil societies organizations. Thus, the groundwork set today to 2026 will greatly assist CSOs to monitor and follow up in preparation for 2026 UPR and other upcoming treaty body reporting.

“As Samoa implements the recommendations from UN member states between now and the next UPR in 2026, NHRI Samoa will continue to play its part in the information and experience sharing, consultation, and regular dialogue to ensure that CSOs are given the support to engage with international human rights mechanisms and maximize opportunities to advance shared goals and interests that are advocating, promoting and monitoring human rights” Lumanuvao Katalaina Sapolu, Ombudsman.

Ms. Momoko Nomura of the OHCHR Pacific Regional Office congratulated the CSOs in their participation in the UPR process last year and encouraged them to conduct regular monitoring and follow-up to keep track of the implementation of UPR recommendations, hold the Government to account for the human rights commitments made, encourage implementation, as well as make CSO work more effective.

At the end of the workshop participants were able to identify UPR recommendations that were consistent with the recommendations they made in their alternative reports and with their mandates. CSOs were also able to put together a roadmap that will help guide their monitoring and follow-up work from now to 2026. Finally, CSO were also informed of reporting processes for treaty bodies and how they can contribute especially to the upcoming reviews for Samoa by treaty bodies including CRC, CEDAW, CRPD and others scheduled for this year.

The Office would like to acknowledge the support and technical assistance of OHCHR Pacific and all CSOs who participated in today’s workshop.



ENDS.