System for Monitoring Recommendations
SIMORE
The Paraguay Experience

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United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice is the link between the Executive Branch and the Judiciary. It proposes and carries out policies for access to justice, Criminal and Prison Policy, and those regarding persons deprived of liberty, as well as policy regarding civil status; promotes the effective enforcement of human rights; coordinates and carries out programmes in the defence of the public interest and promotes legal certainty and the Rule of Law. It is responsible for coordinating the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch (HRNEB), to which, the Judiciary (JB), Legislative Branch (LB), Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Public Defence and the Office of the Ombudsman are invited to participate.

Minister Sheila Abed, Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The mission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to plan, coordinate and carry out foreign policy that promotes and defends the interests of the State and its citizens, and International law. Its objectives are to propose foreign policy to the President of the Republic, and carry it out through foreign relations; represent the country, in other countries, international agencies and economic integration bodies, as well as participate in policy advisory and coordination forums and mechanisms; negotiate and sign treaties, conventions, agreements and all international instruments, collaborating, when appropriate, with national entities, and ensure their compliance; hold negotiations on international economic matters, foreign trade, economic integration, international cooperation and binational and multinational ventures, coordinating, when appropriate, with other State institutions; ensure respect and protection for the country and its citizens' interests abroad; welcome diplomats, authorize consular offices in the Republic and establish representation for international organizations and other subjects of International Law, among others.

Ambassador Eladio Loizaga, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

United Nations Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay

The United Nations Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay, of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), supports the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Paraguay and advises and works with officials and civil society on human rights issues. Specifically, she works with the United Nation Country Team to strengthen the incorporation of human rights in their action plans. She promotes international human rights instruments, standards and mechanisms, and works to strengthen knowledge and understanding of their use by public servants, and civil society. She supports national authorities in complying with the State's international commitments. To this end, the advisor assists in preparing reports for human rights committees and following up on recommendations made to Paraguay, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and the design and implementation of public policies. It is worth mentioning that the country has received technical cooperation from the Human Rights Advisor to promote the National Action Plan in Human Rights, the National Plan on Human Rights Education, recommendations about standards and public policies designed by indigenous peoples in Paraguay, which has contributed to improvements for the protection of human rights of all persons, including those living in a vulnerable situation and/or those who have historically been discriminated against. In addition, the office has worked on strengthening the State's capacities to prevent torture, and designing human rights indicators for education, health and fair trials, among others. All these initiatives are garnered from international human rights recommendations made to Paraguay.

Liliana Valiña
UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay

UPR Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was created through the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 by resolution 60/251. The UPR is a cooperative process which involves a review of the human rights records of all United Nations Member States. It is a State-driven process, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries, to fulfil their human rights obligations and commitments and assess positive developments and challenges faced by the State. It provides also opportunities for the enhancement of the State's capacity and of technical assistance, the sharing of best practice among States and other Stakeholders, as well as for cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights. It further encourages full cooperation and engagement with the Council, other human rights bodies and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In 2007, the Human Rights Council established a new financial mechanism called the **Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance** (resolution 6/17), with a view to provide, in conjunction with multilateral funding mechanisms, a source of financial and technical assistance to help countries implement recommendations emanating from the universal periodic review, in consultation with, and with the consent of, the country concerned.
In accordance with its terms of reference funding is provided for:

- The dissemination of information on the UPR outcomes;
- The development of national capacity and expertise for the implementation of the UPR outcomes;
- The regular follow up, with national bodies and institutions concerned, of action to implement the UPR recommendations.
- The co-funding of programs and projects aimed at implementing the UPR outcomes;
- The exchange of information and sharing of best practices, including through the documentation of good practices, and the organization of regional and sub-regional meetings, seminars, consultations and other interactions;
- The coordination of United Nations, multilateral and bilateral action in support of the UPR outcomes, including for the integration of the UPR outcomes into United Nations common country programming documents, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

OHCHR was very pleased to be able to support the elaboration of the system of monitoring implementation of recommendations –SIMORE - through this Fund, and we look forward to using this resulting documentation in supporting other States wishing to establish similar processes.

Shahrzad Tadjbakhsh
UPR Branch, OHCHR
Geneva (Switzerland)
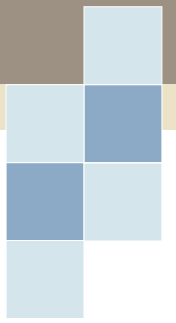
Executive Summary

Following a request made by the Government of Paraguay in 2012, the OHCHR Human Rights Advisor (HRA) developed a project, funded by the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review (Fund for UPR Implementation), carried out during May 2013 to December 2014, named "Project on the Follow-up and Monitoring of International Human Rights Recommendations".

The aim of the project was to establish an inter-institutional monitoring mechanism to systematize, organize, prioritize and follow up on relevant recommendations and State obligations, in order to strengthen institutional structures follow-up and reporting on State capacities. The objectives included the design of a system that allows the State to follow up on international recommendations and inform on progress made in actions carried out by State institutions to comply with international obligations and guarantee the protection of human rights in the country.
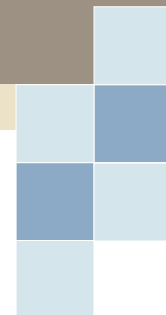
The project was coordinated by the National Officer and supervised by the HRA, with support from consultants, to better achieve the expected results. An important precursor, through a previous OHCHR initiative, was the design of a search portal for international recommendations, in order to facilitate public access to human rights recommendations made to Paraguay by UN mechanisms and the Inter American Court on Human Rights.

OHCHR technical cooperation was provided through the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch in a process led by two main national counterparts: the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One of the most important achievements of this project is a user-friendly system named SIMORE (the Spanish acronym for the "Sistema de Monitoreo de Recomendaciones" or System for Monitoring Recommendations, in English). This system was established for systematizing and monitoring human rights recommendations, identifying priorities and challenges, responsible institutions, timeframes and progress made. SIMORE was publicly launched in June 2014 by the State and is currently accessible to State institutions, civil society and the general public. SIMORE represents an upgraded and complete version of the former search portal mentioned above. It not only includes information about recommendations but also about actions taken by State institutions to implement those recommendations. SIMORE can be consulted using different search criteria: year, mechanism, population groups, subject/right, institution, word or phrase. SIMORE provides information about recommendations, institutions involved in their follow-up, public policies and programmes adopted and/or implemented, actions carried out by institutions, indicators and challenges.

During the second half of 2014, the HRA also provided cooperation in completing and consolidating the State's inter-institutional mechanism. One important outcome of SIMORE was a UPR mid-term report prepared and submitted by the State to the Human Rights Council (HRC) in September 2014. The results of the SIMORE experience were later presented in Geneva to other countries. SIMORE was also used to provide information for preparing Paraguay's report to the CERD. In addition, the HRA team had the opportunity

to share the SIMORE experience with other UN partners, OHCHR field presences and HQ colleagues, international community donors and countries.

SIMORE has already been used effectively. Some concrete examples are: preparation and submission of reports to UN mechanisms by the State; integration of the HRBA by the UNCT in projects and programmes; assessment of human rights conditions in the country by civil society; inclusion of human rights issues in news coverage or communication materials by the media; practical training given by OHCHR to State and civil society participants for using the system to access relevant information; identification of priorities during country visits and for reports by special procedures as related to their mandates (such as the visit of the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples' Rights); assessment of human rights conditions in the design of public policies (such as the National Plan on Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities) by State institutions; and preparation of papers and access to requested materials for analysis by University students.

As was mentioned above, the OHCHR and Paraguayan authorities shared the process and experience of the SIMORE project to encourage the implementation of projects with similar objectives, particularly in Latin American and the Caribbean. In addition, there is a publication documenting the process, published in Spanish, and a brochure of SIMORE is available in Spanish and English, as well as this summary report, which is available in English. Furthermore, Regulations and a User Manual were adopted and published, which lay the foundation for continuity and sustainability of the system. They include clear rules, methodology and a timeframe for continued work and updating information.

Another important result is empowering the engagement of State institutions to include human rights as a cross-cutting issue in the State's agenda. The formal involvement of representatives from the three branches of the State (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary), as well as members of the Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office and the Office of the Ombudsman, in the SIMORE process was fundamental for a comprehensive view and collaborative work among main State institutions.

The main challenges that are foreseen, are those related to changes in the government and public administrations, as well as in the State's capacities to generate human rights indicators to adequately measure the impact of its actions and its rights based public policies. In this regard, the consolidation of SIMORE will depend on continuing to empower State institutions, and the political will to update the information and use it regularly as a practical planning, monitoring and evaluation tool. Adequately assessing the road travelled, will allow continued commitment and responsibility. Paraguay has the opportunity to use its experience with SIMORE to boost its participation as new member of the Human Rights Council by promoting with the international community the follow-up of UPR and other international recommendations, as well as engaging its State institutions in the national implementation of these commitments.

Liliana Valiña
UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
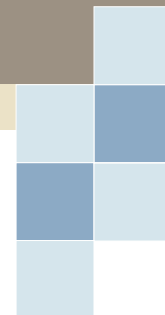*Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay*

Introduction

As the Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay, from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, it is my pleasure to take this opportunity to present this publication that outlines the technical cooperation provided to Paraguay, for an inter-institutional effort to create a system to monitor international human rights recommendations. The result of this effort is a digital tool named SIMORE (System for Monitoring Recommendations). This report explains the process, methodology, best practices, as well as lessons learned during the provision of this technical cooperation, which was carried out with much appreciated support from UPR Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance.

The process put into place for the creation of SIMORE in Paraguay reflects a best practice for implementing an inter-institutional effort for monitoring actions taken by State institutions to follow-up on international human rights recommendations, and periodically assess progress and challenges in the application and protection of these rights. It is also an exercise in transparency and accountability to the national and international community regarding actions and policies adopted and implemented, and challenges and progress made in the protection of human rights in the country.

The inter-institutional effort documented in this publication establishes a methodological tool for improving the governance of human rights and following up on recommendations; improvements that we, the United Nations Human Rights, had the privilege of accompanying.

Seven (7) thematic/population working groups made up of representatives from different State institutions were set up at the beginning of the process as part of the methodology used in the creation of SIMORE. This greatly enhanced the process. Data sheets were used to ensure that a uniform set of criteria was established for processing data. The information from the data sheets was later used for entering the data related to State actions taken, for each of the international recommendations prioritized.

Another important step is the development of regulations and a user manual for SIMORE, with information about the digital platform, which differentiates functionality between the "search" and "follow-up" phases. This was the result of several workshops and meetings with diverse State institutions, from the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, the Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Public Defence, Office of the Ombudsman. This work was carried out under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, in their role as the coordinator of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch. The creation of SIMORE has made actions taken and challenges in complying with and following up on recommendations, as reported by the Paraguay government, visible, both nationally and internationally. It also allows for the State to double its efforts to effectively protect the enjoyment of human rights, without discrimination, including those living in a vulnerable situation, through the adoption or reformulation of public policy, programmes, and legislation.

Technical cooperation provided to Paraguay for following up on recommendations, SIMORE being an example, demonstrates the international community's commitment, particularly the United Nations Human Rights, to promote the following up on human rights recommendations made by treaty bodies, special procedures and the Human Rights Council through the UPR, as well as the effective fulfilment of countries' commitments. The resources and capacity to carry out this best practice nationally, and to promote similar projects by sharing it with other countries and the High Commissioner Field presences, was made possible by the invaluable support of the UPR Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance.

In my role as the Advisor for Paraguay, and on behalf of the United Nations Human Rights team, I reiterate our satisfaction in having been able to provide technical cooperation to the State in the creation and implementation of SIMORE, and I trust the State's commitment to periodically update the data and guarantee the sustainability of this commendable joint effort by the State. A path has been cleared, opening up an excellent opportunity for the State to leverage SIMORE's potential for building, orienting, revising and reformulating its human rights agenda and the priorities associated with the challenges that the country faces, with the valuable participation and contributions of all its institutions and civil society.

Liliana Valiña
Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay
United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for
Human Rights

Prologue

The following report presents the process involved in setting up and running the System for Monitoring Recommendations – SIMORE, the digital tool that reflects Paraguay's coordinated effort, with the participation of various institutions, to effectively protect human rights in Paraguay.

The solidification of this project, that resulted in the implementation of SIMORE, now available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, demonstrates national authorities, experts and public servants' strong commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. Their earnest and serious effort to generate valid data greatly enhanced this tool.

SIMORE is a very valuable instrument for demonstrating not only actions, but also the challenges that we still face as a country to guarantee our population fundamental human rights. In addition, as the information is public, it is accessible, nationally or internationally, to everyone who wishes to know more about what Paraguay is doing to comply with human rights recommendations.

This report clearly outlines the various stages in the creation of this project, from its official presentation in 2014, by the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, along with other branches of the State coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, with invaluable cooperation by the Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay and her technical team.

Nationally, there is a strong commitment to follow-up up on the implementation of SIMORE. Therefore, we believe that sharing Paraguay's governance and capacity building experience could be an important contribution to the international community's efforts to promote and protect human rights.

Ambassador Eladio Loizaga   *Minister Sheila Abed*
Ministry of Foreign Affairs   *Ministry of Justice*
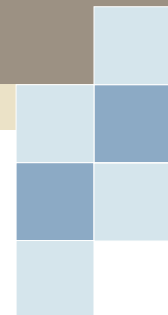
Brief Introduction

Following a request made by the Government of Paraguay in 2012, the OHCHR Human Rights Advisor (HRA) developed a project funded by the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review (Fund for UPR Implementation). It was carried out from May 2013 to December 2014 and named "Project on the Follow-up and Monitoring of International Human Rights Recommendations".

The aim of the project was to establish an inter-institutional monitoring mechanism to systematize, organize, prioritize, and follow-up on relevant recommendations for State engagement, in order to strengthen institutional structures and the State's capacity for following up and reporting. The objectives included the design of a system that allows the State to follow up on international recommendations and report on progress made in actions carried out by State institutions to comply with international obligations and guarantee the protection of human rights in the country.

It is worth mentioning that a previous OHCHR project for following up on recommendations, with HRA cooperation provided to the State, undertook the design of a search portal to facilitate access to recommendations. Information about international human rights recommendations could be accessed using different search criteria by: year, mechanism, subject/right, population groups, and word or phrase. This tool laid the groundwork for developing the current project.

With financial support provided by UPRTF, the project was carried out with the cooperation of two consultants appointed in 2013, one, an expert in human rights, as well as a project assistant. The project was coordinated by the national officer and supervised by the HRA. In addition, a consultant for designing and developing the software for the mechanism was appointed.

OHCHR technical cooperation was provided through the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch in a process led by two main national counterparts: the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One of the most important achievements of this project is a user-friendly system named SIMORE (the Spanish acronym for the "Sistema de Monitoreo de Recomendaciones" or System for Monitoring Recommendations, in English). This system was established for systematizing and monitoring human rights recommendations, identifying priorities and challenges, responsible institutions, timeframes and progress made. SIMORE was publicly launched in June 2014 by the State and is currently accessible to State institutions, civil society and the general public.

This report outlines the OHCHR cooperation process for designing and implementing SIMORE, the methodology used, actions carried out to achieve objectives, expected results, and lessons learned.

Chapter 1
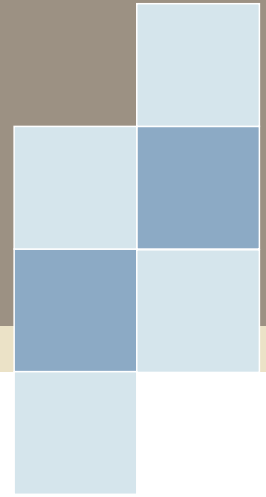
Background Information and Recommendations made to Paraguay

Chapter 1

Background Information and Recommendations made to Paraguay
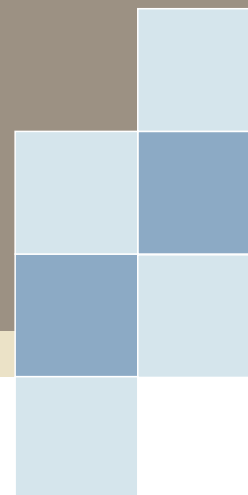
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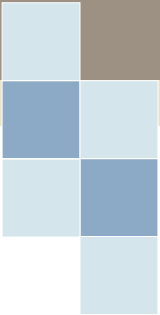
According to the Constitution, Paraguay is a social rule of law governed by the Executive Branch (EB), Judiciary (JB) and Legislative Branch (LB) in a system in which the branches are independent, balanced, coordinated and with mutual checks and balances.

The Paraguayan Constitution provides for a democratic legal and institutional framework that guarantees human rights, recognizing the fundamental rights inherent to the dignity of human beings, and establishes a system of guarantees for their safeguarding and legal protection. The rights under the Paraguayan Constitution are consistent with ratified international human rights instruments.

Over the past years, Paraguay has ratified the main international human rights instruments: The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity; the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid; the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT); the Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol; the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances; the Conventions N° 156, N° 189 and N° 138 of the International Labour Organization (ILO); as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

To date, the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure are still pending.

In 2009, by Decree 2290/2009, the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch was established to coordinate policies, plans and programmes to improve human rights conditions in the country. The same year, the State requested cooperation from the United Nations High Commissioner. A Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay was appointed in 2010.

A significant event was the preparation of the National Report by the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Justice (MJ), which was then submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2010, for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). At this time, Paraguay received and accepted 124 recommendations, and stated that a number of them were already implemented and/or underway.

Between 2010 and 2011, Paraguay submitted most of the pending reports due to UN treaty bodies, according to the inter-institutional plan for remedying overdue reporting. In 2011 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested cooperation from the Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay for the design of a tool to facilitate access to recommendations received from international human rights bodies and mechanisms. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the "Search Portal for International Human Rights Recommendations Made to Paraguay" ("Buscador de Recomendaciones Internacionales de Derechos Humanos a Paraguay").

The search portal led the Government to identify the need to move to a second stage, and the development of a tool that would monitor the compliance of human rights obligations and commitments, in order to update information on the progress and the challenges involved with compliance, easily accessible.

Therefore, in 2012, Paraguay requested technical cooperation from the Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay to create an inter-institutional mechanism for following up and monitoring compliance with recommendations via an online digital platform.

The OHCHR Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay and her team, with support from the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the follow-up of UPR, provided cooperation to the Paraguayan State through the "Project on the Follow-up and Monitoring of International Human Rights Recommendations" This project was part of a process led by the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Justice (MJ), to create an inter-institutional mechanism to follow up and monitor the State's progress and the challenges faced in meeting its human rights obligations.
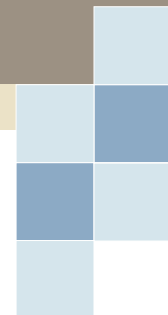
International Recommendations to Paraguay

The Paraguayan State has received recommendations, observations and international judgments on human rights from the both the universal and inter-American human rights protection systems, from the United Nations Organization (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

These recommendations were systematized in a digital tool named "Search Portal for International Human Rights Recommendations Made to Paraguay," ("Buscador de Recomendaciones de Mecanismos Internacionales de Derechos Humanos a Paraguay"), which was used significantly as data for the current inter-institutional follow-up and monitoring mechanism, and was available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, Civil Society and United Nations Human Rights – Paraguay websites.

Below is a brief description of the various mechanisms that gave recommendations to the State, and which were incorporated into the digital platform for following-up and monitoring human rights recommendations.

Universal System for the Protection of Human Rights

In the United Nations system there are three types of mechanisms for protecting human rights. One is known as the "Treaty Bodies", which are the Committees, created to monitor the core international human rights treaties. Each Committee is made up of a group of independent experts whose main function is to monitor that States Parties who have signed a treaty are complying with the obligations set forth. They also have the authority to interpret the standards of the treaty, and, when appropriate, consider complaints or petitions on particular cases of alleged violations of the rights enshrined in a particular treaty.

Another mechanism is the "Special Procedures", established by the former UN Commission on Human Rights and taken up by the current Human Rights Council. Its aim is to examine and monitor human rights situations in specific countries or territories, or to review important human rights issues and phenomena worldwide.

The third type of mechanism is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a procedure established to monitor human rights in each of the UN Member States. Each Member State undergoes a periodic review, which is specially designed to ensure the principle of equality among States members when assessing the human rights conditions that the UPR examines.

The function of each mechanism is as follows:

A) Treaty-based bodies.

Human rights treaty bodies are Committees made up of independent experts who monitor the implementation of international human rights treaties by State Parties, in their respective States. The Committees are established in accordance with the provisions set forth in the treaty they are   charged with monitoring.
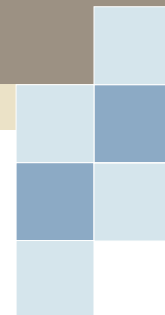
There are nine human rights treaty bodies that monitor the implementation of the core international human rights treaties, as well as the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, that has a particular mandate described further below:

◆ Human Rights Committee (CCPR);
◆ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR);
◆ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD);
◆ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
◆ Committee against Torture (CAT);
    ◆ Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)
◆ Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
◆ Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW);
◆ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
◆ Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED).

The mandate of all treaty bodies is to receive and consider reports, submitted periodically by the States Parties, that detail how the provisions of the treaty are being implemented in the country concerned. They provide guidelines to assist the States Parties in preparing their reports, formulate general considerations interpreting treaty provisions, and organize discussions on topics related to treaties.

Some treaty bodies perform other functions aimed at strengthening the implementation of the treaties by the States Parties, such as considering complaints or communications from individuals who claim to be victims of a violation by that State Party of any of the rights set forth in the treaty, provided that the State Party has recognized this procedure. They may also conduct investigations. A number of treaties also address the possibility of presenting complaints or communications made by another State Party to the treaty, provided that both parties have recognized the authority of the relevant committee to consider such complaints or requests.

After the Committee examines a State Party's report it drafts what the Committee calls "concluding observations" that provide the State Party with practical suggestions for improving compliance with the treaty, and encourages it to take actions to fulfil the rights set forth in it. In the concluding observations, the treaty bodies recognize the positive actions taken by the State Party, while also indicating areas that need to be strengthened to fully implement the treaty's provisions. The treaty bodies try to formulate recommendations that are as specific and viable as possible. The State Parties are asked to disseminate the concluding observations in the country in order to generate public

debate as a starting point for improving human rights, and that public servants be aware of the observations in order to incorporate them as part of their duties.

On the other hand, the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT) is a new kind of treaty-based body in the United Nations human rights system. It has a preventive mandate focused on an innovative, sustained and proactive approach to the prevention of torture and ill treatment. The Subcommittee was established pursuant to the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, adopted in December 2002 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, entered into force in June 2006, and started its work in February 2007.

The SPT has an operational function; it may go to any place where persons may be deprived of their liberty, in a visit to States Parties, as well as an advisory function, which involves providing cooperation and advice to States Parties on the establishment of National Preventive Mechanisms (NMP).

The UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture visited Paraguay in 2009 and conducted a follow-up visit in 2011. Reports and recommendations to the country were prepared after each visit.

B) Special procedures[1]:

The term "special procedures" refers to the mechanisms established by the Human Rights Council to address specific situations in countries or thematic issues worldwide. Currently, there are 37 thematic mandates and 14 country mandates. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights serves as Secretariat to special procedures, providing staff, logistics and research necessary for performing their mandate.

In general, special procedures are entrusted to examine, monitor, advise and publicly report on human rights situations in specific countries or territories, known as country mandates, or on major issues related to human rights violations worldwide, known as thematic mandates.

Special procedures may consist of an individual ("Special Rapporteur", "Representative of the Secretary-General" or "Independent Expert") or a working group usually composed of five members (one from each region). Special procedures mandates are set forth and defined in the resolutions that create them.

The special procedures are independent human rights experts and do not receive any financial remuneration for their work. The independent status of the mandate-holders is crucial for them to be able to fulfil their functions in all impartiality.

Most Special Procedures receive information on specific allegations of human rights violations and make urgent appeals or send letters to States asking for clarification.

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1 Practical Guide for Communicating with United Nations Protection Mechanisms, United Nations Human Rights, Paraguay, 2012

Mandate-holders also carry out country visits to obtain first-hand information on human rights situations directly related to their mandate. Mandate-holders usually receive a letter from the State requesting a visit or they send a letter to a State expressing interest in visiting the country. If it is agreed upon they are sent the corresponding invitation. Some countries, such as Paraguay, have issued "standing invitations", which means that they are prepared to receive a visit from any mandate-holder, with prior coordination of the visit. After a visit, Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups present a mission report that includes their findings and recommendations.

To date, the following Special Rapporteurs have visited Paraguay: Special Rapporteur on toxic wastes (1999); Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2004); Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (2007); Special Rapporteur on the right to education (2010); Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (2011); the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (2012), and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples (2014).

C) Universal Human Rights Mechanism - UPR.[2]

The Universal Periodic Review is an intergovernmental process established by the UN Human Rights Council.

The UPR is a new and unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council (HRC) with the objective of improving human rights situations on the ground in each of the 193 UN member states.

Under this mechanism, the human rights situation of all UN member States is reviewed every four and a half years. 42 States are reviewed each year during 3 sessions of the Working Group, each dedicated to 14 States. These three sessions are normally held in January/February, May/June and October/November.

The result of each review is presented in a "final report" that lists recommendations that the State under review shall implement before the next review.

The UPR process is circular and comprises the following steps: A) Preparing information for the review. B) Working Group on the UPR. C) Regular Session of the Human Rights Council. D) Implementation of the results.

The review is based on three main documents that are used for reviewing the State: a national report prepared by the State being examined on the situation of human rights in the country; a compilation prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights containing information on treaty bodies, special procedures, and UN agencies; and a ten-page summary prepared by OHCHR containing information gotten from civil society.

Paraguay's first UPR was in February/June 2011 and the country should present its next report in October 2015 to be reviewed in February 2016.

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2 See: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx
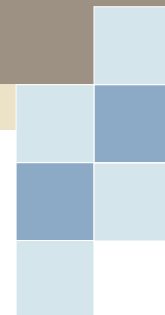
D) Permanent forum on indigenous issues

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council with a mandate to address indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, education, health, environment and human rights.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues visited Paraguay in April 2009, and prepared a report and made recommendations to the country.

The Inter-American Human Rights System[3]

The functions of the Inter-American Court on Human Rights are set forth in Chapter VIII of the American Convention on Human Rights. The most relevant are the adoption of advisory opinions, as defined by Article 42 of the American Convention, and the consideration of contentious cases as defined by Articles 61 and 62 of the Convention.

The advisory competence of the Inter-American Court comprises rationae materiae. The member states "may consult the Court regarding the interpretation of this Convention or of other treaties concerning the protection of human rights in the American states" (art. 64.1)."

The competence of the Inter-American Court also includes cases previously considered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). This competence is limited to "(...) the interpretation and application of the provisions of this Convention", i.e., the American Convention (art. 62.3). Such cases may be submitted by the State Party concerned or by the IACHR provided that the State Party has recognized the competence of the Inter-American Court and the IACHR has complied with the relevant procedural requirements (arts. 61 and 62).

Paraguay has recognized the competence of the Inter-American Court and has received seven (7) judgments to date that impose the adoption of a series of measures for meeting its obligations.

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3 See: http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/default.asp
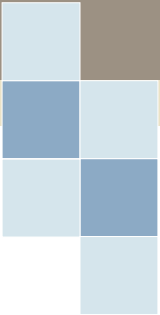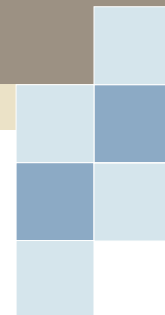
Search Portal for Human Rights Recommendations

In 2011, at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations -Human Rights Paraguay designed a tool named "Search Portal for International Human Rights Recommendations Made to Paraguay," ("Buscador de Recomendaciones de Mecanismos Internacionales de Derechos Humanos a Paraguay") for the purpose of providing online access to Human Rights Protection System recommendations made to the country, as part of technical cooperation from the Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay.

Following this request, a cooperation project was implemented to design a tool that allows the State to show all recommendations made to the State by the international mechanisms mentioned above, organized systematically and sortable through search filters, thus facilitating the State's ability to fulfil its human rights obligations and commitments.

Through this publicly available tool, the State, civil society, the media, academics and students could access recommendations according to the users' specific needs by choosing filter options.

The search filters allowed an inclusive or exclusive search by the selection of one or more criteria, such as year, mechanism, population groups, subject, and a word or phrase. This innovative, user friendly tool gave easy access to human rights recommendations and a direct link to the document with the original text of the recommendation or judgment.

The search filters allowed users of this tool to access the recommendations that he or she was interested in, out of all recommendations that had been given to the Paraguay.

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8 Ver capítulo: Sistema Universal de Protección a los Derechos Humanos

Follow-up and Monitoring of International Human Rights Recommendations made to Paraguay

After the creation of the "Search Portal for International Human Rights Recommendations Made to Paraguay" and a subsequent request made by the State in 2012, a second stage of the project was initiated, creating a tool to follow-up on international recommendations, including those made by the UPR, in reference to the submission of the National Report on Paraguay in the second cycle.

In 2013, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, as coordinator of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, in cooperation with the OHCHR Human Rights Advisor in Paraguay, began implementation of the "Project on the Follow-up and Monitoring of International Human Rights Recommendations".

The current project proposes establishing an inter-institutional mechanism for following up and monitoring the implementation of Human Rights recommendations made to Paraguay. The function of this mechanism is to systematize, organize and prioritize recommendations, making it easier for State institutions to update information and report on follow-up actions taken on recommendations, as well as identify obstacles and challenges, thus progressively strengthening the protection of human rights in Paraguay.

The Judiciary, the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, the Ministry of Public Defence, the Prosecutor's Office and the Ombudsman's Office, worked jointly to design the mechanism, in order to avoid inefficiency and duplication, with the purpose of ensuring effectively implemented recommendations, and information generated for preparing national reports on human rights, including a mid-term report for the UPR.

The Human Rights Advisor and her team provided the State with technical cooperation, throughout the project, in the design of the inter-institutional methodology, and the digital tool for follow-up and monitoring recommendations.

The Human Rights Council requested that the Secretary-General, pursuant to resolution 6/17, establish a new financial mechanism, the Voluntary Fund for financial and technical cooperation, in order to assist countries in the implementation of the UPR recommendations, in consultation with, and with the consent of, the country concerned.

Paraguay received technical and financial cooperation in 2013-2014, for the implementation of the UPR and other human rights mechanism recommendations, as part of the, "Project on the Follow-up and Monitoring of international Human Rights Recommendations" supported by UPR Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance and implemented by OHCHR in the country.

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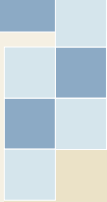
9 Consejo de Derechos Humanos. 21 sesión, 28 de setiembre de 2007.

Development of the Project

Towards the follow-up and monitoring of international human rights recommendations made to Paraguay

The project was designed and developed according to the objectives and methodology described below.

Objectives

Within the main OHCHR thematic priority of strengthening the effectiveness of international human rights mechanisms and the progressive development of international human rights law and standards, SIMORE was developed in the framework of the following objectives:

General Objective:

◆ To improve State institutions capacity to follow-up and monitor the implementation of international recommendations, as well as their capacity to provide accurate information and reporting on the human rights situation in the country.
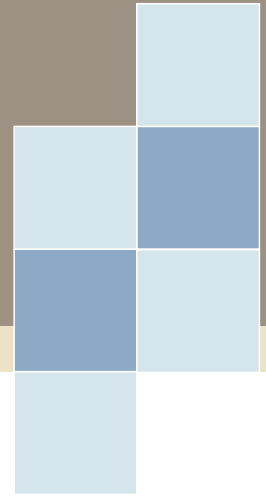
Specific Objectives:

◆ To establish a follow-up and monitoring interinstitutional mechanism for relevant human rights international recommendations.

◆ To inform on the progress in the implementation of international recommendations, particularly from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Chapter 2

Methodology and Inter-institutional Process

Chapter 2

Methodology and Inter-institutional Process

Outcome *A methodological design for the follow-up and monitoring of international recommendations, based on the search portal on recommendations and available online (SIMORE) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and OHCHR – Paraguay websites.*

Outcome *Recommendations systematized; institutions responsible for implementing the project designated ; deadlines and actions defined.*

The work plan included the following items, detailed by specific objective, below:

Prioritized recommendations

In November 2013, three workshops were conducted as part of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, coordinated by of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The criterion used to prioritize recommendations was based on the fact that, over the past four years, Paraguay had submitted all pending reports to the various treaty bodies. Recommendations made in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 were prioritized, as well as the 2007 recommendations from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), since the last report submitted by Paraguay in 2011 was still pending review. Out of a total of 827 recommendations, 609 were prioritized by cut off year. State institutions began working on the follow-up and monitoring of recommendations based on this number of recommendations.

Diverse actors from the three branches of the State, the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary, as well as the Prosecutor's Office, Office of the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Public Defense were involved in the collaborative, inter-institutional, and participative methodology used throughout the entire process, thus providing the necessary information for producing the software, later named SIMORE.

First, working under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice, a team of coordinators identified State institution counterparts, and the institutional units that would be involved in the inter-institutional process.

The two institutions leading the effort sent letters to authorities from the other State institutions, presenting the project and inviting their institutions to actively participate in the process by designating at least a focal point and an alternate one.

Later, members of the previously identified institutions, focal points for the process, were invited to workshops on human rights concepts and the UN protection system, including international mechanisms, particularly as related to treaty bodies, special procedures, and UPR.

Inter-institutional work in thematic/population working groups

The focal points worked inter-institutionally in seven (7) thematic working groups. Based on the State's prior positive experience in preparing its first UPR report in 2010, the working groups were organized in the same way:
During this process, the institutions responsible for a particular recommendation worked to identify the following: public policies related to each of the recommendations, indicators, and main issues and challenges concerning their implementation. In this way, the inter-institutional work was carried out intra-institutionally as well. Each of the institutions identified the appropriate units for the preparation of data. Information regarding the follow-up of international recommendations was also entered by focal points into data sheets and used in the design of the software that was to become SIMORE.

- Poverty;
- Institutional Strengthening / LGBT;
- Persons Deprived of Liberty;
- Indigenous Peoples / Afro-descendants /Migrants;
- Children and teenagers;
- Women;
- People with disabilities / Older Persons;

Booklets with International Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the thematic/population working groups, new workshops were conducted in February 2014. Seven booklets (7) that organize the recommendations according to the five-year prioritization established, and assign responsibility for follow-up and monitoring of recommendations to the various institutions according to their competences, were presented.

The booklets were distributed to the 28 institutions involved in the follow-up and monitoring of the recommendations. The high level authorities coordinating the project sent official letters to their peers. The letters requested that prioritized international recommendations be linked with current public policies, the institution's budget and annual operational plans, based on governmental priorities.

Data sheets

The data sheet was an important tool for gathering information. Focal points from each of the institutions involved in the creation of SIMORE, entered follow-up data for each of the prioritized recommendations into one sheet, from information that was gathered from each of their respective departments, in order to obtain the intra-institutional data required for completing the data sheet.

Each institution identified those priority recommendations, linking recommendations with institutional priorities, their public policies, budget and annual planning.
These elements come from the guidelines[4] on the form and content of reports to be submitted by States Parties to international human rights treaties, and are as follows:

Institución responsable				
Politicas publicas				
Programa				
Dirección/Unidad				
	Indicador		2008	2012
Actualización de indicadores				
1				
2				

Reporte (Max. 700 carácteres)	
Retos y desafíos	
Completado por :	Fecha:
Validado por:	Fecha

- Public Policy
- Plans/Programmes/Projects
- Unit/Directorate/Commission
- Indicators
- Reporting
- Challenges

During a series of workshops held in March and April 2014, the focal points from each of the institutions who participated in the inter-institutional working groups, presented their institution's prioritized recommendations to their peers, as well as data collected

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4 See: http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/TreatyBodies/Documents/HRI-GEN-2-REV-6_en.doc

to enter into data sheets. In this way, every step of completing the form was done inter-institutionally.

Intra-institutional work in coordination with thematic/population working groups

During the implementation of the project, the institutions responsible for coordinating the follow-up of recommendations and United Nations Human Rights - Paraguay worked with the focal points from each institution to coordinate work in their own units in obtaining the data required to complete data sheets.

Exchange with Civil Society Organizations

In February 2014, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, as coordinator of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, with support from the Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay and her team, held a meeting[5] to present the Project to Follow up Recommendations and its method of implementation to civil society organizations. As a result of the meeting, a number of representatives expressed interest in initiating a dialogue about the project, and highlighted the importance of observations and contributions from civil society.

In March 2014, 12 non-governmental organizations attended a discussion group[6] that was held to initiate a dialogue between the State and civil society about the recommendations prioritized by State institutions and to share progress made on the inter-institutional work.

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5 *Meeting held at headquarters of the Foreign Ministry on February 19, 2014.*
6 *Meeting held at headquarters of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch on March 17, 2014.*

Steps for completing data sheets – Follow-up phase

1. Identify existing public policies, programmes, plans and projects related to prioritized recommendations, or to the contrary, indicate their non-existence or absence.

2. Indicate which Directorate/Unit of the institution shall be responsible for follow-up and monitoring of compliance of the recommendation. Said directorate/unit shall coordinate an intra-institutional effort to obtain data for completing the data sheet. This field is mandatory to validate/submit data sheet.

3. If there are indicators to measure compliance with public policies, programmes, plans and projects in progress, the appropriate box should be completed and cut off year indicated.

4. Report, in less than 700 characters, the status of compliance with the recommendation. This field is mandatory to validate/submit data sheet.

5. Identify challenges for compliance as the institution responsible for the recommendation. This field is mandatory to validate/submit data sheet.

6. Sign and validate by a high authority of each institution.

Chapter 3

Digital Follow-up and Monitoring System

Chapter 3

Digital Follow-up and Monitoring System

Outcome — *Capacity of State institutions strenghtend through the use of SIMORE to comply with their international commitments.*

Outcome — *Government institutions members of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, CICSI and other branches of the State trained in correct use of the software. Institutionalisation of the monitoring mechanism through the Regulations and user manual.*

Completing and submitting data sheets

Fifty (50) representatives from the three branches of the State, the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Public Defence and the Office of the Ombudsman worked inter-institutionally. They were divided into seven (7) thematic/population working groups and met for two workshops[7] in order to move forward with the revision of the information contained in each of the data sheets.

During these workshops, information about actions taken by each State institution in the compliance with the prioritized recommendations, from each of the data sheets, was shared. The bulk of the data used in creating the follow-up phase of the inter-institutional mechanism came from this information.

In addition to the workshops[8] sixteen (16) bilateral meetings were held with the institutions involved in the process. During these meetings, technical support was provided about the information gathered in the data sheets, which were still being developed, taking into account the relationship they would have with the SIMORE.

Design of the digital tool

The System for Monitoring Recommendations (SIMORE) was developed from the Search Portal for Recommendations. It has a sidebar tool with search filters for locating specific recommendations. Depending on the desired search, criteria may include:

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7 Workshops held at headquarters of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch on March 4 and 5, 2014.
8 Workshops held at the headquarters of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch on May 7, 8 and 9, 2014.

◆ Mechanism: Filters by Treaty Bodies (Committees), Special Procedures (Special Rapporteurs), Universal Periodic Review, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, among other mechanisms.
◆ Population: Filters by affected population group.
◆ Subject-Rights: Filters by subject and rights related to each recommendation.
◆ Responsible institution: Filters by institution designated to follow up and comply with the recommendation.
◆ Contents of Recommendation: Filters by recommendations containing a specified word or phrase.

SIMORE has a second phase, data on follow-up on international recommendations. This data, entered by each institution, gives information about the follow-up on each of the recommendations and is a result of the work done intra-institutionally. This phase allows searches using the following criterion:

▪ Contents of Follow-up: Filters follow-ups that contain a specified word or phrase.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as project coordinator and because of the strength of the institution, agreed to run the system on its computer servers. After this was decided, several meetings[9] were held with experts from the Computer Department and the Human Rights Department of the coordinating institutions, with technical cooperation from the Human Rights Advisor for Paraguay's technical team, to make adjustments to the system.

Regulations and User Manual

The work methodology used by the seven (7) thematic/population working groups was regulated through the design and approval[10] of the Regulations and User Manual to support continued updating of SIMORE.

In addition, a technical manual for using the platform, which explains the how the two phase system is organized was prepared:

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10 Guidelines approved in a meeting held at the headquarters of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch on May 27, 2014.

Search Phase	Follow-up Phase

◆ *Access*
◆ *Menu options*
◆ *Stages for data entry,*
◆ *Entry of new recommendations*
◆ *System maintenance and administration options*
◆ *Record of documents*

Presentation of and training for use of software

The members of the three branches of the State, the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Public Defence and the Office of the Ombudsman participated in a workshop[11] during which the software and the follow-up and monitoring phases were presented.

On this occasion, public servants were able to explore the various features of the computer system, including how to search by follow-up and how to enter new follow-up information. In addition, the project coordinators explained the regulations for using SIMORE.

Civil Society

In a workshop conducted by the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, with the participation of Civil Society Organizations (SCOs), civil society representatives were able to see how the digital tool works.

The workshop[12] was both an opportunity for the State representatives and relevant actors of civil society to have a dialogue, as well as an occasion to present the digital platform as a tool for monitoring compliance with international recommendations by the different stakeholders.

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11 *Workshop held at headquarters of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch on May 27, 2014.*
12 *Workshop held at headquarters of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch on May 28, 2014.*

Chapter 4
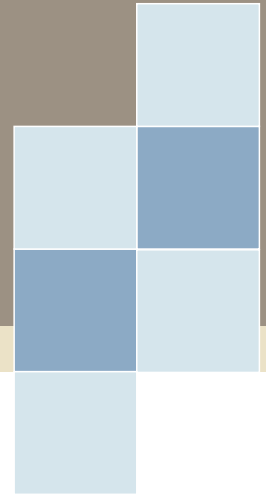
Data for Human Rights Reporting

Chapter 4

Data for Human Rights Reporting

Outcome *Report on progress of implementation of international recommendations, particularly the UPR, submitted.*

Human Rights Reporting

SIMORE allows public servants to access follow-up information about each of the recommendations, by choosing one of the following filter options: subject/right, population group, mechanism and responsible institution. They can then select data for preparing human rights reports, as well as view progress and challenges in implementing each prioritized recommendation, including those of the Universal Periodic Review.

By using SIMORE the follow-up information for each of the recommendations can be exported into a Word, Excel and PDF formatted document. This information can be extracted by selecting search criteria by subject and population groups linked to the report being prepared for a particular mechanism.

It was anticipated that the seven (7) thematic/population working groups analyse the information collected by SIMORE in order to initiate a participatory process for human rights reporting. The SIMORE Coordination shall establish report guidelines in accordance with the guidelines on the form and content of reports to be submitted by States Parties to international human rights treaty bodies.

Universal Periodic Report (UPR) mid-term report

During the SIMORE test phase, State focal points participated in a workshop[13] to identify subjects gathered from the prioritized recommendations by the State, for the Universal Periodic Review, in order to export data for a mid-term report. This report was prepared based on the work methodology established in the SIMORE operational guidelines.

Exchange with Civil Society Organizations

The SIMORE Coordination, using this data, will share the first draft of the national report, to obtain civil society's comments or observations, which will be taken into consideration by the State for preparing the national report, in accordance with reporting guidelines and as established by SIMORE Regulations.

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13 Workshop held at headquarters of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch on May 27, 2014.

In summary, these were the steps taken to gather follow-up information on international recommendations:

◆ Production of booklets on international recommendations: this was done in accordance with the above mentioned thematic working groups, as a way to easily identify relevant international recommendations to be followed up on by relevant institutions;

◆ Prioritization of recommendations to be included in the follow-up mechanism during this first stage: whereas the State caught up with most overdue reports in 2010, recommendations received from the last five years were prioritized, except those from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCRs) issued in 2007, due to the pending revision of the national report lastly submitted;

◆ Design of data sheets: based on the OHCHR guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports to be submitted by State Parties to treaty bodies in order to support the submission of relevant and accurate information by the State.

◆ Follow-up and technical support for intra-institutional work: provided to specific institutions by the HRA's team, for help in gathering information within their respective units, in order to prepare the necessary data for completing the data sheets;

◆ Completing data sheets: developed as a working tool, for the institutional focal points involved in developing SIMORE, to collect information about the follow-up of each prioritized recommendation;

◆ Exchange meetings with civil society organizations about the Project on the Follow-up and Monitoring of International Recommendations Made to Paraguay and the SIMORE process;

◆ Development of the software to systematize, classify and search relevant information that was the precursor to SIMORE.

◆ Designation of the institution where the server for SIMORE would be located: for reasons of technical maintenance and data storage capacity, as well as security, it was decided to locate SIMORE at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

◆ Design of a methodology for SIMORE follow-up and the adoption of Regulations and User Manual for using the system and updating relevant information.

◆ Preparation of promotional and dissemination materials: such as two tutorial videos and a brochure about SIMORE.

◆ Public launching of SIMORE by authorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the HRA.

Chapter 5
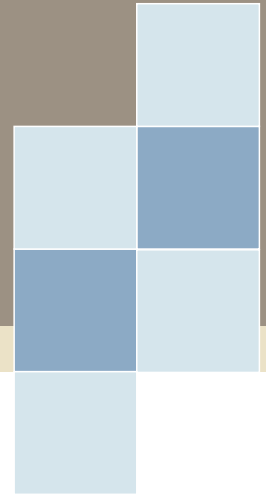
Accomplishments and Lessons Learned

Chapter 5

Accomplishments and Lessons Learned

SIMORE has been designed and implemented in accordance with the objectives and commitments established for the project.

Outputs

The main outputs are the following:

- ◆ SIMORE was created and is up and running.
- ◆ Regulations and User Manual was adopted. Available in Spanish and English.
- ◆ Two tutorial videos were produced as a guide for SIMORE users (Both those from the State and the general public). Available with French and English subtitles.
- ◆ A systematization of OHCHR cooperation was published documenting the process. It is available in Spanish and English.
- ◆ A brochure summarizing information about SIMORE and its uses was published in Spanish and English
- ◆ A video of the SIMORE official presentation was made. Available with French and English subtitles.

Achievements

In addition, highlights of the following main achievements are:

A participatory and inter-institutional process developed: The participatory methodology used in the activities undertaken, using an inter-institutional exchange of experiences and expertise, contributed in an unprecedented way to improve the culture of public officials regarding human rights, as well as communication among institutions of the three branches of the State.

State awareness on human rights obligations strengthened: SIMORE also contributed to a better understanding by the participants of the importance and responsibility of monitoring and complying with international recommendations, integration and internalization of related human rights concepts and awareness of accountability of international commitments, particularly those additionally and voluntary assumed by Paraguay during the first UPR cycle.

Easy access to information enhanced: The systematization of international recommendations and their follow-up can be accessed by: mechanism, year, population group, subject/rights, institutions and word or phrase, linking recommendations to relevant public policies, indicators and challenges;

Institutional capacity to gather information, follow-up of international recommendations and report on progress made strengthened: the SIMORE process, was a valuable exercise for members of public institutions to working collectively, as well as an opportunity to improve capacities for gathering more accurate and updated information in order to effectively follow-up on international recommendations and be able to submit accurate reports.

Civil society knowledge of human rights enhanced: SIMORE also enhanced civil society and the general public's knowledge of human rights, including knowledge of the UN system and its mechanisms, (treaty bodies, special procedures, HRC / UPR) and international recommendations made to Paraguay.

Complementarity of institutional actions strengthened: The inter-institutional participatory process served to avoid inefficiency and duplicated actions, allowing the effective and complementary implementation of recommendations and the strengthening of the State's ability to jointly assess progress and challenges, and report regularly going forward.

SIMORE Information improved State compliance with reporting obligations: The participatory process for gathering data that included public servants in a variety of activities, as well as the observations from civil society throughout the project, enabled the State to gather the necessary information for uploading to the digital platform and use it to fulfil upcoming reporting obligations, such as the UPR mid-term report, submitted in September 2014, and the national report to CERD to be sent in 2015.

Sustainability of SIMORE strengthened by the adoption of a Regulations and User Manual: At the end of the process, a "SIMORE Regulations and User Manual" and an informative brochure was prepared, published and distributed.

Best practices and lessons learned shared and State capacities consequently strengthened: A systematization to document the process, including results, best practices and lessons learned, was prepared to share this valuable methodology and to also help to ensure SIMORE's sustainability.

Legislators' capacities to comply with international obligations strengthened: The Legislative branch was involved, for the first time, in the follow-up of recommendations by working in a cross checking exercise made by the Human Rights Commission of Deputy Chamber linking recommendations with legislation and laws adopted or bills under consideration. This exercise with the Legislative branch allowed the inclusion of information in the SIMORE through designated focal points. In addition, the President of the Human Rights Commission of Deputy Chamber was able to share this experience in a meeting organized in Uruguay by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UPR OHCHR Section to promote the follow-up of recommendations on human rights by Parliaments. SIMORE was used by UN partners: in designing joined projects and programs as well as in preparing documents and activities, such as a joint project submitted to the SDG Fund on food security.

SIMORE was also used as a tool for trainings and workshops. carried out by OHCHR with state institutions, civil society and Media such as those organized with the Secretary for Social Action (SAS) and the Secretary for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SENADIS) in regards with recommendations on poverty issues and rights of persons with disabilities respectively.

SIMORE provided information for documents and publications: Documents and publications were prepared by using SIMORE to get relevant information, compile and systematize thematic recommendations, and analyze and identify challenges on human rights issues, such as the publication on indigenous peoples' rights.

A midterm UPR report was prepared and submitted by the State based on SIMORE information: The tool was also used in preparing national reports to treaty bodies, such as the one to be submitted to the CERD and will be used for preparing the next national UPR report, as well as upcoming reporting obligations (CEDAW and CAT).

SIMORE reinforced civil society capacities to assess the human rights situation: Civil society organizations and human rights defenders used SIMORE to assess human rights in the country and to identify progress and challenges in the State's fulfilment of human rights obligations. This was the case, for instance, regarding the Annual Human Rights Report prepared by CODEHUPY.

Academia capacities to promote human rights were strengthened: Universities also used SIMORE in exercises, investigations and materials prepared by students and teachers.

Special procedures capacities to identify relevant challenges reinforced: SIMORE assisted in the preparation of data for special procedures, including the official visit of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in November 2014.

Capacity to protect rights of persons with disabilities and follow-up of relevant recommendations strengthened: Information retrieved from SIMORE was used as a baseline to assess the situation of persons with disabilities, in preparing a National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Capacity to apply human rights based approach to poverty eradication policies improved: the SIMORE experience, particularly the working group on recommendations related to poverty, provided an opportunity to identify significant challenges on which to base further work on capacity development for inclusive and rights-based poverty reduction with the Secretary of Social Action (SAS).

Regional human rights mechanisms promoted and follow-up capacities strengthened: The fact that SIMORE includes information on Inter-American Court on Human Rights decisions and rulings regarding Paraguayan cases strengthens the ability for follow-up. Furthermore, SIMORE made it possible to share relevant information with regional mechanisms and bodies, particularly the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The HRA had the opportunity to share SIMORE information with the Executive Secretary of the IACHR and to use SIMORE information to send inputs to the IACHR on recommendations related to indigenous women.

Lessons learned

Lessons learned in the process, worth mentioning are:

International recommendations as entry point for OHCHR cooperation: Using international recommendations as an entry point for most of the OHCHR activities and with counterparts in Paraguay allowed the HRA and her team to build cooperation based on previous achievements, such as the "Search Portal for international recommendations Made to Paraguay", designed in 2011, as well as other ongoing related projects;

Search Portal for international recommendations as key precursor: The existence of a previous Search Portal for international recommendations mentioned above, with different search criteria, was essential for the creation of SIMORE, an upgraded version that includes the addition of information about concrete follow-up actions taken by the State on international recommendations.

SIMORE as a practical tool for the UNCT: The search portal initially, and later, SIMORE, allowed the United National Country Team (UNCT) to include specific actions for following up on international recommendations in their Annual Work Plan, as well as the integration of recommendations into United Nations' agency programs. Consequently, SIMORE represents an added value through which UNCT capacity to integrate a human rights based approach was strengthened, particularly considering that SIMORE facilitates access to relevant information and provides a concrete and practical tool for UNCT to work with on these issues;

SIMORE as a practical tool for the international community: The international community, including donors and cooperation partners, has a practical tool to guide the planning and implementation of projects that reinforce the integration of a human rights based approach and supports both the State in following up on international recommendations and civil society in following up and monitoring the fulfilment of State obligations.

The relevance of UPR Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance support: The availability of additional funds and resources, with the support of the Fund for UPR Implementation, reinforced the HRA's local capacities and allowed for better use of opportunities for improving State empowerment on human rights issues. In this context, the integration of the UPR project with the OHCHR field presence's annual work plan enhanced results and multiplied perspectives by linking different processes using the follow-up of recommendations as a cross-cutting approach;

SIMORE experience as an opportunity to make visible priorities and challenges: Furthermore, the comprehensive approach of the project in terms of issues and counterparts made some thematic national priorities, for example, poverty, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples' rights, visible as relevant issues to be focused on and included in the second stage of the cooperation related to the follow-up of international recommendations associated to those issues;

The importance of a State coordination mechanism: The existence of an inter-institutional mechanism to coordinate the State's human rights policies and strategies, such as the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, was an added value to the process, particularly in the achievement of a satisfying collaborative work environment among the State institutions. The partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the coordination of the project contributed to associating national policy mandates with the international agenda. The SIMORE project provided the opportunity to empower public servants on human rights issues, including those from institutions generally not familiar with human rights concepts and mechanism;

SIMORE as an opportunity to improve synergies for promoting human rights: The existence of this kind of platform has been strategic in opening windows of opportunity and engaging new actors such as the UNCT, the international community, NGO's and others in the follow-up of international recommendations and the effective integration of a human rights based approach;

A comprehensive human rights agenda for the three branches of the State: The involvement of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches in the process means a greater likelihood for the integration of human rights in the State's agenda, as well as the sustainability of its commitments;

The SIMORE experience allowed for working on sensitive human rights issues: The participatory inter-institutional process was an opportunity for OHCHR to advocate for important sensitive human rights issues such as discrimination, poverty, women, indigenous and LGBT rights, including with State actors less familiar with human rights issues.

SIMORE User Manual and Regulations: The Regulations and User Manual strengthened expectations for sustainability of SIMORE;

The importance of documenting best practices such as SIMORE: After working on the systematization of the process, the OHCHR's capacity to exchange best practices and lessons learned was improved and the experience can be helpful for similar processes;
A monitoring tool for civil society: SIMORE represents an opportunity to enhance civil society's capacities to monitor and advocate for the implementation and follow-up of international recommendations on human rights;

SIMORE as an exercise of transparency and accountability: Making the information SIMORE provides available to the public, strengthens the State's transparency and accountability regarding its human rights obligations to its population and the international community.

Conclusions and Perspectives

The Project on the Follow-up and Monitoring of International Recommendations in Paraguay, allowed State institutions with the support of the HRA and her team, to develop a digital platform for follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of international recommendations. This digital platform is SIMORE.

SIMORE contains up-to-date online information, available to the public. A tool for choosing different search criteria makes it easier to access information about recommendations and their follow-up, such as public policies, related indicators, and main issues and challenges faced in implementation, for each of the recommendations. In this way, SIMORE is both a practical and essential tool for integrating international recommendations into planning, implementing, monitoring and assessing public policies and State programs and strategies. Consequently, SIMORE is the foundation for effectively protecting and guaranteeing human rights in the country.

SIMORE helped to strengthen the State's capacities. Today, accurate and up-to-date information can be accessed for the fulfilment of international obligations and for reporting to treaty bodies, SPs, and the HRC on progress in the implementation of related recommendations, including the UPR. SIMORE also facilitates the State's capacity to comply with regional obligations, particularly decisions made by the Inter-American Court on Human Rights.

SIMORE also gives a valuable platform to strengthen the Paraguayan contribution to the Human Rights Council by promoting the follow-up of human rights recommendations as well as raising awareness on the importance of integrating a human rights based approach in national policies. It also gives the opportunity to contribute in supporting the High Commissioner action for advocating and providing cooperation to UN state members in the fulfilling of their human rights obligations.

Although the cooperation project was designed and implemented during different political administrations, which presented challenges in terms of institutional empowerment and timeframe, it has provided an opportunity to empower the coordination among State institutions, including the Judiciary and the Legislative branch, by working on a common agenda, as well as engaging new actors and supporting the integration of a cross-cutting human rights approach to be used by public servants in State institutions and policies.

In this context, foreseen challenges are mainly concerns about changes in the government and public administrations as well as in the State's weaknesses regarding the production of indicators to adequately measure the impact of actions and public policies related to human rights. Consequently, the consolidation of SIMORE will depend on continuing to empower the State and the political will to update information and regularly use SIMORE as a practical planning tool. On the other hand, the software programming language is built on the same language used by the State, thus allowing any adjustments and updating to be done easily, ensuring its sustainability.
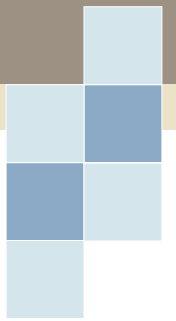
All that being said, the SIMORE experience followed a path from the design of a work methodology to the production of a tool that is currently functioning and available to non-governmental organizations, academia and the media, as well as to the general public. Access to the information SIMORE provides helps to ensure the continuity and the sustainability of the mechanism for following up and monitoring the implementation of international human rights recommendations made to Paraguay. In addition, this positive experience serves as an example for the region and beyond.

ANNEX

Timeline

2009   Creation of the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch

By Decree 2290/2009, for the first time, a Human Rights entity was created to specifically strengthen the Paraguayan government's coordination of policies, plans and programmes among State institutions for improving the human rights situation in the country,.

2010   Deployment of the OHCHR HRA to the country.

2010   Preparation of the Universal Periodic Review & TBs reports

The Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, requested cooperation from the OHCHR for the preparation and submission of the national report for UPR in 2010.

Between 2010 and 2012, Paraguay submitted all overdue reports to the TBs with the HRA's team support.

2011   Design of the "Search Portal for International Human Rights Recommendations made to Paraguay" (Buscador de Recomendaciones Internacionales de Derechos Humanos a Paraguay)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested cooperation from HRA to design a tool to facilitate the access of information regarding international recommendations made to Paraguay by TBs, SPs and UPR, as well as by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. As a result, a Search Portal for international recommendations made to Paraguay was created, allowing the State, civil society and the general public to easily access reliable information. This tool was essential for integrating relevant recommendations for the assessment included in the National Human Rights Action Plan designed in 2011 and adopted in 2012.

2012   Cooperation of the HRA and her team through the Fund for UPR Implementation.

A cooperation project was submitted by the HRA to the Fund for UPR Implementation to improve State institutions' capacities to follow-up and monitor the implementation of international recommendations, as well as their capacity to provide accurate information and reporting on the human rights situation in the country.
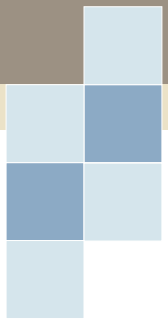
2013   UPR Follow up Project

2014   Launching of SIMORE by the Government of Paraguay

2015   Paraguay becomes a new member of the Human Rights Council and one of its Vice-Presidents for 2015.

2015   Follow up of recommendations on poverty, indigenous people's rights and persons with disabilities rights and consolidation of SIMORE (Fund for UPR Implementation Project)

		Year	2013							2014				
		Month	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	01	02	03	04	05

Overall Objective	Strengthen State institutions' capacities for follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of international recommendations, as well as the capacity for reporting on the situation of human rights in the country.
Specific Objective	Establish a mechanism for follow-up and monitoring international human rights recommendations

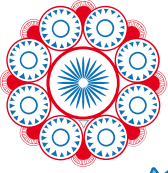| Activities	Tasks	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	01	02	03	04	05
Start of technical cooperation to formalize an inter-institutional agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and Labor, to design a mechanism for follow-up and monitoring of recommendations.	**Preparatory meetings.**	▓											
	Designation of focal points to coordinate the project, by the State. Invitations to other branches of the State.		▓	▓									
	Meetings with focal points.			▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Preparation of inter-institutional work agenda.	Preparation of an **agenda proposal**.		▓	▓									
	Meetings to **approve and adjust time frames in the work agenda**.			▓	▓								
Definition of methodological design for the follow-up and monitoring of international recommendations based on the online search portal for recommendation on the Ministry of Affairs and UN Human Rights websites.	**Presentation of project** to high State authorities.				▓								
	Training workshops on Paraguay's international human rights obligations and recommendations given to Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, CICSI and other relevant State public servants.					▓							
	Workshops to **systemize recommendations** based on						▓						
	search portal recommendations.												
	Approval of methodology for follow-up on international recommendations.					▓	▓						
Systemization of recommendations, designation of institutions responsible for coordinating their implementation, as well as time frames and actions to be carried out.	Workshops to identify **institutions responsible** for implementing recommendations.						▓						
	Workshops **to prioritize follow-up** on recommendations.						▓						
	Meetings with civil society organizations about the prioritization of follow-up on recommendations.								▓				
	Adjustments to prioritization of follow-up on recommendations.							▓					
Design and development of software for systemization, follow-up and monitoring of international recommendations. The tool will have a training and user manual.	Work meetings to **design software** based on tools with an approved methodology.							▓					
	Inter-branch meetings for the **approval of the software.**								▓				
	Preparation of **software operating manual** that includes a module on accountability.								▓	▓			

Activity	Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Trainings for governmental institutions that make up the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, CICSI and other State branches on the correct use of the software.	**Training** workshops for focal points from the governmental institution that make up the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch, CICSI and other State branches, **on the use, updating, and follow-up of recommendations**.											■			
	Inter-branch **meetings**, that include the Office of the Ombudsman, **for updating,**											■	■		
	processing and entering of information into the software.											■	■		
	Meetings with **civil society organizations** about the software for the follow-up of recommendations.												■		
Specific Objective	Prepare **a national report on progress of the implementation of international recommendations**, particularly the UPR.														
Preparation of a report on progress of the implementation of international recommendations, particularly the UPR.	Inter-branch work meetings with focal points who participated in the process, to **write a mid-term report** for the Universal Periodic Review.												■	■	
	Presentation of mid-term report to **civil society** organizations.														■
Preparation of a systemization report about the follow-up of international recommendations process, good practices in Paraguay.	Preparation of a systemization of the process.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Approval of the systemization.														■
	Publication and presentation of the systemization.														■

Follow-up Flowchart

1. Pending

2. Sent for verification

Administration

3. Approved for printing

4. Rejected

Follow-up

SIMORE

Follow-up

Public servant

Thematic working groups

6. Published

Public

Follow-up

Administration

5. Submitted for publication

Follow-up

SIMORE