

Concept note

Follow-up activities Eswatini

Background information

Eswatini ratified the ICCPR in 2004 and, and its implementation of the Covenant was reviewed by the Human Rights Committee for the first time in 2017. Three recommendations were selected for the follow-up procedure, and their implementation was evaluated by the Committee in October 2020. All recommendations received either a B or a C grade, which have the following meaning:

- B: Reply/action partially satisfactory: The State party has taken steps towards the implementation of the recommendation, but additional information or action remains necessary.
- C: Reply/action not satisfactory: A response has been received, but action taken or information provided by the State party is not relevant or does not implement the recommendation.

Eswatini's next periodic report is due on 28 July 2021. The aim of these activities is twofold:

- Disseminate the evaluation of the Human Rights Committee of the three priority recommendations among the relevant stakeholders: civil society, NHRI and authorities
- Raise awareness about Eswatini's upcoming reporting obligation under the ICCPR.

The recommendations selected for follow-up were the following:

Violence against women	
The State party should:	B
(a) Promptly adopt legislation to effectively criminalize and combat sexual offences and domestic violence;	B
(b) Provide relevant actors in the police, public prosecution and judiciary with training on sexual and gender-based violence and on evidence gathering for such cases;	B
(c) Strengthen its efforts to raise the awareness of the wider public to the adverse impact of sexual and gender-based violence and encourage reporting, inter alia by systematically informing women and children of their rights and of the existing legal avenues through which they can receive protection;	B
(d) Ensure that all cases of sexual and gender-based violence are thoroughly investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, are punished with appropriate sanctions, and that victims receive full reparation;	C
(e) Ensure that victims have access to effective remedies and means of protection, including to an adequate number of psychological and educational centres, and that other support services, such as accommodation or shelters, are available in all parts of the country.	C
Freedom of expression, assembly and association	
The State party should prevent and redress attacks on human rights defenders and other social activists and promptly adopt legislation to ensure that any restriction on the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association complies with the strict requirements in the Covenant.	B

The State party should take all measures necessary to protect the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly and ensure that police officials, judges and prosecutors receive adequate training regarding such protection.

B

Participation in public affairs, and corruption

The State party should bring its constitutional framework into compliance with the Covenant, including with article 25, inter alia by: (a) Fostering a culture of political pluralism, ensuring freedom of genuine and pluralistic political debate, and allowing the registration of opposition political parties, including to contest elections, field candidates and participate in the formation of government;

C

(b) Undertaking a constitutional reform process with the objective of devolving power to democratically elected branches of government, and guaranteeing the right of every citizen to take part in the conduct of public affairs and have access to public service on general terms of equality;

C

(c) Guaranteeing free and fair elections;

C

(d) Ensuring the independence and effectiveness of the bodies in charge of elections and anti-corruption.

C

Activities

1. **An informal meeting for civil society organizations** that aims to give the necessary background information for the upcoming activity. That includes information about the follow-up procedure of the Human Rights Committee, the grading, and preparations of the statements that will be read during the round table.

Proposal: 7 April, 10am-1pm

10h00-10h15	Opening remarks	
10h15-10h45	Background about the ICCPR process since 2017	FSEJ
10h45-11h15	Violence against women : an update	WLSA or SWAGGA & ROH
11h15-11h30	Break	
11h30-12h00	Freedom of expression, association and assembly; an update	Political Assembly or SUDF or Council of Churches
12h00-12h30	Participation in public affairs and corruption : an update	FSEJ
12h30-13h00	Next steps on ICCPR Eswatini	CCPR-Centre
13h00	Closure of the meeting	

2. **A round table with all the relevant stakeholders** to raise awareness of Eswatini's reporting obligations under the ICCPR. The stakeholders include authorities, including the intermenstrual drafting committee, representatives of the NHRI and CSOs. The NHRI of Eswatini, the Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration, will be invited to co-host this event. The programme will consist of several elements:

- a. Vasilka Sancin, Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Committee, will provide background information about the follow-up procedure, and present the recommendations with their grading.
- b. CSOs will present their remaining concerns.
- c. The CCPR Centre will focus on the next review cycle.

Proposal: 14 April, 10am-1pm

Both meetings will be physical, with remote participation from speakers outside Eswatini.