



# The UNCRC Simplified Reporting Procedure (SRP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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## 1. What is the Simplified Reporting Procedure (SRP)?

The SRP is an optional mechanism offered to States parties in reporting to the UN treaty bodies, which is currently known as the “List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR) procedure”. The LOIPR is a public list of limited issues that the treaty body adopts based on a document review, including reports prepared by UNICEF and UN agencies, NGOs, children, NHRIs, Ombudspersons and other stakeholders. The LOIPR aims to help States in preparing reports that are focused on key priority areas and are shorter to follow the new words limit imposed by the GA resolution to all State reports, independently from the type of reporting procedure (31,800 words for initial reports, 21,200 words for subsequent periodic reports). The replies of the State to the LOIPR, together with a common core document, constitute the State report.

No further written information is required from the State until the dialogue with the treaty body, as the practice of transmitting a list of issues following the receipt of the report of the State is eliminated. The constructive dialogue is conducted based on the State report in reply to the LOIPR.

For more information on the SRP please refer to:

- [CRC Committee webpage on SRP](#), including [Information note for States parties](#) and [Information note for Stakeholders](#)
- [OHCHR paper on the Simplified Reporting Procedure for the Twenty-sixth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies](#)
- [CCPR Working Methods on the SRP](#)
- [CAT Working Methods on the SRP](#)
- [CEDAW Working Methods on the SRP](#)
- [CRPD Working Methods on the SRP](#)
- [UN General Assembly resolution 68/268](#)

## 2. Why is the CRC Committee implementing the SRP?

The CRC has started to implement the SRP to follow the recommendations that UN member States made in the UN General Assembly resolution 68/268. This resolution was adopted in April 2014 for strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

The 68/268 **resolution encourages treaty bodies to offer the SRP to States, and likewise encourages States to consider using such a SRP**, if offered to them. The goals are:

- “to facilitate the preparation of States’ reports and the interactive dialogue on the implementation of their treaty obligations”;
- to ensure “efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the treaty bodies, in particular regarding the backlog of reports”.

Concerning the States’ reporting compliance, it is worth noting that States reporting to the CRC Committee generally perform better than States engaging with other treaty bodies.

The CRC Committee has in fact been particularly affected by the problem of the backlog due to the high amount of ratifications of the CRC and its Optional Protocols. This problem has been resolved thanks to the introduction of the double chamber and to the provision of additional

meeting time by the resolution (§26). It now has a “healthy backlog” that allows planning and reasonable time for children’s rights defenders to engage in an effective manner, especially children.

The Committee decided to introduce the SRP only after having overcome the problem of backlog.

### 3. What is the treaty body strengthening process?

The treaty body strengthening process is an inter-governmental review that started in 2009 and had the objective to address several challenges related to the functioning of the treaty bodies, such as the:

- low States’ rates of reporting compliance;
- low States’ rates of implementation of treaty bodies recommendations;
- mounting workloads within the time and resources provided to treaty bodies by the General Assembly, creating a backlog of work;
- increase in number of treaty bodies and demands of the ‘treaty body system’ on States and the UN budget;
- diverging working methods among the treaty bodies.

The treaty body strengthening process built on previous initiatives and culminated in the adoption of the 68/268 resolution in April 2014. The implementation of the resolution is reviewed in two ways:

- A biennial report by the UN Secretary-General on the state of the treaty body system;
- An overall review of the effectiveness of the measures taken pursuant to resolution 68/268 no later than 2020.

For more information about the Treaty Body strengthening process check out these pages:

- [OHCHR website](#)
- <http://research.un.org/en/treatybodies>
- [Universal Rights Group](#)
- <http://www.universal-rights.org/blog/the-un-general-assembly-and-the-strengthening-the-united-nations-human-rights-treaty-body-system/>

### 4. Do other Treaty Bodies implement the SRP?

This procedure is being implemented in different ways by the Committee Against Torture (since 2007), the Human Rights Committee (since 2010), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (since 2013), the Committee on Migrant Workers and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (since 2014). For example, the Committee on Migrant Workers applies the SRP to both periodic and long-overdue initial reports whereas the Human Rights Committee and the Committee Against Torture only apply it to periodic reports. CERD is gradually adopting the LOIPR for late-reporting States parties. For the countries to be reviewed during the 94th session, it will produce a list of themes (not list of issues) to the States parties 4-6 weeks before the session. The list is not exclusive and issues which are not included in the list can be raised by civil society for the actual review.

In 2011, the Committee Against Torture and the Human Rights Committee were requested by the Chairpersons of the Treaty Bodies to report on their experiences in implementing the SRP. However, as of April 2017, no public information is available about whether an assessment has been conducted or not, and its results.

## 5. How is the SRP simplifying the reporting process?

Under the normal reporting procedure, States are requested to:

1. Send to the Committee a comprehensive report;
2. Send to the Committee focused replies to its list of issues;
3. Participate in the session dialogue.

With the SRP, the first two steps are merged and States are only tasked to send a report to respond to the Committee's list of issues, in addition to the common core document. The list of issues is therefore made by the Committee without using any information provided by the State beforehand.

Additionally, the SRP is meant to be a fast procedure. States that are reviewed under the SRP are fast tracked and their session (dialogue between the Committee and the State) should be scheduled first after the submission of the State report.

Finally, the resolution calls upon treaty bodies to "limit on the number of questions in the list of issues and focus on areas seen as priority issues". The review of the country situation is therefore supposed to be more focused and less comprehensive than is currently the case. As explained by OHCHR, "the simplified reporting procedure streamlines and enhances the State party review by rendering it more focused and effective, as both the constructive dialogue and concluding observations focus on areas that the treaty body concerned sees as priority areas for consideration in a given State party at a given point in time"<sup>1</sup>.

The assumption behind this is that States will be more guided in their follow-up responsibilities by receiving less and more specific issues to work on.

## 6. Is the SRP ensuring better quality of State reports?

The SRP follows the recommendations listed in the 68/268 resolution, which include several requests for the OHCHR to support States parties in implementing their treaty obligations, whether they are reviewed under the SRP or the old procedure. Through advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building, the 68/268 resolution suggests that support from OHCHR to State parties relating to State reports should include:

- providing direct assistance to States parties at the national level by building and developing institutional capacity for reporting to treaty bodies and strengthening technical knowledge through ad hoc training on reporting guidelines at the national level;

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<sup>1</sup> [OHCHR paper on the Simplified Reporting Procedure for the Twenty-sixth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies](#)

- facilitating the sharing of best practices among States parties, such as improving coordination of reporting at the national level;
- deploying a dedicated human rights capacity-building officer in every regional office of OHCHR, as required.

Hence, there is not an explicit direct link between the SRP and better State report, the quality of which will continue to be dependent on the States' capacity to monitor, collect data and report accordingly. OHCHR's assistance and capacity building to States is key to improve to these processes, including by establishing or strengthening the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up<sup>2</sup>.

## 7. Does the CRC Committee have more resources to implement the SRP?

In the 68/268 resolution, States have recognised that “the current allocation of resources has not allowed the human rights treaty body system to work in a sustainable and effective manner”. The resolution allocates more meeting time (including human resources to OHCHR) to:

- review more State reports per year;
- deal with individual communications;
- conduct field visits.

The CRC Committee has benefitted from the first two points, as it is not mandated to conduct country visits. However, while more meeting time was allocated for States reviews (without link to a specific reporting procedure), the Committee and its Secretariat were not provided with the additional necessary human resources. Moreover, no additional meeting time was allocated for individual communications under the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention.

## 8. What are the implications of the SRP on children's rights defenders?

The change of the reporting cycle has huge implications on the way that children's rights defenders can engage in the CRC reporting cycle, in both a practical and substantive sense. The entry points for children's rights defenders differ in scope and time from those of the original cycle. For instance, the timeline of the process is very different and starts with a document from the Committee (the LOIPR) and not a document from the State (the State report) as it currently the case.

The LOIPR is meant to focus the dialogue with the State and the Concluding Observations on a limited number of issues<sup>3</sup>. The content of the LOIPR will define the content of the entire review and, to some extent, will impact the inputs that children's rights defenders can provide. For example, if the LOIPR does not include a certain topic, the Committee might or might not decide to discuss that topic with children's rights defenders within the pre-session. On the other hand, it is still possible that if an issue that the Committee considers relevant was not included in the

<sup>2</sup> See [OHCHR Guide on National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up](#)

<sup>3</sup> The 68/268 resolution encourages treaty bodies to set a limit on the number of questions included in the LOIPR. In this line, OHCHR has recommended to the treaty bodies Chairpersons that they “endorse and recommend for implementation by their respective treaty bodies the draft common format for the list of issues prior to reporting, with a limit on the number of questions asked (25 questions)<sup>3</sup>, treaty bodies are using LOIPR that differ in terms of content, format and number of questions. See [OHCHR paper on the Simplified Reporting Procedure for the Twenty-sixth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies](#)

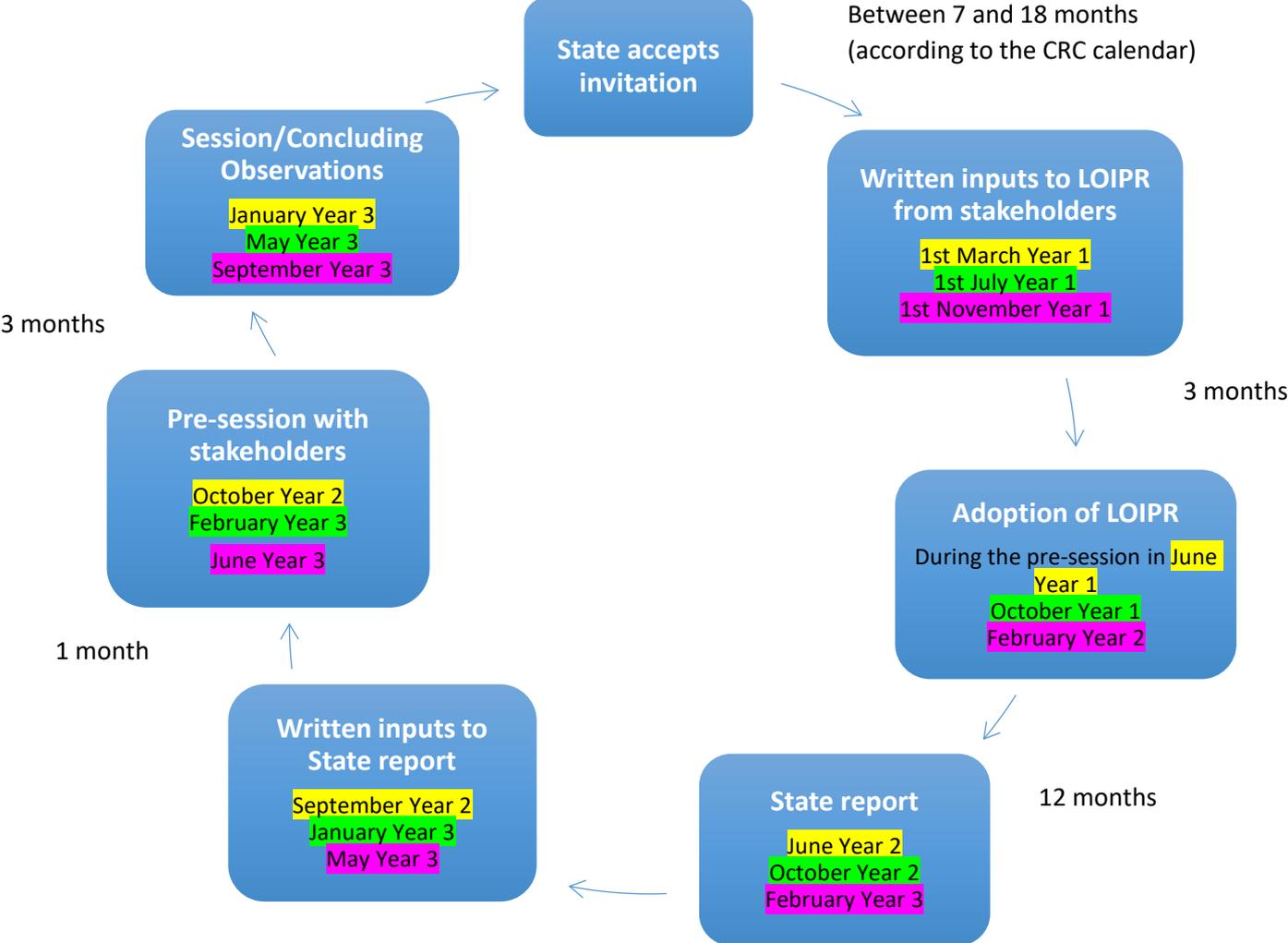
LOIPR, the Committee could still discuss it with children’s rights defenders as well as with the State during the session. The LOIPR will in fact, as the current List of Issues, including a sentence saying that the Committee might ask questions on the whole Convention and Optional Protocols – when relevant – during the dialogue.

**9. How is the SRP cycle?**

The Committee is implementing the SRP with pilot modalities that might be changed or adapted in the future. The Committee will evaluate the impact of the SRP throughout the reporting cycle and will assess positive and negative aspects in view of ensuring quality and effectiveness of the system.

As of June 2017, the CRC Committee has defined the modalities and timeline of the SRP - including inputs from “stakeholders”<sup>4</sup>, as well as children’s inputs - before the adoption of the LOIPR and after the submission of the State Report.

Below, you can find the reporting cycle as it looks like under the UN CRC SRP.



<sup>4</sup> The Committee uses the term “stakeholders” to refer to NGOs, coalitions, NHRIs, Ombudspersons, UNICEF and other UN agencies, as well as independent experts.

The Committee is not planning to make any major change to the Concluding Observations under the SRP. These should have the same format of the current ones, including urgent issues for States that have been reviewed twice already. However, it is expected that the Concluding Observations will reflect the LOIPR and won't therefore be as comprehensive as under the old procedure.

It is not yet clear whether the Committee will formalize a follow-up procedure in the framework of the SRP.

## 10. How the CRC LOIPR look like?

As of June 2017, the Committee has made the following decisions on the content and the format of the LOIPR:

- The LOIPR are structured according to the Committee's current clusters;
- The LOIPR include:
  - ✓ questions related to selected recommendations of previous Concluding Observations to the State. While some may be addressed more in general (*i.e.* what measures have been taken to implement recommendation No. X and what is the situation today?), for others, the Committee may ask more specific questions;
  - ✓ recent developments in the State, including emerging issues;
  - ✓ a standing question to allow the State to raise any other issue it may want to;
  - ✓ questions on general and specific statistics (for the State to provide in annex to its report).

The Committee drafts the LOIPR based on the information provided by its Secretariat and other stakeholders, including children's rights defenders and children.

As referred to in section n°8, the Committee may decide to ask additional questions to the States during the session dialogue, even if these were not included in the LOIPR.

## 11. What type of written inputs can children's rights defenders submit before and after the LOIPR?

**Three months before the adoption of the LOIPR**, children's rights defenders can submit written information, based on the guidelines below:

- The submission should include emerging trends and key issues that children's rights defenders think should be covered in the LOIPR;
- Under each of the issues proposed, children's rights defenders should include a set of questions with a brief explanation of the context, and why the issue should be included in the LOIPR. The questions may or may not be related to previous Concluding Observations.
- Children's rights defenders should – as far as possible – follow the Committee's clusters. However, reports can also focus on cross-cutting or thematic issues.
- Adults' submissions should – as far as possible – respect this word limit: 10'000 words for comprehensive report and 3'000 for thematic reports. These limits do not apply to children's submissions.

**This first submission is meant to be a short and less detailed report focusing on questions for the LOIPR and not recommendations for the Concluding Observations. The submissions can be confidential.**

It is also important to note that at their twenty-second annual meeting, in 2011, the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies agreed that national human rights institutions and civil society, including NGOs, play an essential role with regard to the preparation of lists of issues prior to reporting, and their active participation in the process is encouraged.

**One month before the pre-session**, children’s rights defenders can submit written information, based on the guidelines below:

- The reports should follow as much as possible the same structure of the LOIPR. Thematic reports, should refer to the relevant issues/questions in the LOIPR.
- Children’s rights defenders should provide more detailed information than the first report, including:
  - ✓ More detailed information on the issues/questions included in the first submission;
  - ✓ Information on new developments;
  - ✓ Comments to the State report;
  - ✓ Questions for the dialogue;
  - ✓ Proposed recommendations for the Concluding Observations;
  - ✓ Gaps in the LOIPR and the State Report.
- Word limit: The Committee has set specific word limits of 20’000 words for comprehensive reports and 6’000 for thematic reports. This will not apply to children’s submissions.

**This second submission is meant to be the comprehensive “alternative report”. The submissions can be confidential.**

The Committee is aware of the short timeframe for this second submission, and it therefore encourages stakeholders to start preparing the report based on the LOIPR and their on-going monitoring and data-collection process.

## **12. What type of oral inputs can children’s rights defenders after the LOIPR?**

**After the LOIPR**, the Committee will hold its pre-session as soon as the State report is received and three months before the session with the State (*i.e.* October 2019 for dialogue in January 2020). As per the current pre-sessions, the Committee will invite selected stakeholders, including UNICEF, other UN agencies, NHRIs, Ombudspersons, and children’s rights defenders, including children. During the pre-session, the Committee will hold online or in-person children’s meeting with children, as it is the case today.

### 13. How is the CRC Committee implementing the SRP?

The CRC Committee decided to start implementing the SRP as of 2016. In November 2016, the Committee invited the first group of States to decide whether they want to be reviewed under the SRP or not.

The Committee is taking a progressive approach and will be inviting more States at the end of every session as it is an on-going and optional procedure. For more information and for identifying the States that will be invited please look at the [Treaty Bodies' calendar](#) and the [SRP calendar](#).

Invitation to State parties includes a deadline to answer. The State parties can decide:

- to reply positively and opt-in;
- to reply negatively and opt-out;
- to not reply: in that case, the CRC Committee considers that the State opts-out.

**Only the States that are invited by the Committee can accept to be reviewed under the SRP.**

As of June 2019, the CRC Committee has adopted LOIPR for [Croatia](#), [Hungary](#), [Poland](#) and [Luxembourg](#).

### 14. How does Child Rights Connect work on the SRP?

In the last 30 years and more, it has been proven that for the CRC reporting process to be able to have a positive impact on children's lives, children's rights defenders must engage in a strategic and on-going manner.

Child Rights Connect will empower children's rights defenders<sup>5</sup>, especially children, to effectively engage in the CRC SRP thanks to the complementary expertise of Child Rights Connect's Secretariat and members. The first being an expert on the CRC Committee's overall work and jurisprudence and children's participation at international level, while the latter being the experts on the country/regional situations, specific themes and children's participation at national and regional level.

Child Rights Connect will maximize the potential of its network to make sure that the SRP is, as much as possible, effective and useful for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols at the national level.

Child Rights Connect has a solid and longstanding partnership with the CRC Committee and its Secretariat, thanks to its unique expertise on the Committee and its reporting cycle. In view of this, in 2015 the Committee invited Child Rights Connect to join its SRP working group as the only civil society representative, in addition to UNICEF and OHCHR.

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<sup>5</sup> Children's rights defenders refer to children, children's organizations and groups, NGOs (including Child Rights Connect's members), coalitions of NGOs, UNICEF National Committees, Ombudspersons for children and National Human Rights Institutions.