



GLION HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE

Tenth Glion Human Rights Dialogue (Glion X)

16 and 17 October 2024, Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco

Transforming universal norms into local reality – NMIRFs and the strengthening of the UN human rights system's effectiveness and on-the-ground impact

Concept Note

The Glion Human Rights Dialogue is a high-level event bringing together around 85 human rights practitioners and thinkers. It is designed to provide an informal space for open exchange, as well as new and innovative thinking. The meeting is held under the 'Chatham House rule' and regularly includes the participation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council, Assistant UN Secretary-General's, members of the Human Rights Council at ambassador level, UN independent experts, UN Resident Coordinators, NGOs, and business leaders.

Over its nine years of existence, the Glion Human Rights Dialogue has established itself as the international community's preeminent space for open and inclusive discussion on the world's foremost human rights challenges and opportunities.

The historic tenth Glion Human Rights Dialogue (Glion X) will be organised by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Universal Rights Group, in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Mexico, Paraguay, Portugal, The Gambia, Marshall Islands, and Thailand. The Glion X retreat, to be held from 16-17 October 2024, has been preceded by three preparatory policy dialogues, and will be followed by one or more launch event(s).

■ Theme of Glion X

The overall theme of the 2024 Glion Human Rights Dialogue will be 'Transforming universal norms into local reality – NMIRFs and the strengthening of the UN human rights system's effectiveness and on-the-ground impact.'

The international community has invested enormous time and energy in building the international human rights system over the past 70 years. Today it comprises, inter alia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nine core human rights instruments (international treaties) and various international human rights mechanisms – namely, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). These mechanisms are designed to oversee States' compliance with their international legal obligations, hold duty-bearers to account, and recommend domestic legislative and policy reforms to improve future compliance. They also engage and facilitate national and international dialogue and cooperation on human rights issues, foster the integration of human rights within the UN system,

promote human rights mainstreaming, connect various sectors of society, and draw attention to all human rights issues, including those that might otherwise remain invisible.

This system has, on occasion, been confronted with the questions over the degree to which it is capable of, and is succeeding in, securing real-world change – i.e., demonstrable improvements in the on-the-ground enjoyment of human rights. According to this narrative, an ‘implementation or knowledge gap’ has developed between universal values and local realities.

Over the past ten years there have been a growing number of initiatives by States, the UN system, and other stakeholders to address these persistent questions. During that time, far more thought and attention has been paid to the ‘mechanics of implementation’ (i.e., the systems and processes through which States translate universal norms into local reality), as well as to what role the Council, in concert with the wider UN system, can and should play in supporting implementation, measuring impact, and highlighting progress.

Central to the former has been the emergence, especially in developing countries, of so-called ‘national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up’ (NMIRFs) – single, streamlined legal bodies that collate, manage, coordinate and track progress on the implementation of recommendations from all international human rights mechanisms (together, in some cases, with those from regional mechanisms). Some of these States, often supported by OHCHR, have also begun to develop sophisticated implementation and reporting software, to support the work of NMIRFs, and connect human rights implementation with progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

In 2018–2019, this revolution at national level began to be recognised and encouraged at UN level. A ‘group of friends on domestic implementation/NMIRFs’ was created in Geneva; subregional groups (e.g., the Pacific Community) began to hold meetings to share good practices and define practical guidance for the establishment and operation for NMIRFs; Paraguay and Brazil secured the adoption of a series of Council resolutions; and Morocco, Paraguay, and Portugal launched a new international network of NMIRFs, as the outcome of a 2022 meeting in Marrakech, and a follow-up meeting in Asuncion.

On the basis of these and other steps forward, today a major opportunity exists to catalyse the quantitative and qualitative development of NMIRFs, and thus further accelerate the international human rights ‘implementation agenda.’ One key dimension of that should be the elaboration, based on collated good practices from around the world, of some form of practical guidance framework to help States (developed and developing) that wish to establish and/or strengthen their NMIRFs to do so.

■ Proposed objectives and structure of Glion X

Glion X will seek to provide an informal and neutral ‘Chatham House’ space for all key stakeholders to share and identify key ‘good practices’ in the establishment and/or development of NMIRFs – i.e., the shared characteristics that make NMIRFs effective in transforming UN human rights recommendations into improved national laws, policies, and practices. The identification of core shared good practices will in turn contribute to the elaboration, through inclusive dialogue and cooperation, of a practical guidance framework, to help guide all States that so wish to establish and/or develop effective NMIRFs.

Ahead of Glion X, URG, in conjunction with partners, organised three preparatory informal consultations (pre-Glion dialogues) to provide a space for all interested States, civil society actors, and others, to participate in this process of dialogue and cooperation. Two of these focused on the development of NMIRFs. One seek sought to contribute to the Council’s ‘self-reflection’/‘self-assessment’ process, as part of wider consultations to develop a ‘Geneva’ contribution to the GA’s 2021-2026 review of the Council’s status.

The Glion retreat itself (to be held in Marrakech from 16-17 October 2024) will begin with a high-level opening plenary. This will be followed by a session consisting of three ‘breakout groups’ to explore the key characteristics (best practices) of effective NMIRFs in more detail. A closing plenary will then be convened to hear back from the breakout groups and further discuss the elaboration of a practical guidance framework for the establishment and/or strengthening of NMIRFs.

A report of the meeting, bringing together key discussion points, ideas, and proposals, will be compiled after the retreat, and presented at one or more launch event(s) at the United Nations.