

# **Bologna Expert Roundtable on Data Planning and Collection by National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-up (NMIRFs):**

## ***The role of local and regional governments and national statistical systems***

### **Summary and Main Takeaways**

The one-day [Expert Roundtable on Data Planning and Collection by National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-up \(NMIRFs\)](#) took place in Bologna on the 18th of April 2024, organized by the University of Bologna's Department of Legal Studies and the Geneva Human Rights Platform (GHRP), with the support of the Unit for Analysis, Programming, Statistical and Historic Documentation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy. This event focused on the integration of local and regional governments (LRGs) and national statistical systems in NMIRF-led data collection efforts. Delegates from Italy's NMIRF, including its President, along with representatives from the NMIRFs of Portugal, Paraguay, and Morocco, were present. Also in attendance were representatives from Italian LRGs, the Italian National Statistics Office, the OHCHR, think tanks, academia and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) working on the link between LRGs, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and NMIRFs.

The Roundtable was envisioned as a complementary initiative to the broader NMIRF agenda. Under the scope of [Human Rights Council resolution 51/33](#), the OHCHR was requested to organize seminars in Geneva in 2023 and 2024, with the purpose of fostering experience-sharing among States to bolster their NMIRFs, which have included [calls for enhanced participation of local and regional governments](#). The Bologna Expert Roundtable was conceived as an extension of this initiative, seeking to delve deeper into the information management capacity of NMIRFs whilst emphasizing the critical role of data planning and collection, particularly in collaboration with LRGs and national statistical systems. The [First International Seminar on NMIRFs in the Field of Human Rights](#) (Marrakech, 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022) – a collaborative endeavor between the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Danish Institute for Human Rights – served as a valuable opportunity to enhance cooperation and dialogue between NMIRFs. A recurring theme during this Seminar was the reiterated need for precise and current human rights data, deemed essential for effective monitoring, reporting, and follow-up. As such, the Marrakech Declaration calls for promoting the establishment and development of information systems to manage, process and analyze data related to the implementation of the recommendations of UN and regional human rights mechanisms, exchange experiences and provide support and technical assistance thereon.

Expanding on these premises, having acknowledged how the sharing of best practices is invaluable for the broader NMIRF community, the Bologna Expert Roundtable aimed at highlighting the critical role of data collection and analysis by NMIRFs in collaboration with LRGs and national statistical systems.

Moreover, the roundtable provided a valuable platform to tackle pertinent issues related to NMIRFs' information management capacity in the build up to the Second International Seminar on Exchange of Experiences among NMIRFs, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay (Asunción, 8-9 May 2024). In this occasion, two specific sessions will be dedicated to the involvement of LRGs as well as on information management systems and tools respectively.

## **Summary**

The Bologna Expert Roundtable revolved around three core themes:

### **1. Data Planning and Collection for Informed Decision-Making**

For NMIRFs, data transcends mere numbers as it serves as a critical tool for informed planning and decision-making in human rights implementation. The roundtable stressed the fundamental importance of collaboration between NMIRFs, LRGs and NSOs to tailor data planning and collection efforts in line with Human Rights Mechanisms' expectations for States, and to make use of data for well-informed decision-making and resource allocation. In this regard, it was also observed how a Human Rights Based Approach to Data (HRBAD), including through data disaggregation, is vital for obtaining accurate comprehension and making sound political decisions. Furthermore, it was deemed important to shape a common language and align positions between stakeholders more familiar with data collection on the SDGs (usually LRGs) and central government policies on human rights, respecting international standards in both areas, thus enhancing future implementation practices.

### **2. Data Planning and Collection as Tools to Foster Transparency, Accountability and Enhancing Public Awareness**

The roundtable highlighted the pivotal role of human rights data in advancing transparency and accountability. Transparent and accessible data collection practices not only foster public trust but also contribute to hold governments and institutions accountable in upholding human rights standards. Furthermore, the roundtable considered the possible benefits of promoting awareness of human rights standards, particularly through data dissemination, at all levels including local and regional, a strategy that can support democracy and non-discrimination.

### **3. Coordinated Collaboration in Data Planning and Collection**

Underscoring all the above themes, collaboration is another facet enhanced by data. It offers a shared language, facilitating NMIRFs' collaboration with LRGs and NSOs. Reliable data can also be a magnet for partnerships, enticing other organizations to collaborate or lend their support. Efficient coordination of data collection amongst national, regional and local stakeholders is key. Establishing or strengthening clear mechanisms for data collection, through NMIRFs - including the use of focal points within government ministries or institutions as well as when possible through "LRGs umbrella bodies" – may ensure that relevant and accurate information is consistently gathered. Ministerial focal points act as liaisons, streamlining the process. By standardizing data collection practices and maintaining strong communication channels, sustainability is enhanced, preventing information gaps that may arise due to inconsistent or sporadic reporting. In this regard, human rights actors at both national and international levels have introduced a growing number of digital tracking tools and databases designed to facilitate a more holistic approach to human rights monitoring and implementation. Such tools represent an innovative solution for all national human rights actors to better organize, coordinate and streamline information management and data collection across all levels of government on the steps taken to implement international human rights recommendations. In this sense, it is important to consider how digital technology may help towards increased coordination for human rights data collection and planning, including the potential for leveraging SDGs data collection systems to enhance the effectiveness of NMIRFs' functions.

## **Main takeaways**

### Data Planning and Collection for Informed Decision-Making:

- Collaborative Frameworks: The role of NMIRFs is critical in ensuring the participation of LRGs and NSOs in their activities, including the establishment of specific frameworks for data planning and collection tailored to human rights indicators. For NSO participation, it is important to ascertain their independent status to maintain their operational autonomy.
- Human Rights-Based Approach to Data (HRBAD): Integrate HRBAD in the data collection processes of LRGs and NSOs. This includes systematic data disaggregation by age, gender, ethnicity, location, and other relevant factors to ensure all community segments are represented and to aid in sound decision-making.
- Linking Human Rights Recommendations and the SDGs: Explore and implement ways to integrate SDGs data collection frameworks with human rights data collection processes. This integration can enhance the comprehensiveness and utility of data for policy-making and tracking progress on human rights commitments. Merging SDG data collection with human rights data through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) may facilitate such comprehensive approach. This allows the localization of human rights to highlight community actions, thus enhancing human rights reporting at the local and regional levels and linking it to the 2030 Agenda.

### Data Planning and Collection as Tools to Foster Transparency, Accountability, and Enhancing Public Awareness:

- Transparent Data Practices: LRGs and NSOs should adopt open data practices, making human rights data accessible to the public to foster trust and accountability.
- Education and Awareness Campaigns: Utilize data to educate the public about human rights norms and progress. LRGs could lead localized campaigns to disseminate findings and engage communities in dialogue, leveraging data to promote democracy and non-discrimination.

### Coordinated Collaboration in Data Planning and Collection:

- Central Coordination Point: Establish a central data coordination point within NMIRFs that liaises with LRGs and NSOs. This role could be responsible for harmonizing data collection methodologies and ensuring the reliability and timeliness of data flows.
- Digital Tools and Databases: digital human rights tracking tools not only assist in data planning and collection but also ensure data diversity and support institutional memory. Investment in the development and deployment of digital tools and databases may facilitate more comprehensive human rights monitoring processes across all levels of government.

Through such actions, LRGs and NSOs may significantly enhance their contribution to the effective functioning of NMIRFs, leading to more informed decision-making, enhanced transparency and accountability, and more robust human rights protection and promotion.