Human rights and the 2030 Agenda as mutually reinforcing: Ensuring no one is left behind while accelerating SDG implementation

INTRODUCTION
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places human rights at its core. In the words of Amina Mohammed, UN’s Deputy Secretary-General, “human rights are an intrinsic part of sustainable development -- and sustainable development is a powerful vehicle for the realization of all human rights.”\(^1\) Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, much progress has been made in increasing awareness on how the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are interrelated and mutually reinforcing and on the synergies between the two\(^2\).

Numerous practical tools and approaches have been developed to assist Member States to accelerate progress in SDG implementation by ensuring promotion and protection of human rights. Similarly, human rights actors at national level, including National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Equality bodies, can contribute to leaving no one behind by building trust and safeguarding spaces for dialogue between state actors and civil society, and by fostering data disaggregation processes. As expressed by Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, “the human rights approach leads to development that is more powerful, more sustainable and more effective, because it promotes empowerment, inclusiveness and equal opportunities for all”.

Accordingly, the work of the human rights and the development communities is becoming increasingly integrated and collaboration between relevant processes and bodies is expanding. Acknowledging that the 2030 Agenda is a human rights-based agenda, the Human Rights Council in resolution 37/24 adopted in March 2018, decided to organize two intersessional meetings for dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda, the outcomes of which are to...

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\(^2\) Human Rights Guide to SDGs shows that more than 92% of SDG targets find direct correspondence in human rights instruments.
directly inform the High-level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF) this year and in 2020.

The first of these meetings took place on January 16, 2019, in Geneva, and was convened under the theme of the upcoming HLPF, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. The meeting focused on the SDGs under review this year, namely SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Change), SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the goals). During the full day meeting, States, UN agencies, UN independent experts, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society organizations shared good practices, achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The proposed side event aims to share the outcomes of the intersessional meeting with the participants of the HLPF. The recommendations of the meeting and the discussions held offer valuable inspiration and concrete examples of ways to effectively integrate a human rights-based approach to SDG planning, implementation, monitoring and review, with a particular focus on key questions of relevance to this year’s HLPF:

a) How can we promote empowerment, inclusion and equality in SDG implementation?

b) What are the roles of the human rights mechanisms in supporting SDG processes?

c) How can we ensure adequate space for civil society, business and other partners?

OBJECTIVE AND FORMAT

The Human Rights Council intersessional meeting on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was an important step in documenting the numerous contributions of the human rights mechanisms and practitioners to national SDG implementation. It also helped concretize the multiple relationships between the sustainable development and the human rights agendas, and the challenges and opportunities related to speeding up progress on the implementation and monitoring of both through an integrated approach.

With a high-level panel of relevant actors in the field, this side event will disseminate the outcomes of the Human Rights Council meeting. The event will feature [one or two] high-level key note address[es], followed by an interactive discussion, opened by H. E. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN in New York. He will briefly present the outcomes of the inter-sessional meeting, prompting a discussion with panellists and participants, sharing experience on practical ways in which human rights and the SDGs can mutually reinforce each other. A question and answer session will follow, with H. E. Milenko E. Skoknic Tapia, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations closing the event.
ORGANIZER AND CO-ORGANIZERS:
Organizer: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Co-sponsors (Member States): Permanent Missions of Denmark, Chile, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Fiji, Luxembourg, Portugal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Thailand and Uruguay to the United Nations

Co-sponsors (equality bodies, civil society): The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, The Danish Institute for Human Rights, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Equinet, Universal Rights Group