Invitation by H.E. Mr. Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany


27 February, 2pm – 3.30pm

Venue: Trusteeship Council Chamber

The event “Advocating Human Rights in the 21st Century – building bridges between Geneva and New York” takes place under the umbrella of the Alliance for Multilateralism, which is a cross-regional network of partners who believe that strong and effective multilateral cooperation is an indispensable foundation for securing peace, stability and prosperity. A key element of our endeavors to defend and develop the rules-based multilateral order is the promotion and protection of human rights. The event also ties in with the ministerial meeting on multilateralism and international law organized in Geneva on 24th February by Germany and France.

Following the Appeal of 13th June 2016 to put human rights at the heart of conflict prevention supported by 71 States, Germany and Switzerland created the Human Rights / Conflict Prevention Caucuses in New York and Geneva. These cross-regional groups call upon UN actors to use the full preventive potential of the UN human rights instruments and to strengthen the link between New York and Geneva, in particular between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. These efforts are in support of the cross-pillar approach highlighted by the 2016 twin resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council on sustaining peace, which refer to the relevance of human rights for conflict prevention and for sustaining peace. In his report on the implementation of the twin resolutions, the Secretary-General notes that the collective work of the UN system to advance human rights “should help to identify the root causes of and responses to conflict. In that respect, it will remain imperative for the peace and security and development pillars to make better use of the existing human rights mechanisms, such as special procedures, the treaty bodies and the universal periodic review, and their recommendations in support of Member States”.

An intensified exchange between Geneva and New York is also necessary with regard to specific contemporary human rights issues such as women’s rights and gender equality, the effects of climate change on human rights, and risks and opportunities of digitalization and artificial intelligence for the protection of human rights.

Against this background, the side event upon invitation by German Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Heiko Maas, provides an opportunity to discuss how the UN human rights tools can contribute to conflict prevention and to sustaining peace in practice. Minister Maas will also present the results of a conference, which Germany organized on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2019, in the framework of the 'Alliance for Multilateralism'. Briefers on women’s rights, climate change and the digital sphere will provide input to the discussion.

Questions to be discussed:

- How can human rights instruments contribute to conflict prevention and sustaining peace?
- Where do we stand on human rights at the beginning of the 21st Century?
- How can we safeguard and promote the rights of women and girls?
- What challenges do human rights face under the conditions of climate change?
- Which opportunities does digitalization offer for human rights protection and which challenges lie ahead in the digital age?

Run of show

2-2.10pm: Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany

2.10-2.15pm: Opening remarks by Senior Official of the United Nations

2.15 – 2.20pm: Perspective 1: Implementation of women’s rights in the future

2.20-2.25pm: Perspective 2: The future of human rights in the digital age

2.25-2.30pm: Perspective 3: Climate change and resilience of human rights

2.30-3.00pm: Interventions by Co-Sponsors

3.00-3.20: Interventions by Member States

3.20-3.30: “One minute” responses by panelists and wrap up by moderator