



## **Expert Seminar 'Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals'**

**Saturday 11 June 2016  
Villa Moynier, 120B Rue de Lausanne, Geneva**

### **Context and rationale**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) did not explicitly link human rights to the achievement of human development outcomes. In response to widespread criticism over the failure to mainstream a human rights-based approach to development within the MDGs, efforts have been made by different actors to connect the realization of the post-2015 development agenda with the existing international human rights framework.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development affirms the importance of international law and human rights in a world where there is 'universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination.' Although they are not framed in the language of human rights, in their reference to gender equality, poverty and social security, food security, health, education, housing, water and sanitation the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) incorporate most of the core elements of these rights as they are articulated in international treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The SDG on access to justice (Goal 16) constitutes a first step towards the integration of this particular right, which had not been included in the MDGs, within the new development agenda.

Along with the substantive human rights guarantees, the 2030 Agenda has also put a strong emphasis on ensuring that the implementation process is participatory, rights-based and effective, with the outcome document calling on the 'United Nations System' as a whole to work together for this purpose. Geneva-based human rights institutions and civil society played a significant role in insisting upon participation by a range of constituencies, appropriate coordinating mechanisms, reliable data and indicators to measure progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

With regards to financing the SDGs, close attention needs to be paid to the allocation of resources from a variety of sources in order to ensure the realization of the goals. Targets 1a and 1b of Goal 1 on poverty eradication require governments to mobilize resources for the implementation of the goals and call upon high income States to engage in enhanced development cooperation. The same targets also specify the need for pro-poor and gender sensitive development policies to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions. Under Goal 17, States aim to 'strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection'. These targets are in line with the obligations of States under international human rights law to allocate a maximum of available resources to the fulfillment of human rights.

During the last decade, the relationship between trade, investment, fiscal policies, development cooperation and human rights has also attracted increased attention from scholars, lawyers, United Nations (UN) independent experts and Special Rapporteurs (such as the Special Rapporteurs on the right to food, the right to water and sanitation, the right to education, the right to health and the right to housing respectively). Concern surrounding the negative human rights impact of specific neo-liberal economic policies, odious debt and illicit financial flows has been expressed by numerous Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and other human rights mechanisms.

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10:00 – 10:30	<p><b>Welcome by the organizers</b></p> <p>Felix Kirchmeier, Geneva Academy Hubert René Schillinger, FES Geneva Helene Ramos dos Santos, IBAHRI</p>
10:30-13:00	<p><b>Session 1 - The Role of UN Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies in Supporting the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator: Christophe Golay, Geneva Academy</i></p> <p><i>Introduction: Philip Alston, SR on extreme poverty and Bianca Pomeranzi, CEDAW</i></p> <p>This session will look at the way in which substantive human rights guarantees have been included (or not) in the SDGs. It will then discuss the role to be played by UN SPs and TBs in supporting the implementation of the SDGs, through increasing monitoring and accountability at global and national levels.</p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 16:30	<p><b>Session 2 - Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals and Economic and Fiscal Policies</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator: Caroline Dommen, IBAHRI</i></p> <p><i>Introduction: Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, Independent Expert on foreign debt and Nico Schrijver, CESCR</i></p> <p>This session will look at the content of states' obligations to mobilise resources from both a legal and a practical perspective. Drawing on a review of the interpretative work of selected UN Special Procedures (see background document to the session 'Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals and Economic and Fiscal Policies'), the session will seek to address (1) what specific aspects of the duty to mobilize resources merit priority attention and clarification; (2) how to deal with the governance and accountability gaps that follow from the fact that the State remains the principal duty-bearer whilst its powers to act are being gradually constrained by factors such as globalization and the increasing power of private business and; (3) how to give practical effect to human rights principles, norms and processes relating to economic activities.</p>
16:30 – 17:00	<p><b>Wrap up</b></p> <p><i>Helene Ramos dos Santos, IBAHRI</i> <i>Hannah Peters, FES Geneva</i></p>

**Contact details of the organizers:**

Geneva Academy: Mr. Felix Kirchmeier, [felix.kirchmeier@geneva-academy.ch](mailto:felix.kirchmeier@geneva-academy.ch)

International Bar Association: Ms. Muluka Miti-Drummond, [muluka.miti-drummond@int-bar.org](mailto:muluka.miti-drummond@int-bar.org)

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung: Ms. Hannah Peters, [hpeters@fes-geneva.org](mailto:hpeters@fes-geneva.org)