

46th session of the Human Rights Council
**Meeting on the role of poverty alleviation
in promoting and protecting human rights**

Concept note (draft as of 9 February 2021)

Date and venue: **26 February 2021, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations, Geneva**
(will be broadcast live and archived at <http://webtv.un.org>)

Objectives: With a view to advancing mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, this meeting will discuss the role of poverty alleviation in promoting and protecting human rights, with the participation of senior officials from States to share good practices and experience in their countries with regard to particular aspects of the promotion and protection of human rights. The meeting is also aimed at encouraging States to take this opportunity to share information and facilitate relevant technical cooperation.

The objectives are:

- **To highlight the threat posed by poverty to the enjoyment of all human rights in particular in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19) and the necessity of enhancing the role of poverty alleviation** in promoting and protecting all human rights;
- **To identify the priorities and gaps existing in poverty alleviation related to the promotion and protection of human rights and technical cooperation** in this regard;
- **To enable a constructive dialogue among States to share good practices and experience** with regard to the role of poverty alleviation in the promotion and protection of all human rights;
- **To understand how better to use the universal periodic review and other United Nations human Rights mechanisms to promote the role of poverty alleviation in the promotion and protection of all human rights and to provide technical cooperation** in this regard;
- **To provide States a platform to share information on technical cooperation, match those in need with those willing to provide technical assistance and facilitate partnership and capacity-building at the bilateral, regional and global levels in a feasible, sustainable and effective manner.**

Chair: **H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem KHAN**, President of the Human Rights Council

Opening statement: **Ms. Peggy HICKS**, Director of the Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Discussants: **Ms. SU Guoxia**, Director-General of the Department of General Affairs, State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development of China (*video message*)

Mr. Sonnia-Magba Bu-Buakei JABBI, Director of Demographic, Health and Social Statistics and Head of Research and Innovation of Sierra Leone (*video message*)

Mr. Maximo TORERO, Chief Economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (*video message*)

Outcome: **The anticipated outcomes of this meeting include:**

- **Improved awareness of the role of poverty alleviation** in the promotion and protection of all human rights for all by sharing positive outcomes and experiences;
- **Creative exchange on mutually beneficial cooperation and poverty alleviation** in the promotion and protection of human rights;

- **Information on good practices and national experience** with regard to particular aspects of the promotion and protection of human rights related to poverty alleviation shared in a constructive dialogue among States;
- **Explored and discussed opportunities to facilitate technical cooperation, partnership and capacity-building at the bilateral, regional and global levels;**
- **A summary report** to the Human Rights Council at its forty-ninth session.

Mandate:

In its resolution 43/21 on promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, the Human Rights Council decided to convene at its forty-sixth session a meeting under item 3 of its agenda, with a duration of two hours, to be presided over by the President of the Human Rights Council, on the theme of the role of poverty alleviation in promoting and protecting human rights, with the participation of senior officials from States to share information on good practices and experience in their countries with regard to particular aspects of the promotion and protection of human rights, and encouraged States to take this opportunity to facilitate relevant technical cooperation. The Council also requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a summary report on the meeting and to submit it to the Human Rights Council at its forty-ninth session.

Format:

The meeting will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the invited discussants will be followed by an interactive discussion divided into two segments. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including the opening statement and discussants' presentations, their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, for States and observers (2x12), national human rights institutions (2x1) and non-governmental organizations (2x2).

The list of speakers for the meeting will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues, pose questions and share information and experience. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet.

Background:

Human Rights Council resolution 43/21 highlights the importance of fostering international relations based on mutual respect, fairness, justice and mutually beneficial cooperation, and of building a community of shared future for human beings in which human rights are enjoyed by all. It calls upon all States to uphold multilateralism and to work together to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights. The resolution recognizes the importance of international cooperation in the field of human rights, presenting best practices, positive outcomes and experiences, mutual learning and understanding, enhancing dialogue and assisting the promotion of technical cooperation among States. It underscores that such forms of cooperation contribute to preventing violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to strengthening the capacity of States to comply with their human rights obligations, expanding common ground including through capacity-building and technical cooperation.

The vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to realize freedom from want and from fear for all humanity calls for a social and international order which enables the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people. This requires emancipating everyone from poverty and realizing their inalienable right to development. Poverty alleviation goes to the heart of human rights and is key to promoting and protecting them all – civil and political, economic, social and cultural, as well as the right to development for all people. Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty had declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in

1990 to 836 million in 2015.¹ At the end of 2019, research revealed the 15 countries that experienced the largest annual average percentage point declines in extreme poverty rate between 2000 and 2015.² At the same time however, millions of people around the world had been left behind, especially the poorest and those in vulnerable situations.³ Today, as humanity faces the profound, unprecedented and multiple crises from COVID-19, “more than ever before, we need solidarity, hope and the political will and cooperation to see this crisis through together”.⁴ The pandemic is exposing and exacerbating inequalities within and among countries. The Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals is witnessing the first rise in global poverty since 1998, pushing around 150 million people⁵ into extreme poverty. Within countries, people in vulnerable situations are the most affected.

Poorer nations face challenges to their ability to deliver on economic and social rights, including foreign debt, collapsing trade, falling remittances, capital flight, currency depreciation and limited international development assistance. Recovery with resilience and building better require reversing longstanding cycles of poverty and inequalities. Recovery and re-building need strengthened global partnership and means of implementation for all people in all countries - especially developing countries, and most particularly countries in Africa, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, and countries in conflict and post-conflict⁶ and other vulnerable countries which include several middle-income countries. This means effectively strengthening all forms of international cooperation including South-South and Triangular Cooperation to alleviate poverty and make its contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights.

As enshrined in Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development:⁷ 1. States have the primary responsibility for the creation of national and international conditions favourable to the realization of the right to development. 2. The realization of the right to development requires full respect for the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. 3. States have the duty to cooperate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development. 4. States should realize their rights and fulfil their duties in such a manner as to promote a new international economic order based on sovereign equality, interdependence, mutual interest and cooperation among all States, as well as to encourage the observance and realization of human rights.

This meeting will provide an opportunity for States and the international community to share information on good practices and national experience aimed at alleviating poverty to realize all human rights for all people in all countries and encourage States to use this opportunity to facilitate relevant technical cooperation.

Background documents:

- [Human Rights Council resolution 43/21](#) of 22 June 2020 entitled “Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights”
- [1986 Declaration on the Right to Development, General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986](#)

¹ 2015 Millennium Development Goals Report, United Nations, New York, 2015.

² “Which Countries Reduced Poverty Rates the Most?” World Bank Blogs, November 12, 2019, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/which-countries-reduced-poverty-rates-most>

³ 2015 Millennium Development Goals Report, United Nations, New York, 2015.

⁴ United Nations, “Shared responsibility, global solidarity: responding to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19”, p. 2, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf

⁵ See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/07/covid-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021>

⁶ See para. 16, General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

⁷ Article 3, 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development.

- [1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action](#)
- Consolidated reports of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner on the right to development ([A/HRC/39/18](#), [A/HRC/42/29](#) and [A/HRC/45/21](#))
- Reports of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner on international cooperation in the field of human rights ([A/74/351](#) and [A/HRC/44/28](#))
- [General Assembly resolution 70/1](#) of 25 September 2015 entitled “Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
- [2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development](#)
- [Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#)
- [A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#)
- Report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the role of technical assistance and capacity-building in fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in promoting and protecting human rights ([A/HRC/43/31](#))
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights entitled “[Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery](#)”, 11 September 2020