

***Human Rights as Catalysts for Sustainable Development:  
Leveraging a Coordinated Approach by the UN Development System to Leave No One Behind***

**An official side event of the 2024 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment**

**15 May 2024, 1:15-2.30 PM EST**

**Conference Room 11, UNHQ, New York**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **1. Introduction**

**The United Nations development system (UNDS)** plays a pivotal role in assisting governments in fulfilling their human rights obligations and commitments under international law. This role is crucial for operationalizing the pledge to leave no one behind and accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Human rights serve as a transformative force, reinforcing the necessity for transparent, effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions. Human rights also contribute to reducing inequalities, fostering diversity and participation, improving access to quality public services, protecting the environment, and ensuring that everyone - including those furthest left behind - participate in, contribute to, and benefit from sustainable development.

Through the **2020 QCPR Resolution**, Member States have acknowledged the UN's role in promoting human rights for sustainable development and have called upon all UNDS entities to support them in meeting their human rights obligations and realizing the pledge to **leave no one behind (LNOB)**. The QCPR resolution has been instrumental in creating an enabling environment for mainstreaming human rights across UNDS activities, particularly in country-level support for sustainable development.

In response to the 2020 QCPR resolution, UNDS entities have provided support in reinforcing the integration of human rights into development efforts. The recent **Secretary-General's QCPR Report 2024**<sup>1</sup> covering the year 2023, underscores the vital role of UN country teams in supporting Leave No One Behind efforts, noting governments' high satisfaction levels with their partnership in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations, consistently observed throughout the quadrennial cycle. It highlights that successful collaboration between UNCTs, governments, and special rapporteurs and other human rights mechanisms have yielded tangible recommendations on crucial sustainable development areas such as human rights, climate change and environment, older persons' and indigenous peoples' rights, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

### **2. Organisers and Partners**

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<sup>1</sup> [2024 Secretary General's Report on the implementation of the QCPR](#) (advance edition) Please see paragraphs 172 to 176.

This side-event is organized by the **UN Interagency Network on Human Rights, LNOB, and Sustainable Development** which includes the following entities: OHCHR and ILO (co-chairs), DCO, DESA, EOSG, IOM, FAO, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women, SRSG/VAC, WHO. Under the umbrella of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights workstream on rights at the core of sustainable development, the Network collaborates for coherence in UNDS work provides support, advice, tools, and capacity building to UN Country Teams to strengthen the integration and mainstreaming of human rights in UN programming and to assist countries to achieve the SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind.

**Co-sponsors of this side event:** Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN, Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the UN, and the Permanent Mission of Chile to the UN.

### **3. Goals of the side event**

This official side event of the ECOSOC OAS will showcase key efforts by the UN development system at the country level to support governments on human rights for sustainable development, in response to the QCPR resolution. Illustrative examples include aiding in integrating human rights perspectives into Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), facilitating the implementation of recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms, institutional strengthening in the application of the right for a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and providing data that underscores the intersectionality of LNOB principle with sustainable development, grounded in human rights. Moreover, the UNDS extends assistance in promoting the participation and safeguarding the rights of civil society and marginalized groups. This includes efforts to combat inequalities and discrimination, crucial steps towards fulfilling the pledge to leave no one behind. The event will also illustrate how human rights approaches and analysis are essential to, and can facilitate, integrated programmes and solutions and joint action by UN Country Teams.

### **4. Key questions**

1. Based on the progress and key lessons outlined in the 2024 Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the QCPR, what actions and policy options could significantly accelerate progress on integrating human rights to reach the SDGs? What are the promising examples from the UNDS to date?
2. How could governments and other stakeholders effectively leverage interlinkages between human rights and the SDGs to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda? What are the most promising initiatives in different contexts?
3. What measures at the country-level can be implemented to enhance LNOB implementation and increase the availability of relevant data at all levels? How can the UNDS support the increased collection and use of disaggregated data to measure progress towards the SDGs?

### **5. Participation and organization**

The side event invites and welcomes the attendance of member states, the UN, and civil society. It will be held in-person with speakers who cannot attend in person, online. The event will be recorded and broadcast live on UN WEBTV.

## PROGRAMME

- **Moderator:**
  - Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative to the United Nations and Director of the ILO Office for the UN.
  
- **Opening Remarks:**
  - Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights
  - H.E. Maritza Chan, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations
  - Ms. Anne Dostert, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations
  
- **Panellists:**
  - Mr. Andrew Saberton, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director
    - *UNFPA and UNCT engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms to advance gender equality and leave no one behind*
  - Ms. Andrea M. Brusco, Deputy Regional Director *a.i.*, UNEP Latin America and the Caribbean Office
    - *Supporting Member States to implement the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable development: Efforts for institutional strengthening at country level.*
  - Mr. Georges Gonzales, UNICEF Deputy Representative in the Republic of Congo
    - *An example from the Republic of Congo: perspectives and experience of an inter-agency joint programme supporting the rights of Indigenous peoples (Joint SDG Fund)*
  - Mr. Aldo Garcia, UNDP Resident Representative in Bolivia
    - *Tripartite Partnership to Support national human rights institutions.*
  - Mr. Michele Ribotta, UN Women Representative in Albania
    - *UN Women and UN Gender Thematic and Results Group initiative on legal reforms that advance gender equality.*
  
- **Q&A and discussion**
  
- **Closing Remarks by Moderator**
  - Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative to the United Nations and Director of the ILO Office for the UN