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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General****Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration  
and Programme of Action****Consultation on the experiences and practices of national  
human rights institutions in working to support the  
establishment and maintenance of inclusive societies and the  
implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable  
Development****Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for  
Human Rights\****Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 13 of Human Rights Council resolution 39/17, in which the Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to convene, in close coordination with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, on the margins of the 2019 annual meeting of the Global Alliance, an intersessional, half-day consultation, open to all States, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders, with the objective of exchanging the experiences and practices of national human rights institutions in working to support the establishment and maintenance of inclusive societies and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Council further requested OHCHR to submit a summary report on the consultation, at its forty-first session. Prior to the consultation, OHCHR received written contributions from national human rights institutions on their experiences, challenges and best practices in the implementation, monitoring and measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on Goal 16. The consultation took place on 7 March 2019 and resulted in a number of conclusions and recommendations. Participants agreed that national human rights institutions support the realization of the 2030 Agenda through their unique mandate, role and functions, which allow them to promote all human rights and

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\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



serve as a bridge between national stakeholders. This role is particularly important, as the Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved only with the meaningful participation and cooperation of all actors. Participants also recognized national human rights institutions' key position in raising public awareness about the 2030 Agenda and in promoting the integration of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to paragraph 13 of Human Rights Council resolution 39/17, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) convened, on 7 March 2019, an intersessional, half-day consultation to exchange experiences and practices of national human rights institutions in supporting the establishment and maintenance of inclusive societies and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The consultation was open to all relevant stakeholders, including States, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations.
2. The present report summarizes the written contributions submitted by national human rights institutions ahead of the consultation, as well as the discussions at the consultation.
3. The consultation consisted of two panel discussions. The first focused on “The role of national human rights institutions in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: achievements and challenges in the implementation, monitoring and measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals”. The second focused on “How the work of national human rights institutions can better support the establishment and maintenance of inclusive societies: exchanging experiences and best practices”. The discussions resulted in a number of recommendations.

## II. Written contributions

4. On 7 February 2019, OHCHR invited all national human rights institutions to share their experiences, challenges and best practices in the implementation, monitoring and measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on Goal 16.<sup>1</sup> OHCHR received 12 written contributions from institutions in Argentina, Finland, Hungary, Kenya, Maldives, Nigeria, Oman, the Philippines, Slovakia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the State of Palestine.
5. A common thread in the written contributions is that national human rights institutions support the realization of the 2030 Agenda through their unique mandate, role and functions, which allow them to promote all human rights and serve as a bridge between national stakeholders. This role is particularly important, as the Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved only with the meaningful participation and cooperation of all actors. Furthermore, national human rights institutions recognize their key position in raising public awareness about the 2030 Agenda and in promoting the integration of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
6. The contributions mainly describe the engagement of national human rights institutions in the implementation of the Goals through collecting data, linking the international human rights system’s recommendations and observations with the Sustainable Development Goal targets, contributing to the compilation, dissemination and use of data on human rights and on Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and identifying groups that are left behind to ensure their inclusion in the data collection related to the Sustainable Development Goals.
7. In their contributions, the national human rights institutions also share their best practices and approaches to the implementation, monitoring and measurement of the Goals. For instance, partnership and cooperation with the national statistics offices enable them to collect human rights-sensitive data on sustainable development and to help make the Goals tangible in the national context. This cooperation also enables them to identify and provide advice regarding specific groups, including those who are, or might be, at risk of being left behind. Moreover, data collected by national human rights institutions are reflected in their

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<sup>1</sup> Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

reports, which are disseminated to the general public, government agencies and international organizations.

8. In their written contributions, national human rights institutions further highlight the importance of aligning human rights monitoring and reporting with the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, some mention their efforts to create tracking systems to bring together recommendations and observations by the international human rights system and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals, and to assess progress in their implementation. Some have also explored the link between the Goals and compliance by the business sector with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework, and the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

9. Some of the challenges of engaging in the implementation, monitoring and measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals are: the perception that the Goals apply only at the international level; the low level of stakeholders’ awareness and understanding of the Goals, of the relevance of human rights and of the interconnection between the Goals and the human rights agenda; the lack of formal status for national human rights institutions at the high-level political forum on sustainable development<sup>2</sup> and the need for a more transparent process for engagement in the voluntary national reviews;<sup>3</sup> the lack of resources, capacity and expertise of national human rights institutions to fully include the Sustainable Development Goal agenda in their work plans; the lack of knowledge of how to link recommendations from international human rights mechanisms with Sustainable Development Goal indicators; the lack of contextualized indicators for certain targets, while for others there are too many, making monitoring and data collection difficult; the existence of elements that can distort statistics, such as the geographical and social imbalance of complaints received by national human rights institutions, and the fact that not all violations are reported to them.

10. In their written submissions, some national human rights institutions make recommendations to be implemented at the national level. These include:

- Expanding, improving and coordinating the collection of statistics and new indicators in collaboration with national statistics offices;
- Building capacity, cooperating and exchanging peer to peer on the methodology to be used for linking human rights and Sustainable Development Goals;
- National human rights institutions developing methodologies and tools for data collection, disaggregation and dissemination;
- Identifying the information required by national human rights institutions to evaluate human rights policies;
- Government authorities, academia and research centres granting access to information to enable national human rights institutions to better formulate Sustainable Development Goal indicators from a human rights perspective.

### III. Summary

11. The consultation took place in the morning of 7 March 2019. Opening statements were made by a representative of OHCHR, the Permanent Representative of Australia to

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<sup>2</sup> The high-level political forum on sustainable development is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals at the global level. See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>.

<sup>3</sup> The 2030 Agenda encourages States to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels which are country-led and country-driven”. These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum on sustainable development. See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>.

the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and the Chair of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

**A. Panel I – The role of national human rights institutions in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: achievements and challenges in the implementation, monitoring and measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

**1. Statements by the panellists**

12. The panellists were the Chair of Komnas HAM of Indonesia, the Chair of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon (also member of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals), a representative of the Office of the Ombudsman of the Nation of Argentina, and a representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights moderated the panel discussion.<sup>4</sup>

13. The moderator underscored that the 2030 Agenda was a major achievement in the multilateral arena. He observed that it clearly referred to human rights and that there was a need to think about how to operationalize that link. He referred to the triennial conference of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, held in Mérida, Mexico, in 2015, where national human rights institutions had had the opportunity to discuss what Sustainable Development Goals meant for them. He provided an example of the commitments contained in the Mérida Declaration on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely the commitment to including more systematically the Sustainable Development Goals in the monitoring activities of national human rights institutions and in their reporting to the treaty bodies and the universal periodic review.

14. The Chair of Komnas HAM explained that in Indonesia the Sustainable Development Goals had become part of the national legal system through the enactment of Presidential Decree 59/2017 on Indonesian Sustainable Development Goals Implementation. He added that Komnas HAM was using the Sustainable Development Goal indicators to review policies from previous Governments that affected the human rights of indigenous peoples, the urban poor and other groups, as well as to review the development policies of the current Government. In terms of best practices, the Chair mentioned that Indonesia used an inclusive implementation process involving all stakeholders.

15. The Chair of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon reported that the Commission participated in national consultations for the contextualization and prioritization of the Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of national policies and strategies, during which it insisted that the Government should integrate all Goals and indicators in relevant national programmes. The Commission had organized two workshops, in 2016 and 2018, on how to implement and monitor the Goals. It had been reporting on them since 2016 and had adopted a four-year plan (2019–2022) to follow up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Chair flagged that the Commission faced a lack of resources and a lack of reliable data for assessing the implementation of the Goals. It had enhanced cooperation with civil society organizations, focal points in ministerial departments and other State institutions, while also providing them with training on the Goals.

16. The Chairperson of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon noted that the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals promoted the active role of national human rights institutions in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The Working Group's work plan for 2019 foresaw the

<sup>4</sup> The summary follows the order in which the panellists took the floor.

collection, processing and publication of best practices in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the mobilization of resources to train national human rights institutions in Africa.

17. The representative of the Office of the Ombudsman of the Nation of Argentina described the work of the institution with the Government in monitoring and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as with the National Statistics Office. He noted that the Office of the Ombudsman had linked the Goals with the recommendations Argentina had received from the universal periodic review. He also elaborated on the connection between the 2030 Agenda and the business sector. His institution had undertaken some work with a State company producing energy, which was now bidding to comply with all related international conventions, including those on indigenous peoples' rights, the elimination of discrimination against women and the prohibition of child labour.

18. The UNDP representative emphasized that the time had come to look at gaps and accelerators to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. She underlined the importance of fully involving national human rights institutions compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure a human rights-based approach at the national level and make sure no one was left behind. In the run-up to the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019, UNDP had held multi-stakeholder consultations, including with national human rights institutions. The UNDP representative stated that the work of national human rights institutions should not be confined to Goal 16, and that there was a need to communicate the amplifying impact they could have across the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **2. Summary of discussions**

19. The representatives of national human rights institutions of Algeria, Denmark, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, the Niger, Peru and the State of Palestine, a representative of Australia and a representative of OHCHR took the floor following the presentations of the panellists.

20. It was agreed that national human rights institutions played an important role in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

21. Several national human rights institutions shared their experience regarding the implementation of the Goals, which included the establishment of a follow-up committee for the implementation of the Goals; work to collect data; active participation in government strategies, plans and consultations; collaboration with stakeholders, including civil society and national statistical institutions; and efforts to demonstrate the link between human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals in their reports to treaty bodies and the universal periodic review.

22. Some institutions highlighted the lack of financial resources to monitor human rights. Several stressed the crucial importance of having disaggregated data to show which segments of the population should be prioritized. Others stressed the need for the business sector to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in their work.

23. The example was given of a website with a search engine relating each Sustainable Development Goal target to human rights and labour rights conventions. It was noted that this tool offered a data explorer linking recommendations from international human rights mechanisms with Sustainable Development Goal targets.

24. One national human rights institution emphasized the need to put the Sustainable Development Goals into context and recommended that its Government adopt a new goal: Sustainable Development Goal 0.

25. Several institutions raised the difficulties they faced, including in accessing funding to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, taking the necessary measures to link the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and identifying clear focal points within Governments for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

26. It was reiterated that the role of national human rights institutions could not be confined to Goal 16 and that they should work across the 2030 Agenda.

27. The representative of OHCHR referred to its publications that could be useful for national human rights institutions, such as its guidance note on a human rights-based approach to data<sup>5</sup> and its guide on human rights indicators.<sup>6</sup>

## **B. Panel II – How the work of national human rights institutions can better support the establishment and maintenance of inclusive societies: exchanging experiences and best practices**

### **1. Statements by the panellists**

28. The panellists were the Chair of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the People's Advocate of Albania, a member of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines and a representative of OHCHR. A member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights moderated the panel discussion.<sup>7</sup>

29. The moderator reminded the audience that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had adopted general comment No. 10 (1998) on the role of national human rights institutions in the protection of economic, social and cultural rights, and that it had been working closely with such institutions.

30. The Chair of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights stressed that national human rights institutions were playing a key role in the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. They were at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals' web of accountability by contributing to the compilation, dissemination and use of data on human rights and Sustainable Development Goal indicators and by cooperating with national statistical offices. She noted that the Commission had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, with the support of OHCHR. She added that the Constitution of Kenya underscored the duty of State organs to ensure the protection of vulnerable groups within society. In that regard, the Commission and the National Bureau of Statistics had prepared a preliminary list of population groups that were at risk of exclusion.

31. The People's Advocate of Albania noted that the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions had collected data on the human rights-based approach to poverty at the national level, including in the context of national action plans for the Sustainable Development Goals. These data were the basis for publications, to be launched in the current year, in which it was recommended that attention should be given to the "missing poor"<sup>8</sup> and that national statistical officers should be trained in methodologies to address shortcomings in national data collection from a human rights perspective. The People's Advocate of Albania added that, in follow-up to the Marrakesh Declaration on "Expanding the civic space and promoting and protecting human rights defenders, with a specific focus on women: The role of national human rights institutions", adopted in October 2018, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions had included the Sustainable Development Goals in its Regional action plan to promote and protect human rights defenders and enable democratic space.<sup>9</sup>

32. The People's Advocate of Albania referred to the adoption by the parliament of Albania, in 2017, of a resolution upholding the Sustainable Development Goals, stressing the important role of independent institutions in achieving the Goals. She pointed out that the lack of public awareness about the Goals and the lack of data were two major

<sup>5</sup> "A human rights-based approach to data: Leaving no one behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

<sup>6</sup> *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation* (United Nations publication, HR/PUB/12/5).

<sup>7</sup> The summary follows the order in which the panellists took the floor.

<sup>8</sup> This term refers to people living in poverty who are not captured in poverty estimates.

<sup>9</sup> Available at [http://ennhri.org/IMG/pdf/ennhri\\_regional\\_action\\_plan\\_hrds.pdf](http://ennhri.org/IMG/pdf/ennhri_regional_action_plan_hrds.pdf).

challenges. She added that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda required the inclusion and partnership of key actors at global, regional, national and local levels.

33. The representative of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines focused on the call in the Mérida Declaration for cooperation among national human rights institutions, more specifically regarding Goal 16, and in particular on access to justice. He recommended that, given the global nature of most human rights issues, such as migration, statelessness and climate change, national human rights institutions should work together in investigating human rights violations to create more synergies and avoid possible gaps or overlaps. He acknowledged that this proposal entailed some challenges, such as establishing rules and protocols, identifying common issues and conducting joint inquiries.

34. The representative of OHCHR emphasized that national human rights institutions had been producing and using data to monitor, from a normative perspective, the voluntary commitments assumed by Member States under the 2030 Agenda. They required adequate resources and the right tools, especially human rights indicators and a human rights-based approach to data, to do this effectively. He added that while two thirds of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators adopted by the General Assembly<sup>10</sup> were human rights indicators, less than half of those directly measured States' commitment to international standards or their efforts to achieve them. Using complementary structural and process indicators developed by OHCHR could help address that imbalance. He stated that OHCHR was also keen to support the formation and strengthening of platforms of cooperation between national human rights institutions and national statistical offices. He added that those new partnerships were critical in implementing Sustainable Development Goal indicators 16.10.1, 16.a.1, 10.3.1/16.b.1 and 16.1.2<sup>11</sup> and other human rights/Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and operationalizing the human rights-based approach to data. Thus, it would be important to accelerate the establishment of national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles in view of indicator 16.a.1 data showing that only 54 per cent of countries would have A status institutions by 2030, at the current slow and uneven pace.

## 2. Summary of discussions

35. Due to time constraints, only the representatives of the national human rights institutions of Algeria and Mexico took the floor.

36. The representative of the institution of Algeria gave an example of its approach to the right to health. Her institution had categorized the indicators based on different population groups, particularly the most vulnerable, such as older persons and persons with disabilities.

37. The representative of the institution of Mexico asked how the 2030 Agenda could be promoted and achieved in countries experiencing various forms of violence, such as disappearances and violence against women, journalists and human rights defenders.

## IV. Conclusions and recommendations

**38. The consultation provided an opportunity for national human rights institutions to share their experience and best practices in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also enabled them to assess the progress**

<sup>10</sup> General Assembly resolution 71/313.

<sup>11</sup> Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months (16.10.1); existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles (16.a.1); proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law (10.3.1/16.b.1); and conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause (16.1.2).



achieved since the adoption, in 2015, of the Mérida Declaration, which set out the directives for their work on the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. The consultation confirmed that a number of national human rights institutions contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through monitoring activities resulting in the systematic, reliable and quantitative analysis of the human rights situation in their countries.

40. The consultations led to the following recommendations to national human rights institutions:

(a) Encourage Governments to ensure that the implementation of international human rights obligations as well as the 2030 Agenda are included in relevant national action plans;

(b) Enhance cooperation with national statistics offices for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Develop methodologies for data collection, disaggregation and dissemination;

(d) Link recommendations from the international human rights system to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; in this regard, capacity-building, cooperation and peer-to-peer exchange on methodology are needed;

(e) Contribute to putting the principle of leaving no one behind into practice by identifying the most vulnerable groups of the population;

(f) Enhance cooperation among themselves for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

41. The consultations also led to the following recommendations to Governments:

(a) Include the implementation of international human rights obligations as well as the 2030 Agenda in relevant national action plans;

(b) Ensure the full participation of all relevant stakeholders, including national human rights institutions, in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Provide the necessary support and resources to national human rights institutions so that they can effectively discharge their mandates in full compliance with the Paris Principles.