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Contribution to the Inter-sessional meeting on the 2030 Agenda of the Human Rights Council, January 16th 2019

Introduction

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Last year, the UNS General stated that the world suffers from a bad case of “Trust Deficit Disorder”, including mistrust in national institutions and in the rules-based global order. Likewise, the 2018 HLPF Ministerial Declaration noted that SDG implementation has not been at the pace required to achieve the 2030 agenda and that we need to urgently accelerate progress.

This is the global – and double - challenge we are facing, and I would coin this as a **human rights implementation gap**, and a **SDG accountability gap**.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has engaged with the 2030 Agenda from the outset, seeing the 2030 Agenda and human rights as a potential mutual reinforcers. We have been exploring how one can make reality of the pledge that the SDGs will “realise human rights of all” and “leave no one behind” both through analyses and through working with partners at national level.

In terms of substance, the 2030 Agenda is built around “5 Ps”, understood as five dimensions of sustainable development: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships.

During these 3½ years, we have learned several lessons, which I will summarize as the “5 Cs”, understood as five key elements which can pave the way for achieving the SDGs and realising human rights in an integrated manner.

These 5 Cs are:

- Convergence
- Convenience
- Complementarity
- Coherence
- Consensus

Convergence

- Based on the principle of “show don’t tell” - the Danish Institute for Human Rights has developed an on-line database that links specific articles of international and regional human rights instruments to specific SDG targets.
- The database concretises the convergence between human rights and sustainable development and shows that 92% of the 169 SDG targets are linked to specific articles of

international human rights instruments. This reaffirms that there is no sustainable development without human rights.

- It also implies that states must use human rights instruments as roadmaps to guide the development process, including for specific groups of rights-holders such as women, children, persons with disabilities. For example, the urban planner should be guided by CRPD to achieve target 11.7. on universal access to green and public spaces.
- Link <http://sdg.humanrights.dk>

Convenience

- The convergence leads to convenience. Second C. The substantial link between human rights and SDGs implies that state reporting to human rights bodies can double as SDG reporting. For example, 170 countries have ratified ILO Conventions on child labour. These countries report to the ILO every 3rd year. Child labour is addressed directly in two SDG targets: 8.7 and 16.2. Hence, reporting and review can serve a dual purpose. One could say that states can **recycle their reporting**.
- This also implies that instead of doing a separate National Action Plan (NAP) on Human Rights, and a separate NAP on SDGs, states could develop a **Power NAP**, which serve several purposes.
- Moreover, states can rely on the guidance and recommendations they already receive from human rights monitoring mechanism to reach the SDGs.
- The monitoring mechanisms (the UPR, TBs, SPs) produce high-quality analysis and recommendations, which is a treasure trove of data obvious for guiding SDG implementation.
- However, the complexities of the human rights system are not always easy to navigate, e.g. for the urban planner I mentioned before.
- So in order to make this easier and more convenient, we have in close collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, developed a database, which allows all stakeholders to dig into that treasure trove of human rights data.
- The backbone of the database is an algorithm we have trained to machine read and link the thousands of recommendations from UPR, TBs, and SP to specific SDG targets, for specific

countries and vulnerable groups – thereby making the recommendations immediately accessible for those working to achieve the SDGs. See <http://SDGDATA.humanrights.dk/>

- So exploring the database, the urban planner seeking to achieve SDG target 11.7 would realise that there are more than 80 recommendation from the human rights monitoring system giving specific guidance to states on how to create universal access to green and public spaces – leaving no one behind including people with disabilities.
- During the lunch break knowledge fair, staff from the Danish Institute stands ready to demonstrate how to use the database.

THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SDG-Human Rights Data Explorer

EXPLORE ALL COUNTRIES GROUPS SDGS MECHANISMS

Making the link between human rights and sustainable development

Use information from the International human rights monitoring system to develop a human rights-based approach to the SDGs

GET THE GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Find your country

Type in the name of a country or region, and explore the links between human rights recommendations and the SDGs

Country

ALL REGIONS AND COUNTRIES

Rights-holder groups

Click on a group to explore recommendations that concern specific groups of rights-holders

Children Human rights defenders Indigenous peoples

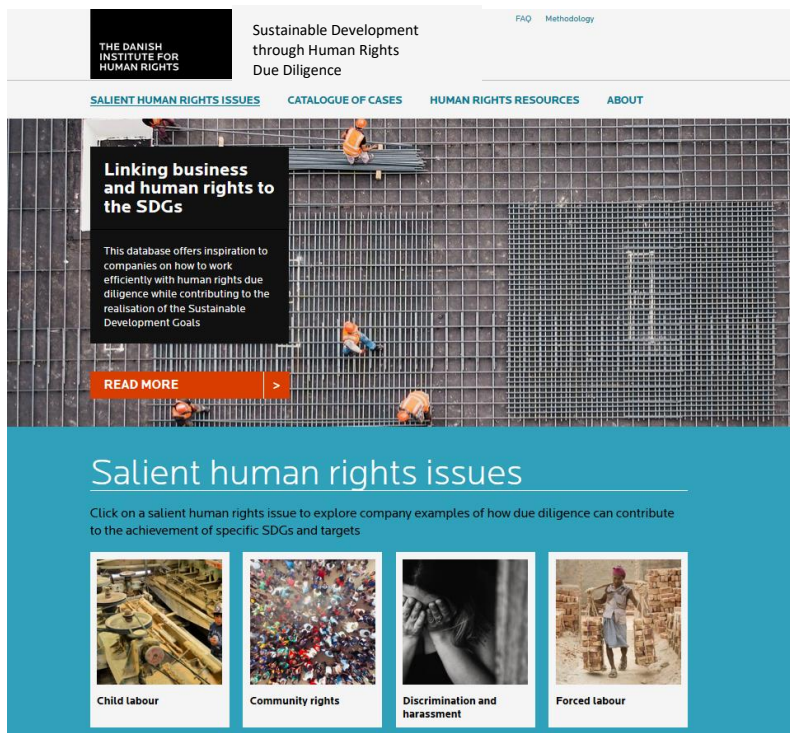
The SDG-Human Rights Data Explorer

SDGDATA.HUMANRIGHTS.DK

Complementarity

- Integrated approaches are convenient and enhance efficiency and accountability. However, such approaches also require complementarity through a “whole-of-government” and a “whole-of-society” approach, which are far from how we have traditionally organized our societies.
- Often human rights is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice – or Foreign Affairs – and not mainstreamed in e.g. Ministries of Education, Energy or Water Resources. And sustainable development should not be seen as the domain of only state actors, but as a multi-stakeholder effort clearly recognising not least the role of business.
- Likewise, our mindsets are compartmentalized. Today the urban planner will not look into the CRPD or UPR recommendations for guidance on how to design a public park. But it is worthwhile since the human rights monitoring system gives specific recommendations as mentioned just before and CRPD actually gives clear guidance on how to identify and eliminate obstacles to accessibility in the physical environment. (eg. article 9.1 and 30.1).

- Likewise, human rights experts will not think they have much to contribute towards sustainable fisheries. But they do when slave-like working conditions in the fishing industry oftentimes are exposed.
- Breaking out of our mental or institutional silos also helps us – human rights practitioners and institutions – to develop a new and broader language for human rights that is close to the everyday concerns of many people.
- This does not mean that we should all become experts on everything, but we need to foster the dialogues and partnerships that allow us to see the complementarity of efforts.
- One crucial partnership is between human rights actors and companies, as responsible business conduct is part and parcel of the 2030 Agenda, as also reflected in specific goals and targets.
- As a step in this direction, the Danish Institute for Human Rights has developed a platform which offers inspiration to companies on how action on human rights due diligence concretely can contribute to the SDGs. See: <http://biz.sdg.humanrights.dk/>



Sustainable development through human rights due diligence

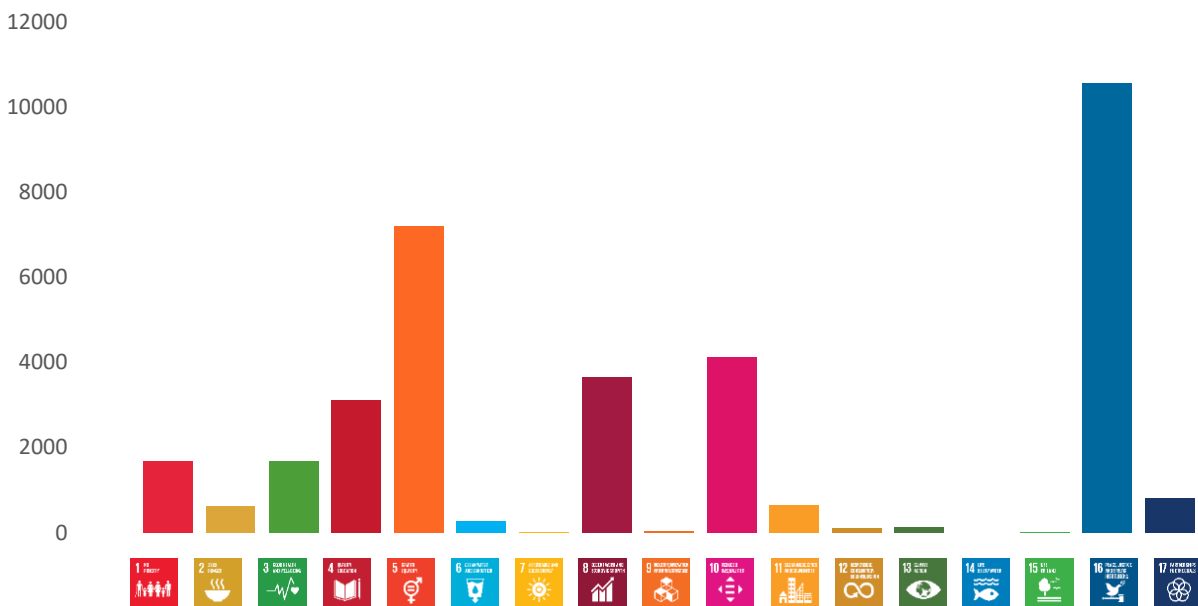
BIZ.SDG.HUMANRIGHTS.DK

Coherence

- Now to the fourth C – coherence. The 2030 Agenda has many similarities with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, including the universality and the indivisibility.
- Overall, combining human rights obligations and SDG commitments provides for a unique framework for coherence of domestic policies; coherence of efforts by diverse actors, e.g. creating a level playing field for businesses, and; coherence between countries to avoid externalization of risks and adverse impacts.

- Moreover, when combining the 2030 Agenda with human rights, the result is more than the sum of the parts. For example, categorising the UPR recommendations against the 169 SDG targets gives a detailed and different analysis of the focus – and gaps – of the UPR.
- For example, UPR recommendations are strong in terms of addressing gender equality (SDG 5) and labour rights (SDG 8) – but very few of the app. 55'000 UPR recommendations address issues pertaining to access to water and sanitation (SDG 6).
- Tempting to conclude a need for more coherence in the UPR, covering all sets of rights when states give and accept UPR recommendations.
- Also, the human rights treaty monitoring bodies may be perceived as fragmented, as they address different aspects of human rights realisation. In this regard, categorising treaty body recommendations in terms of SDG targets may provide a unifying and more coherent language between the different treaty bodies – and between the international, regional and national bodies.
- Presenting the treaty body recommendations in a coherent SDG language to states may ensure a better integration into national planning, facilitating national human rights implementation as well as SDG accountability.

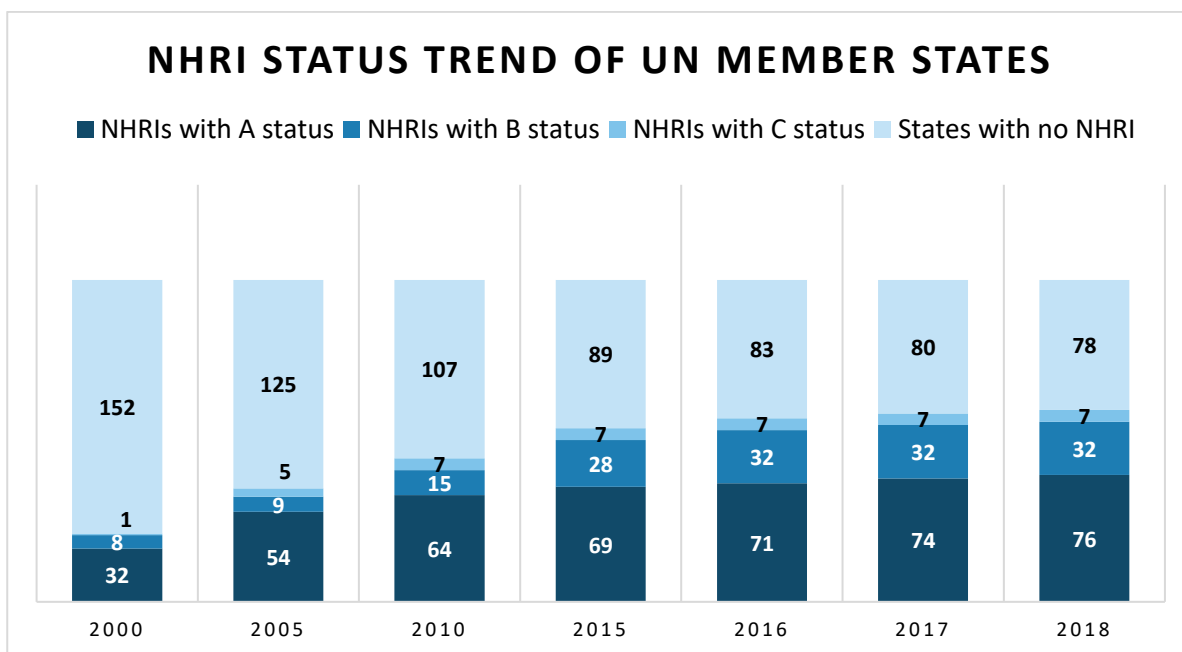
Distribution of UPR recommendations (C2) across the SDGs



Consensus

- This leads to the last of the five Cs – consensus.
- The 2030 Agenda reflects a global political consensus with time-bound targets and specific indicators. With the 2030 Agenda, all countries have become “sustainable developing countries” with challenges to overcome to achieve the SDGs.

- And, although voluntary, a large number of states (more than 120 so far) has committed to undertake Voluntary National Reviews under the High-Level Political Forum.
- While human rights instruments are legally-binding, they do reflect voluntary decisions by sovereign states across the globe to ratify these instruments and ensure their implementation.
- This commitment is further reflected in the broad acceptance by states of e.g. UPR recommendations (74%).
- This constitutes a strong consensus basis for action on human rights as well as the SDGs.
- For example, the establishment of a fully independent A-status NHRI is the global indicator for SDG 16 on strong institutions. So far, 76 UN member states have an A-status NHRI, but of the remaining 114 countries, 113 have already accepted UPR recommendations to work towards a fully independent NHRI. Hence, the consensus is there within the human rights system.
- But following the trend from 2015-2018, only 54% of UN member states will have an A status NHRI in 2030. So the focus should not be whether to have an A status NHRI, but rather on the technical implementation challenges to reach the target within the timeframe the 2030 Agenda has given us.



- To conclude, I believe that if we explore the Convergence, illustrate the Convenience, acknowledge the Complementarity, strive for Coherence and build on the Consensus - these “5 Cs” is the formula for ensuring the “5 Ps” – addressing both the SDG accountability gap, and the human rights implementation gap in a way that can eventually cure the trust deficit disorder we are currently suffering from.