SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY LAB

Building on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

ONLINE EVENT
14 January 2021
12:30 - 2:30 PM CET

Co-sponsors
Introduction
‘This is not a time to neglect human rights; it is a time when, more than ever, human rights are needed to navigate this crisis in a way that will allow us, as soon as possible, to focus again on achieving equitable sustainable development and sustaining peace’ UN Secretary-General.

The COVID-19 pandemic has a devastating effect on vulnerable groups and societies and serves as a magnifying glass that reveals and exacerbates existing patterns of vulnerability, inequality and discrimination. These patterns reflect long overdue obligations of states under international human rights law, as well as pending commitments under the 2030 Agenda. We cannot undo the past but can at least realise that timely and efficient implementation of these obligations and commitments would have increased our collective resilience to shocks and disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, looking forward, we can place human rights and sustainable development at the core of COVID-19 recovery strategies.

This vision of ‘Sustainable Recovery’ is emphasised in the landmark report by the UN Secretary-General on ‘Human Rights and COVID-19: we are all in this together’, which highlights that ‘the 2030 Agenda, underpinned by human rights, provides a comprehensive blueprint for sustainable recovery from the pandemic’.

The challenge is to conceptualise this blueprint for Sustainable Recovery, in a manner that builds on previous efforts and lessons learned, unite stakeholders and is immediately operational through existing institutions, mechanisms and measurements.

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1 Human Rights and COVID-19: we are all in this together, April 2020.
Operationalising Sustainable Recovery

While the full range of human rights and SDGs are interlinked and indispensable for Sustainable Recovery, certain targets have already proven to be of utmost relevance in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The compilation of targets draws from across the SDGs and covers all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) and social, economic, civil and political rights as well as fundamental freedoms:

- Strengthen social protection (SDG target 1.3), build resilience (1.5) and ensure food security (2.1)
- Combat epidemics and communicable diseases (3.3.), ensure universal health coverage and affordable medicines and vaccines for all (3.8, 3.b), increase health financing and trained health workers (3.c) and strengthen capacity for managing global health risks (3.d)
- Ensure free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all (4.1)
- Eliminate violence against women and girls (5.2.) and enhance use of information and communications technology to empower women (5.b)
- Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all (6.2) and expand international cooperation in water and sanitation programmes (6.a)
- Achieve decent work for all (8.5) and support entrepreneurship and innovation (8.3)
- Reduce inequalities of outcome, eliminate discriminatory laws, policies and practices (10.3), and adopt fiscal, wage and social protection policies to achieve equality (10.4)
- Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services (11.1)
- Advance a green and just transition to sustainable management and use of natural resources (12.2), conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems (15.1) and increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix (7.2)
- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions (16.6); ensure responsive, inclusive participatory and representative decision-making (16.7); access to justice (16.3) and to information and protection of fundamental freedoms (16.10).
- Strengthen domestic resource mobilization (17.1), increase official development assistance (17.2); enhance international cooperation on science, technology and innovation (17.6) and enhance generation of disaggregated data (17.18)

These targets constitute a conceptualisation of Sustainable Recovery that leaves no one behind but must be used in a mix that is tailored to the particular context and impact of the pandemic in a given country. They thereby constitute the basis for identifying concrete and context-specific solutions and offer a monitoring framework for assessment of Sustainable Recovery that is based on existing global SDG indicators and recommendations from international human rights mechanisms.

Sustainable Recovery Lab

The Sustainable Recovery Lab is organised in conjunction with the intersessional meeting of the Human Rights Council on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on 14th January 2021. It is co-sponsored by a broad coalition of Partners for Sustainable Recovery, with a shared commitment to human rights and sustainable development.
The Sustainable Recovery Lab brings together leading experts within the fields of human rights and sustainable development and creates a platform for sharing and developing ideas and suggestions on how to operationalise the concept of Sustainable Recovery, as envisaged by the UN Secretary General. The format will be that of an interactive discussion, aiming to extract concrete ideas and proposals to inform the continued work.

The Sustainable Recovery Lab will explore the following questions:

- What are the key priorities and components of Sustainable Recovery, from the perspective of specific countries and major groups?
- How can human rights monitoring mechanisms and National Human Rights Institutions guide and monitor the operationalisation of Sustainable Recovery?
- What is required to operationalise the Sustainable Recovery concept in going forward?

The key conclusions and recommendations of the Sustainable Recovery Lab will be widely shared and be brought forward to the inter-sessional meeting of the Human Rights Council, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and other relevant fora.

The Sustainable Recovery Lab will contribute to strengthening collaboration between human rights and sustainable development actors and inform their continued engagement on the operationalisation of the Sustainable Recovery concept.

Tentative agenda

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<td>12:30-12:35</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<td>12:35-12:45</td>
<td>High-Level Speaker, Opening remarks</td>
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<td>12:45-12:50</td>
<td>How can human rights and the SDGs guide Sustainable Recovery, DIHR</td>
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<td>12:50-1:20</td>
<td>What are the core elements of Sustainable Recovery from a government and business perspective? Facilitated conversation between discussants.</td>
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<td>1:20-1:30</td>
<td>Interactive segment: what are the core elements and strategies for Sustainable Recovery</td>
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<td>How do we ensure no one is left behind in Sustainable Recovery? Facilitated conversation between rights-holder representatives.</td>
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<td>2:10-2:20</td>
<td>Interactive segment: compiling key suggestions for advancing and operationalising Sustainable Recovery, based on human rights and SDGs</td>
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<td>2:20-2:30</td>
<td>Closure by Session Rapporteur</td>
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