

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



Leaving No One Behind:
A Human Rights Approach to Combating Inequalities and Discrimination
Concept Note for 2016 High-Level Political Forum Side Event

Where: Conference Room 11, United Nations Headquarters, New York

When: July 12, 1:15-2:30pm

Co-sponsors and organizers:

Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Amnesty International, Center for Economic and Social Rights, Center for Reproductive Rights, Human Rights Watch and International Disability Alliance

Thematic focus:

One of the most potentially transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and the theme of this year’s HLPF – is the critical commitment to “leave no one behind.”

Under the MDGs, despite important progress at the aggregate level in reducing extreme poverty rates globally, the poorest and most marginalized were often neglected and inequalities increased. Indeed, inequalities have deepened in ways that threaten social and political stability and the sustainability of economic and environmental development. As Oxfam has recently highlighted, the world is richer than ever before but the wealth is concentrated in very few hands – today, the world’s 63 wealthiest people own as much as half the world’s population put together. Pervasive discrimination also continues to affect women and girls as well as many other groups, including persons with disabilities, migrants, minorities, indigenous peoples, among others.

This is why, when the 2030 Agenda was adopted last year, the international community pledged that “no one will be left behind” and “to reach the furthest behind first”, including through combating discrimination and inequalities and by calling for the disaggregation of data to ensure that progress benefits all groups and sectors of society.¹ Notably, the SDGs contain specific goals calling for gender equality (Goal 5) and addressing inequalities of opportunities and outcomes (Goal 10) as well as targets aimed at eliminating discrimination faced by marginalized populations, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and older people, among others, and the disparities that result.

Human rights principles and standards on equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability provide a detailed normative framework for making these commitments a reality. The challenge is to get states to use them in the planning, delivery, and review of the 2030 Agenda. As economic inequality reaches a historic high, exacerbating the overlapping impacts of persistent forms of discrimination and social inequalities, it is time to reflect on its direct impact on

¹ U.N. Doc. A/RES/70/1, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para. 4.

individuals, communities, and countries and to call on governments, UN agencies, and civil society to put equality and non-discrimination at the heart of efforts to implement the new Agenda.

This event will provide space for ideas and recommendations on how to address inequalities within and between states to ensure that the 2030 Agenda leaves no one behind. In particular, human rights organizations will share proposals based on experience in confronting and seeking redress for inequalities and discrimination. Speakers will make concrete suggestions for how to operationalize key human rights principles in the implementation, follow up, and review of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional, and global level.

Panelists will:

- highlight human rights perspectives on different facets of existing inequalities;
- outline ways in which different kinds of discrimination further exacerbate inequalities and make recommendations to ensure that policies reach the most marginalized;
- discuss opportunities for an increased role of civil society and outline measures through which the participation of particularly the most disadvantaged groups could be secured in the decision-making and programming related to the 2030 Agenda; and,
- discuss the global monitoring framework of the 2030 agenda and ways to secure participatory, transparent, and universal reviews that address existing inequalities and help drive forward an inclusive agenda that ensures that no one is left behind.

