

OHCHR's Work on Using Indicators to Promote and Monitor the Implementation of Human Rights

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman for this opportunity and good afternoon to you and to all the participants in this room. A number of speakers throughout the course of the day have raised the issue of the use of benchmarks and indicators to monitor and measure accessibility of persons with disability not only to their physical environment, to information, but also to their other human rights. Relevant to this and to Article 31 on statistics and data collection of the Convention, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on human rights indicators and also to highlight some of the indicators we have developed that are relevant to rights of persons with disability.

OHCHR initiated its ongoing work on human rights indicators in response to a request from the Inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies to help them make use of statistical information in assessing the realization of human rights in the States parties to the core international human rights treaties. In consultation with a panel of experts, including members of treaty bodies, special rapporteurs of the Human rights council, United Nations agencies and civil society organisations, OHCHR has developed a conceptual and methodological framework on indicators for human rights assessments. The objective is to adopt a structured and consistent approach for translating universal human rights standards into indicators that are contextually relevant at country level.

In short, the conceptual and methodological framework:

- adopts a common approach to identifying indicators for monitoring civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights, thereby strengthening the notion of indivisibility and interdependence of human rights;
- translates the narrative on the normative content of human rights (starting with the related provisions of international human rights instruments and general comments of treaty bodies) into a few characteristic attributes and a configuration of *structural*, *process* and *outcome* indicators. The identified indicators bring to the fore an assessment of steps taken by the State party in addressing its obligations – from acceptance of international human rights standards (*structural* indicators) to efforts being undertaken by the primary duty-bearer, the State, to meet the obligations that flow from the standards (*process* indicators) and on to the outcomes of those efforts from the perspective of rights-holders (*outcome* indicators);
- makes it easier to identify contextually meaningful indicators for universally accepted human rights standards. It seeks neither to prepare a common list of indicators to be applied across all countries irrespective of their social, political and economic development, nor to make a case for building a global measure for cross-country comparisons of the realization of human rights;
- focuses on two categories of indicators and data-generating mechanisms:
(a) indicators that are or can be compiled by official statistical systems using

administrative records and statistical surveys; and (b) indicators or standardized information more generally compiled by human rights organizations;

- focuses on quantitative as well as qualitative indicators to assess the implementation of human rights effectively. Efforts have been made to keep the identified indicators simple, based on objective and transparent methodology and, to the extent feasible, there is an emphasis on the disaggregation of identified indicators by type of prohibited grounds of discrimination (e.g. sex, ethnicity, disability, etc.) and by vulnerable or marginalized population groups;
- contains list of illustrative indicators identified on a number of human rights and thematic issues. The list, which has been subjected to validation exercises, aims to support efforts of human rights stakeholders in identifying contextually relevant indicators through participatory processes at country level. At present, lists of indicators are available for *the right to life; the right to liberty and security of person; the right to participate in public affairs; the right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the right to adequate food; the right to adequate housing; the right to education; the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the right to a fair trial; the right to social security; the right to work; the right to non-discrimination and equality; and violence against women.*
- Includes indicators' *meta-data sheets*, namely detailed information facilitating the compilation and use of the indicators, including on their definition, rationale, methods of computation, data sources, disaggregation levels and periodicity (see [HRI/MC/2008/3](#)).

Some indicators relevant to rights of persons with disabilities:

- Right to non-discrimination and equality – proportion of buildings with facilities for persons with physical disabilities
- Right to education – Date of entry and force of coverage of domestic laws implementing the right to education, including prohibition of corporal punishment, discrimination in access to education, making educational institutions barrier free and inclusive education (e.g. children with disabilities, children in detention, migrant children, indigenous children)
- Right to participate in public affairs – Reported cases of denial access to public service or position on account of discrimination (e.g. persons with disabilities)

Thank you very much for your attention. If the committee wishes to be briefed further about this work, we will be more than happy to do so.

Contact address:

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr. Nicolas Fasel

Research and Right to Development Division / Development and Economic and Social Branch

United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland

hrindicators@ohchr.org