



SIDE EVENT OF THE ESCR-NET WOMEN AND ESCR WORKING GROUP AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

CSW 60- March 2016

CONCEPT NOTE

Advancing women's substantive equality in the implementation of the SDGs: Securing women's rights related to land, health and work

Background:

The 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 60) will have as its priority theme 'women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development' in the context of the twentieth anniversary commemoration and global review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD), and the post-2015 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals document, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (the 2030 Agenda).¹

Building on the framework of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), CSW 60 provides an important opportunity to discuss ways to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is implemented with view to achieve gender equality and women's rights and empowerment.² This event aims to highlight the nexus between States' existing obligations under international human rights law and the recently adopted agenda on sustainable development. Human rights standards such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as the interpretations of their respective treaty bodies, have increasingly foregrounded both legal and substantive equality, are relevant for the goals of the 2030 Agenda and should guide the implementation and monitoring of the Agenda.

The document *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*³, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, includes various goals that relate to economic and social rights, such as poverty (Goal 1), food and nutrition (Goal 2), health (Goal 3), education (Goal 4), and water and sanitation (Goal 6), rights that are enshrined in the ICESCR. The Agenda also emphasizes the principles of equality and non-discrimination, which have been outlined in Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and Goal 10 on reducing inequalities within and among countries. Also Goal 16 is highly relevant from the perspective of a human rights-based approach to development, as it underlines the need for rule of law, accountable institutions, inclusive decision-making, and non-discrimination in development policies, while highlighting the need for greater accountability through access to justice. Goal 16.3 calls on governments to: "Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all."

¹ Concept Note of the Expert Group Meeting on 'Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable

² Ibid.

³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

It is in this context that the ESCR-Net Women and ESCR Working Group(WESCR WG), in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, wishes to discuss how the framework of women's ESCR and the substantive equality approach can be used to promote gender equality in the implementation of the recently adopted development goals. Building on a joint briefing for the UN CEDAW Committee and Committee on ESCR in 2015, this side event will focus particularly on women's rights to on land, health and work.

The main questions:

- How can the human rights framework, incorporating a substantive equality analysis, guide strategies and policies with the aim of ensuring the full realization of women's ESCR in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?
- What is the added value of a substantive equality analysis in the case of women's rights related to land, health and work?
- How can the SDGs, particularly the information and data produced as part of the monitoring frameworks, become an effective mechanism to further uncover and redress patterns of substantive inequality and discrimination?
- How can civil society organizations support governments in ensuring that the SDGs create an enabling environment to realize women's rights and how can they increase governments accountability in this regard?

Presenters:

The discussion will be framed by an international panel of leading women's rights advocates featuring **Ximena Andión Ibañez** (Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir, Mexico), **Mayra Gomez** (Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, United States), **Charlene May** (Legal Resources Centre, South Africa) and **Rebecca Brown** (Center for Reproductive Rights, United States).

The panel will also include comments from **Mr. Philip Alston**, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

Opening remarks will be given by the **Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations** and **ESCR-Net**.

Date of the event: Tuesday, 22 March 2016, at 1:15-2:45 pm

Venue: Conference Room 11, GA Building

The mandate of the **Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights** was first established in 1998 by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Professor **Philip Alston** is the current Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. The Special Rapporteur is an independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council and undertakes the following main tasks: (1) conducting research and analysis to be presented in separate thematic reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly; (2) undertaking country visits and reporting on the situation in those countries in relation to the concerns of the mandate; (3) sending letters to governments and other relevant entities in situations in which violations of human rights of people living in extreme poverty are alleged to have taken place.

The **International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net)** unites over 270 NGOs, grassroots groups, and advocates across 70 countries, facilitating strategic exchange, building solidarity, and coordinating collective advocacy to secure social and economic justice through human rights. ESCR-Net members define common strategies and advance joint action foremost through international working groups, including the **Working Group on Women and ESCR** which is composed of about 40 members – NGOs, social movements, and individual advocates – working across regions to advance women’s ESC rights and substantive equality. Through engagement with UN bodies, capacity building, and advocacy at multiple levels, the Working Group is collectively striving to ensure women’s experiences and analyses are at the center of domestic and international policy-making and legal developments.