**Mandate of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights**

**Call for contributions**

**The impact of economic reform policies on women’s human rights**

For his next thematic report to the UN General Assembly, 73rd session, the Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, Mr Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, intends to focus on the links and the impact of economic reforms and austerity measures on women’s human rights. For this purpose, the Independent Expert would like to invite States, international financial institutions, academia, civil society organizations, trade unions, United Nations agencies and entities, private actors and any other relevant stakeholder to share information and analysis on this topic **by 5 April 2018.**

**I. Background**

Human Rights Council resolution [34/3](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/34/L.3) adopted on 23 March 2017 requested the Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights to develop guiding principles for human rights impact assessments for economic reform policies, in consultation with States, international financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

In line with his 2017 thematic report on structural adjustment and labour rights ([A/HRC/34/57](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/34/57)), the Independent Expert has prepared a first report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/37/54[[1]](#footnote-1))](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/37/54) in which he describes the evolution in structural adjustment responses to financial crises and mitigation of adverse social impact and explains how structural adjustment programmes affect human rights. He argues that, for both economic and legal reasons, economic reform programmes must be inclusive and advance human rights for which a set of guiding principles can make a positive difference. He identifies the main challenges of developing guiding principles to assess human rights impacts, including their basis, scope, content, issues related to timing, and some reflections on how to proceed. He concludes with some preliminary recommendations for discussion on the content and format of the guiding principles and proposes the next steps towards developing them.

In the course of his research, and in the context of the expert consultations that the Independent Expert has undertaken, it has become essential to him to devote a specific report to the situation of women in the context of economic reforms. He has decided to deepen his research by analysing the particular ways in which austerity measures, structural adjustment, fiscal consolidation and in general economic reform programmes have had a disproportionate impact on the life of women of all ages and what to do to address the negative impacts. Information and analysis of recent years continues to indicate a lack of a gender perspective in the development of economic and macroeconomic policy, as well as in its monitoring and implementation. Several questions require further exploration, discussion and actionable responses at the international level.

A human rights lens, which takes stock of the existing literature from various academic areas, including economic feminism, fiscal and financial policy, as well as from research on social justice and human rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights of women, will also contribute to this discussion and provide concrete and critical guidance for the development of the guiding principles for human rights impact assessments for economic reform policies. The Independent Expert will present the guiding principles in 2019, to the Human Rights Council.

**II. Call for contributions**

Stakeholders are kindly invited to share with the Independent Expert information, documents, case studies or analysis to address the following topics. If available, please provide information or analysis on different groups of women, including women of different age groups, women with disabilities, rural and urban women, migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women, indigenous women, and women who belong to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

1. Relevant analysis of the impact of economic policy reforms, including fiscal consolidation policies, structural adjustment and austerity measures, **on women’s enjoyment of human rights, including gender equality**, in any or all the following areas:
2. Care services (for example, in relation to care of children, persons with disabilities, older persons and persons who are sick or suffer from chronic diseases)
3. Social security and pension; including contributory schemes
4. Access to land, housing and inheritance
5. Access to credit, productive sources or property; including when such access is based on civil status
6. Health, including sexual and reproductive health
7. Public education
8. Taxation
9. Utilities and public service providers, such as water, electricity, transportation and sanitation
10. Labour market, including flexible working arrangements, paid-maternity/paternity/parental leave, sub-employment, part-time employment and domestic work
11. Policies to address or mitigate discrimination in the work place, salary gaps, sexual harassment and violence
12. Privatization of public enterprises and services.
13. Subsidies for food, fuel, transportation; including cash transfers and in-kind subsidies.
14. Eradication of gender-based violence against women.
15. Legal aid, access to justice and remedies
16. Political participation for women.
17. Lessons learnt about designing, implementing and monitoring these policies and reforms on the rights of women of all ages (a life cycle approach).
18. Specific examples (subnational or national levels) in the preparation of participatory budgets and human rights impact assessments of economic reforms from the perspective of women and/or incorporating a gender analysis.
19. Information and analysis on the advice, policies and frameworks of international financial institutions from a gender perspective and how those have had positive and/or negative impact on women’s rights.
20. Information, assessments or analysis on challenges in adopting economic policies conductive to women’s rights and gender equality. In particular what are the remaining challenges faced where solid evidence exists to support such policies and sufficient advocacy has been conducted on the benefit of realization of women’s rights and gender equality?
21. Recommendations or good practices on how to overcome existing obstacles and to realize policy change which creates an enabling macroeconomic policy environment for women’s rights and gender equality.

**III. Submission of responses**

Due to limited capacity for translation, it is kindly requested that responses be submitted, if possible, in English, Spanish or French and, **no later than 5 April 2018.** All responses will be posted on the official webpage of the Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, unless it is indicated that the submission and/or the supporting documentation should be kept confidential.

([http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/IEDebt/Pages/IEDebtIndex.aspx](http://karine-dev.in.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/IEDebt/Pages/IEDebtIndex.aspx))

Please keep responses to a maximum of 5 pages (or 3,000 words), and provide links to information or documents when available. Preferably sent via email to: [ieforeigndebt@ohchr.org](mailto:ieforeigndebt@ohchr.org), copying [registry@ohchr.org](mailto:registry@ohchr.org). Alternatively, please send to:

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1. This report is scheduled to be presented to the Human Rights Council on February 28th, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)