



EUROPEAN UNION

Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office  
and other international organisations in Geneva

**EU INTERVENTION**

**Human Rights Council**

**Second Intersessional Meeting for Dialogue and Cooperation on Human Rights  
and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Palais, Room XX, 3 December 2019**

**Session 2: Reflections and conversations on human rights and Agenda 2030.**

Merci M. Le Président,

Permettez-moi de féliciter tous les panelistes pour leurs importantes contributions. J'aimerais ajouter quelques réflexions de la part de l'Union Européenne.

1. Et pour commencer, permettez-moi d'emmener dans ce débat les mots de la Haute Commissaire Bachelet lors de notre première "Réunion intersessions sur les droits de l'homme et l'Agenda 2030", en Janvier de cette année. Je cite: "*l'Agenda envisage un monde de respect universel des droits de l'homme et de la dignité humaine, de la primauté du droit, de la justice, de l'égalité et de la non-discrimination; respect de la race, de l'ethnie et de la diversité culturelle; et d'égalité des chances et de prospérité partagée pour tous*".

2. Dear colleagues, we have 10 years left to take action and transform this visionary Agenda into reality. The world today heads toward more bad news than signs of optimism. Conflicts, displacement, extreme poverty, rising income inequality, climate change are front page. Many young people are not receiving the education they deserve. Commitments to multilateralism are being rolled back. These are not encouraging trends. As mentioned in the latest SG's report on SDG Progress 2019, the shift in development pathways to generate the transformation required to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required, even if the commitment to the 2030 Agenda remains strong. Many people, including the most vulnerable are being left behind; that's a certainty. So we have to ask ourselves: what is the best we can do in the ten remaining years?

3. Allow me to elaborate on three things. First of all, **human rights and the rule of law**. The EU believes that the support for these principles, as well as for democracy, guide development action and thus the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; they cannot be disconnected. Narrow and regressive views that sustainable development can be achieved without a foundation in human rights and the rule of law do not make for sound decisions. Likewise, the argument for a sequential order between development and human rights is simply not putting people first. This is why the EU implements a human rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights, promoting inclusion and participation, non-discrimination, equality, transparency and accountability.

4. Second, we need more **investment in development**. The EU will help partner countries in their national strategies, programmes and budgets implementing Agenda 2030 as a whole. The European Union and its Member States continued to be the world's leading provider of official development assistance and in 2018 stepped up their efforts directed at developing countries. Our development assistance supports policy frameworks at national level that address challenges in the implementation of all 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda, from the eradication of poverty, to gender equality and women empowerment, which requires urgent action to eliminate the many root causes of discrimination that still curtail women's rights in private and public spheres; from economic growth, employment and decent work to combating climate change. We believe that partner country engagement and democratic ownership are essential. At the same time, the EU and its Member States also needs to redouble efforts to achieve the SDGs at home, not least by better integrating them with the promotion and protection of human rights. We need to move farther and faster; we also need to reduce inequalities and adequately monitor achievements towards the Agenda 2030 implementation.

5. Third and last. We need a **UN fit for purpose**. The UN should support all countries in reaching the SDGs and in fulfilling their human rights obligations. So we need the whole UN – in headquarters and in country teams – to have clear and unified goals and standards; to share joint analyses; to have coordinated strategies and effective joint operations; to use human and financial resources wisely and transparently. The reform efforts of the Secretary General of the United Nations development system aim to make the UN a stronger partner to countries implementing the 2030 Agenda. The EU fully supports these efforts, while stressing the need to reinforce the human rights pillar of the UN and step up efforts to operationalize a human rights based approach across the UN's development and peace and security work, not least as provided for in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. In September this year, EU and UN signed a €30 million contribution agreement to the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda. The Fund is a central component of the ongoing reform of the UN Development System and seeks to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals worldwide. We are looking forward to continue working with the UN in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, on the basis of human rights.