INTRODUCTION

Issued every two months, the OHCHR ESCR Bulletin aims at sharing news, activities, key events and new resources relevant to economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), with focus on the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Bulletin is edited by the Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues Section, Research and Right to Development Division (HRESIS/RRDD). For feedback and further information on the work of OHCHR as mentioned in this volume: escrbulletin@ohchr.org

The OHCHR ESCR Bulletin contains links and references to non-OHCHR material, websites and other online information. These are provided only as a convenience, and the inclusion of a link or reference does not imply any endorsement by OHCHR.

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"Food crises, wars and conflict, climate change, economic downturns and other societal upheavals tend to disproportionally affect women. But what is acknowledged far less is that women can be, and are, powerful agents for change."

Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

HIGHLIGHTS

Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure: negotiation completed

On 9th March 2012, the Committee on the World Food Security (CFS) completed the inter-governmental negotiation on the Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of lands, fisheries and forests in Rome. The Guidelines are expected to be formally adopted by the special session of the CFS in May 2012. Once adopted, it will be the first international instrument providing guidance on the governance of land. OHCHR provided technical advice to ensure consistency of the Guidelines with existing international human rights law throughout the negotiations. The Guidelines reflects key international human rights standards, such as prohibition of forced evictions, non-discrimination and gender equality, human rights responsibilities of business enterprises, access to justice and remedies, just to name a few.


Rio + 20 should be firmly rooted in human rights

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (“Rio+20”) will be held 20-22 June 2012. On 30 March, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navy Pillay, issued an open letter appealing to Member States to fully integrate key human rights considerations in the Rio+20. Twenty two UN independent human rights experts have also called upon States to incorporate universally agreed international human rights with an emphasis on strong accountability mechanisms. They also elaborated further analysis, as background notes, on specific issues, including the rights to food, water and sanitation and social protection.


New ratifications: International Covenant on ESCR and its Optional Protocol

On 31 January 2012, the Haitian parliament endorsed the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. On 7 March 2012, Slovakia became the 8th country to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Covenant. Only two more ratifications are needed for the Optional Protocol to enter into force. OHCHR is stepping up its advocacy efforts to ensure the soonest possible entry into force.

Optional Protocol to CRC on communications procedure open for ratification

On 29 February 2012, the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (3rd OP-CRC) was opened for signature and ratification. The Protocol will allow the Committee on the Rights of the Child to receive communications and conduct inquiries in cases of violation of children’s rights. Twenty countries from all regions of the world signed it during the ceremony. The adoption of the 3rd OP-CRC will strengthen the international legal protection of children’s economic, social and cultural rights, and help to consolidate the firm recognition of the justiciability of these rights in international human rights law.


Web-based toolkit on the right to adequate housing

OHCHR has launched a web-based “toolkit” on the right to adequate housing. This toolkit gathers in one place reports, guidance notes, methodologies and other useful tools produced by OHCHR, human rights mechanisms and other UN agencies on the right to adequate housing. It includes sections on housing rights issues such as forced evictions and displacement as well as the right to adequate housing of specific groups including women, indigenous peoples and migrants.

- The toolkit can be accessed here: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/toolkit/Pages/RighttoAdequateHousingToolkit.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/toolkit/Pages/RighttoAdequateHousingToolkit.aspx)

ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD

High Commissioner called for further efforts on ESCR in Guatemala

On 15 March, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued her statement at the end of her visit to Guatemala. Among other issues, her statement addressed inequality and discrimination, including on ESCRs, faced by indigenous peoples and the youth. She stressed the importance of respecting the rights of indigenous people recognized under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including their right to land and right to consultation. In this context, she expressed concern over forced eviction conducted in the context of economic investment projects.

- OHCHR’s site on Guatemala: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/LacRegion/Pages/GTIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/LacRegion/Pages/GTIndex.aspx)

Deputy High Commissioner addressed ESCR issues in Chad and Niger

The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kyung-wha Kang, visited Chad and Niger on 1-3 April and 4-6 April 2012 respectively. In her end-of-mission statement on Chad, she encouraged the Government to further integrate a human rights-based approach to their response to the food crisis, as well as in land clearing and relocation projects. On Niger, she
praised the Government for their efforts to respond to the ongoing food crisis in line with human rights principles, and encouraged integrating a human rights-based approach to the full range of development and peace and security policies.

- OHCHR's site on Chad: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/TDIndex.aspx
- OHCHR's site on Niger: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/NEIndex.aspx

**International forum on access to justice on ESCR, Mexico**

On 3 February, the Mexican Supreme Court of Justice, OHCHR-Mexico, the Judiciary Council, the Civil Society Coalition on ESCR and two academic institutions, held an international forum on access to justice on ESCR. It aimed to highlight the importance of adequate mechanisms to make protection of ESCR effective and justiciable. This event took place in the context of the recent constitutional reform on human rights in Mexico. Over 150 people attended the forum, including judges, civil society representatives and media.

**Mexico: Follow-up to the mission by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food**

On 6 March, OHCHR-Mexico organized an event to disseminate the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food on his mission to Mexico and to discuss follow up of his recommendations convening wide range of stakeholders, including senior government officials, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, NHRI s, the private sector, academics, journalists and UN agencies. The event contributed to an interactive dialogue among various stakeholders on how to facilitate implementation of accountability measures by state actors.

- For full text of the statement made by the Special Rapporteur: http://www.hchr.org.mx/files/comunicados/2012/03/Comunicado_de_Prensa_Alimentacion_Final.pdf
- For full text of the mission report of the Special Rapporteur: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Food/Pages/Annual.aspx

**Moldova: Joint advocacy efforts on ESCR**

On 14-17 February, the Human Rights Adviser in Moldova, together with a member of CESCR, Mr. Eibe Riedel, and OHCHR Geneva, conducted advocacy for a) the follow up of the concluding observations made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued in May 2011, b) the acceptance of ESCR-related recommendations made in the UPR, and for the ratification of the OP-ICESCR. Meetings and advocacy activities were held with different Ministries, members of Parliament, judges, the NHRI, civil society organizations, UN agencies and media. The series of advocacy activities was highly appreciate by various stakeholders.
Moldovan authorities have adopted a plan for the follow up of CESCR recommendations, with the participation of the relevant Ministries.

EVENTS

RECENT EVENTS

19th session of the Human Rights Council: Reports relevant to ESCR

► Access documents listed below in all available UN official languages, searching by symbol numbers at: [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/mainec.aspx](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/mainec.aspx)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Mandates* and offices</th>
<th>Main focus / relevant sections</th>
<th>Symbol number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Report of the HC - Study documenting discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity</td>
<td>Report documents discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, including examples of discrimination in the areas of employment, health, education and welfare benefits.</td>
<td>A/HRC/19/41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing</td>
<td>Report focuses on women and the right to adequate housing.</td>
<td>A/HRC/19/53</td>
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<td>Report of the Independent Expert on minority issues</td>
<td>Report contains the fourth session of the Forum on Minority Issues, held in November 2011, which focused on the rights of minority women and girls, including ESCR.</td>
<td>A/HRC/19/56</td>
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<td>Addendum: Guiding Principles on Human Rights Impact Assessments of Trade and Investment Agreements</td>
<td>A/HRC/19/59/Add.5</td>
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<td>Report of the 2011 Social Forum</td>
<td>Report contains a summary of discussions and recommendations of the 2011 Social Forum which focused on the right to development. The discussion included the linkages between the right to development and ESCR</td>
<td>A/HRC/19/70</td>
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19th session of the Human Rights Council: Panel discussions addressed ESCR

The following panel discussions held during the 19th session of the Human Rights Council addressed the issue of ESCR. This table covers only the panel discussions mandated by the Council, and not side events held during the Council session.

<table>
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<td>Ending Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity</td>
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<td>Giving voice to people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS</td>
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Concept notes of all panels held during the 19th session of the Council is available from: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session19/Pages/19RegularSession.aspx


The Universal Periodic Review goes into its second round

All 193 Member States participated in the first round of the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR). In the second round of the UPR, which begins in May, States will be reporting on progress in implementing the recommendations made after the first assessment. High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed that the second cycle which presents States with an opportunity to evaluate implementation of recommendations the first time round, “will test the mechanism’s value and credibility.” In the first round of the review, more than 260 recommendations were made on ESCR and among them, 160 recommendations were accepted by States under review.

- For more information: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/AglobalhumanrightsmapUPRgoesintoitssecondround.aspx
- Recommendations on ESCR issued in the first round of the UPR can be searched through the Universal Human Rights Index: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsIndexDatabase.aspx
“WASH United” soccer team kicked off for the right to water & sanitation

On 3 March, in Marseille, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, kicked off a soccer match in the French premier league as part of the soccer and water project “WASH United”. WASH United is an imaginary soccer team that uses soccer’s popular appeal to campaign for safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). This soccer event was organised as part of their campaign toward the 6th World Water Forum scheduled to be held in Marseille from 12 to 17 March 2012.

- To see some of the media coverage, see:
  - http://www.om.net/fr/Saison/101005/Actualites/59347/Sous_le_signe_de_WASH_United

UPCOMING EVENTS

Human Rights Council discussion on women & ESCR, September 2012

On 22 March, Human Rights Council decided to hold its annual discussion on economic, social and cultural rights at its 21\textsuperscript{st} session in September 2012 to be focused on economic, social and cultural rights of women (resolution 19/5). The Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on economic, social and cultural rights of women at its 22\textsuperscript{nd} session in 2013.


CASES, LEGISLATION & POLICIES

South African Constitutional Court ruling on the right to adequate housing

On 13 March 2012, the Constitutional Court of South Africa handed down another judgment protecting the right to housing of tenants. The case concerned evictions that arose from a rental dispute between tenants of a Johannesburg apartment building and their landlord. The landlord exercised his power to cancel the tenants’ leases, offering them an opportunity to enter into a new lease on the same terms, but at much higher rentals. The Court found that that the landlord’s exercise of the bare power of termination in the leases for the sole purpose of securing higher rentals may have amounted to an “unfair practice”.


TOOLS / PUBLICATIONS / MULTIMEDIA

Special Rapporteur on housing: New materials on women and housing

As a complement to the report that she just presented to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/19/53), the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing has produced a leaflet and simplified guide on women’s right to adequate housing. This material is available in Arabic, English, Portuguese and Spanish.

- Direct links to these documents:
**Special Rapporteur on water & sanitation: Good practices**

Special Rapporteur on the right to water and sanitation issued a book on good practices on the right: “On the Right Track”. The book is available in English and French.

- The book is available from:
  

**Stock-taking of tools to monitor progressive realization of ESCR**

Center for Economic and Social Rights and the International Network on Quantitative Methods for Human Rights and Development convened a seminar “New Horizons in Economic and Social Rights Monitoring” on 22-23 March. The seminar took stock of various tools and methods developed to monitor ESCR, in particular Governments’ obligation to “fulfil” ESCR.

- Tools and methods shared at the seminar are available from:
  
  http://www.cesr.org/article.php?id=1253

**Other Publications/ Reports**


- A Bottom-Up Approach to Righting Financial Regulation:
  


- Ekta Parishad and Ekta Europe, Achieving People’s Control over Land and Livelihood: Report from the International mobilisation conference on The Right to Land and Livelihood: http://ektaeurope.org/conference/

- Global Campaign for Education, Gender Discrimination in Education: The violation of rights of women and girls:
  


Multimedia

OHCHR sources

• OHCHR Web Stories:


  • “People-centred Development: What the Arab Spring taught us”, 27-03-2012: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/People-centredDevelopmentWhattheArabSpringtaughtus.aspx


  • “Proper disposal of old electronic equipment key in protection human rights”, 15-02-2012: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/ProperdisposalofoldelectronicequipmentkeyinprotectionHR.aspx

  • “Older persons among the poorest in the world”, 03-02-2012: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Olderpersonsamongthepoorestintheworld.aspx

• Interactive online game on human rights:

  OHCHR Guatemala Office has developed an interactive online game on human rights for children, “Aventura Fascinante”: http://www.aventurafascinante.org/

Other sources:


• Video: Colombian Afro-descendant communities commemorate 15 years of forced displacement: the struggle for their territory continues: http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?et=1109535811076&s=143&e=001VTTy6KNiTZZxK1rJjgPl9y2ctsHswM2rfkIhLGYh3iGEGomhobf_x_WwbBB33KABbUxQp13JPtic7MI-w4dvRDJFXZOdgUJOGqbrR68LTbZAFv_Y2CQ==
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Training Course on Health Rights Litigation, 18-22 June, Boston

The Global School on the Enforcement of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Global School) offers a course on Judicial Enforcement of ESC Rights Course on Health Rights Litigation, June 18-22, Boston, USA. This course offers participants an opportunity to develop specialist-level knowledge in relation to litigating health-related rights at the national, regional and international level. In 2012, the Global School will provide five courses on ESCR: Africa (Pretoria), Latin America (Bogota), Health Rights (Cambridge), Vietnam (Hanoi) and Advanced International Course (Åbo).


Intensive Course on Health and Human Rights: June 11-13, 2012, Boston

The Center for Continuing Professional Education at the Harvard School of Public Health announces the Intensive Course on Health and Human Rights: Concepts, Implementation and Impact. The course will take place June 11-13, 2012, in Boston. This program equips professionals and leaders in law, development, urban planning, education, public health, humanitarian intervention, and medicine with the concepts, skills, and tools to integrate human rights into their professional activities.

- Full information on the course: [https://ccpe.sph.harvard.edu/programs.cfm?CSID=ICHH0612&pg=cluster&CLID=1](https://ccpe.sph.harvard.edu/programs.cfm?CSID=ICHH0612&pg=cluster&CLID=1)

Training on Understanding ESCR, 19-23 Nov 2012, Geneva

This course will provide human rights advocates, staff of NGOs and national human rights institutions, representatives of governments, and staff of UN bodies and other international organizations, as well as members of the academia, with a broad understanding of economic, social and cultural rights, and in-depth knowledge on how to promote these rights in their work. The course is conducted by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. Deadlines for application are: 1 September for applicants requiring visas for Switzerland and 12 September for applicants not requiring visa for Switzerland.

- For more information on the course: [http://www.adh-geneva.ch/professional-training/professional-training-in-escr/tc](http://www.adh-geneva.ch/professional-training/professional-training-in-escr/tc)

Previous issues of the ESCR Bulletin are available at [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/escr/escr-general-info.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/escr/escr-general-info.htm)

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