



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

31 July 2023

Excellency,

The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundations of justice, freedom, and peace in the world.

In the month of August, the Human Rights 75 campaign is placing a spotlight on the theme of Justice, celebrating the impact of the Declaration on those who have found justice over the last 75 years, but also highlighting the challenges for too many who are still searching for justice, equality before the law, and accountability rather than impunity.

In today's world, only bold steps will ensure that the ideals of justice become a lived reality for all. 253 million people are living in extreme situations of injustice, while 4.5 billion people are practically excluded from the opportunities the law provides. More than one billion women lack protection from sexual violence by an intimate partner. The 2030 Agenda is off track in providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions under the rule of law at all levels. Justice institutions are themselves struggling with multiple challenges related to the use of digital technologies.

As part of the Human Rights 75 initiative, I therefore invite you to commit to the goal of justice for all, by pledging to take specific, concrete and urgent actions as set out in the non-exhaustive suggestions annexed to this letter. As a first step, I encourage you to recommit to Sustainable Development Goal 16 at the 2023 SDG Summit in September. Member States are also invited to update on actions taken to foster and anchor real, fair and equal access of their peoples to justice, under law, at the high-level event that I will convene on 11-12 December 2023.

In this anniversary year, I invite everyone to make significant strides towards ensuring the rights to remedy and access to justice for all - cornerstones for achieving sustainable development and peace.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'V. Türk'.

Volker Türk

All Permanent Representatives of
Member States and Permanent Observers of
non-Member States to the United Nations Office at Geneva



ANNEX

Human Rights 75 - 'Justice'

States are urged to take the following steps to promote justice as part of the Human Rights 75 initiative:

1. Ensure national development plans make justice a political priority and that programmes to promote access to justice are clear and detailed, nurture partnerships and receive sufficient funding to be able to achieve delivering justice for all.
2. Implement recommendations of Human Rights Mechanisms in relation to strengthening access to justice for all.
3. Establish and strengthen mechanisms for meaningful and sustained consultation with CSOs at all stages of the policymaking processes around the justice sector, basing policy on a comprehensive understanding of people's justice needs and designing appropriate solutions.
4. Increase funding on achieving SDG 16, including commitments to domestic resource mobilization and budgetary commitments to deliver on SDG 16 and for donors to increase commitments to fund SDG 16 globally.
5. Support for the implementation of the SDG 16 Survey, in cooperation with their National Statistics Offices, to help fill glaring gaps on discrimination, access to justice and anti-corruption among other rule of law issues.
6. Commit to including rule of law and human rights as central themes across the agenda for the Summit of the Future and in the Pact of the Future.
7. Promote and protect strong encryption on on-line communication and avoid all direct, or indirect, general, or indiscriminate restrictions on the use of encryption.
8. Establish and strengthen national human rights institutions and equality bodies, with capacity to receive complaints, and ensure they are adequately resourced.
9. To establish laws, policies, codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms with a view to zero tolerance for strategic litigation against public participation and other forms of harassment targeted at people in public office, journalists, human rights and environmental defenders, particularly women, whether on-line or off-line.
10. Commit to ensuring accountability for those contributing to environmental harms and access to justice and effective remedy for those affected.
11. Use the Sustainable Development Goals framework to accelerate the design and implementation of comprehensive and context-specific transitional justice initiatives and to enhance data collection and reporting on progress and impact, including, for example, through the development of transitional justice-specific indicators at the national level, as relevant.